

COMMON QUESTIONS – EFFLORESCENCE

1. What is efflorescence?

There is a chance that after a few weeks or months pass, a white haze may appear on the surface of your pavers. This is known as efflorescence. It may appear randomly or in certain areas, and will be more pronounced on dark colour pavers. The white haze may give the impression that the colour is fading. When wet, the white disappears and the colour of the pavers is enhanced. When they dry, the white haze reappears.

There's no reason to be concerned that your pavers are damaged or defective. The concrete pavers are experiencing a natural process that occurs in all cement based products. But the condition will usually correct itself with time and exposure to the elements.

All concrete products contain cement, which contains calcium. Although concrete pavers are solid, strong and very dense, they contain millions of microscopic capillaries that run from the interior to the surface. During wet weather, moisture enters these microscopic capillaries and reacts with the calcium to form calcium hydroxide. As the stone dries, the water rises to the surface. At surface, the water evaporates while the calcium hydroxide reacts with carbon dioxide to create calcium carbonate (the white haze).

Efflorescence will stop when the supply of calcium hydroxide is exhausted. Over time, the efflorescence that does occur will also be washed and worn away by rainwater.

2. Can efflorescence be removed without the wait?

Yes. Although efflorescence will eventually go away naturally, there are commercial cleaners available that are specifically formulated to remove efflorescence from the surface of the concrete pavers. However, these cleaners will not prevent additional efflorescence from occurring if you use them too early. If you only want to clean the pavers once (say just before you seal them), we recommend you wait approximately 10 rainfall/drying periods before you even clean the surface deposits as most of the efflorescence should occur by then. Please note that it is necessary for wetting, and then drying, to occur for efflorescence to be drawn out of the stones.

During arid periods, watering the driveway using a sprinkler can help expedite the process.

Please note, most cleaners contain acid and detergents, so be sure to follow all label directions and environmental regulations when using these cleaners.