

Improving The All-Important First Impression

Window Damage Does Not Always Require Replacement

By Daniel A. Fields



Before
Acid Graffiti Damage



During
Restoration Process



After
Restoration with Anti-Graffiti Film

The axiom "You never have a second chance to make a first impression" is at least as relevant for business as it is for personal relationships. The appearance of one's company to potential customers has a direct bearing on that company's bottom line. A clean, well-maintained establishment will be more appealing to Joe Public, resulting in more business for the company, more work for its employees and better profits. Most business owners know this and when looking for a location for their business will have this in mind. As a building owner and property manager, YOUR bottom line is also dependent on the image of your properties. How disheartening is it, then, when the prohibitive cost of replacing glass damaged by hard water spots or vandalism prevents you from making that great first impression? Fortunately, reasonably priced, innovative options to glass replacement have been developed.

The most common and noticeable glass damage is usually found on commercial properties where vandals purposely scratch or acid-etch glass to leave their mark. This graffiti damage is obvious and usually offensive to both the building owner and tenant. Such damage should be removed as soon as possible to discourage future vandals from attempting to outdo their rivals. This damage can be effectively removed with specialized polishing compounds and equipment, bypassing the need to replace the glass, and at a more reasonable price than replacement. After the glass has been restored, anti-graffiti film should be installed to protect the glass from future damage; subsequent damage would only affect the film, which is easily replaced at a lower cost.

Another source of glass damage occurs very slowly and is usually unnoticed for months, and sometimes years. This type of damage, commonly referred to as "Hard Water Spots", results from glass being subjected to water sprinklers and/or rain water running down the side of your building. Basically, chemicals from hard municipal water or minerals leached by rain from the building's exterior surface build up on the glass. The glass will eventually

appear hazy and corroded although no corrosion has occurred. Normal cleaning procedures have little effect on most hard water spots. Eventually, the glass may need to be replaced (which can be pricey) or restored by a specialized process at a reduced cost.

The difficulty of removing these water spots depends on the composition of the hard water spots. In most cases, water spots consist of calcium and magnesium deposits, which are easily removed from glass by standard window cleaning soaps and chemicals. But some hard water spots are composed of silicate which cannot be removed as easily and alternative methods must be employed.

Where do these silicate deposits come from? Some municipalities add sodium silicate to their water distribution systems to help retard pipe corrosion. When water sprinklers are not monitored and water is allowed to repeatedly wet the glass, hard water spot damage results.

Another source of silicate water spots comes from building rundown during a rainy season. Any water allowed to come into contact with a precast, concrete building that has not been sealed can leach silicate from the concrete, leaving deposits on the glass that cannot be removed by conventional cleaning. These deposits, however, can be removed with specialized polishing compounds and equipment. Once the glass is restored, a concrete sealer should be applied to the building's surface to minimize leaching in the future.

Regardless of the type of damage, options to costly glass replacement DO exist, which can benefit both the building owner and tenant. And, that valuable positive first impression will also be restored.

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