

# Removing Stains on TENTS

Courtesy of the experts at Shipp Cleaning Systems

Tent cleaning usually does a good job of washing away dirt and grime but the solutions do not always remove the variety of stubborn stains tents can pick up when in use or in storage. However, there are several options for removing most anything from tent fabrics.

**Mystery stains:** Even purple berry bird droppings, among a variety of mystery stains, can be removed with the Mr. Clean Magic Eraser. The eraser dissolves as you use it and it can be somewhat tedious when cleaning large areas but this product is a marvel. The Magic Eraser can be found in grocery stores in the cleaning section. They work great on resin chairs as well.

**Rust, leaf, hard-water and mineral stains:** Shipp's MAC or CLR (Calcium, Lime, Rust remover) is an acid but safe for the vinyl. It dissolves any mineral deposits that are left on the surface. If your clear wall or windows have hard water residue or look foggy, a weak dilution of the acids can remove those deposits as well. For old leaf stains and rust, soak a towel in MAC or CLR and let dwell on the stain for a few hours.

**Mildew stains:** When a tent has bad mildew stains, a chlorine cleaner must be used. Fresh bleach-sodium hypochlorite-from a grocery store works well but bleach weakens quickly the older it gets. However, household bleach or sodium hypochlorite is 200 times more corrosive than calcium hypochlorite. A more stable, stronger and safer chlorine solution is Shipp's Blitz mildew remover or X-14 mildew remover. These solutions are a calcium hypochlorite and do a better job of "killing" the roots or spores of the mildew. Always apply any chlorine to a dry fabric for better mildew removal. Only use chlorine when the tent has mildew stains. Chlorine does not whiten tent fabric like it does a cotton t-shirt. Extended constant use of bleach on vinyl fabric will rob the plasticizer and make the fabric stiff. Extended use of chlorine cleaners also can dry rot the polyester stitching on the seams with the help of ultraviolet sunlight.

**Black stains:** Black stains from aluminum poles are tent eyesores. Tim Cahall of The Main Event discovered that liquid silver polish and tarnish remover removes the aluminum dust and hasn't had harmful effects on the vinyl. The chemistry makes sense; the same product that removes tarnish on silverware should remove metal dust. Tim says the water based silver tarnish remover is safer.

**Duct tape, tar, paint, grease and oil stains:** These stains can be removed with a pure organic citrus solvent, such as Shipp's Citro. Do not use mineral spirits, Goof-Off or paint removers because these products are made of petroleum. Since vinyl is a petroleum-based product other petroleum products will permanently yellow and pucker the vinyl. If you have a yellow stain on your tent, it is more than likely someone removed a stain with petroleum and after a few days, the area yellowed. If you are not sure, read the ingredients on the label. If it contains petroleum, do not use it.

**Crepe paper or confetti stains:** The dyes bleed deep into the vinyl and seem impossible to remove. Tent rental companies in sunny states like Arizona or Nevada have found that the ultraviolet light from the sun can bleach out the dye stains if you put the tents up in the sun for a few days. Jackie Hendricks of Party Pros discovered that using the infrared heating lamps used at meat carving stations will work as well. Just set the lamp the normal distance from the surface and let it sit for around 20 minutes. The infrared light has also removed old set in yellow mildew stains and leaf stains. This is a new remedy so be careful not to let the vinyl overheat.



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