

## Wood Tile Care & Maintenance Considerations

Bison Wood Tiles are made from dense hardwoods and are an ideal long-lasting, low-maintenance decking solution, providing warmth, excellent weather resistance, and architectural charm to decks. *NOTE: This guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the most up to date version of the Bison Wood Tile Specification, which can be found online at [www.bisonip.com](http://www.bisonip.com).*

**Wood Characteristics:** Bison Wood Tiles are made of South American (Cumaru, Ipê, Garapa, Itauba, Jatoba, Massaranduba, Yellow Balau, and Tigerwood) and Chinese (Fused Bamboo) hardwoods which contain a rich variety of graining and coloration, are exceptionally dense, and resistant to insects. Bison Wood Tiles are a natural material that can absorb or lose moisture in different climates. The natural shading, coloration, and graining variations add to the architectural character and overall visual appeal of the finished product.

Being a natural product, Bison Wood Tiles will react to the surrounding environmental conditions. Surfaces may spot or stain when exposed to various materials including: metal, steel, iron, or aluminum filings, pieces, equipment, tools, or fasteners; iron enriched fertilizers; plant debris; animal urine; beverage, food, or grease spills; or mildew that naturally occurs in humid or moist locations. To avoid spotting or staining during construction, Bison recommends protecting the deck to reduce exposure to metal that could rust and react with the deck surface.

Bison Wood Tiles are made of hardwoods that will weather over time, developing a silvery-gray patina. In order to maintain the original coloring, Bison Wood Tiles can be periodically cleaned and sealed. Use deck products designed for hardwoods. Spot cleaning can be done, but for a consistent appearance, Bison recommends cleaning the entire deck. Most decks need to be cleaned after installation is complete.

Test any cleaners, brighteners, or sealants in an inconspicuous area first before applying them to the installed deck. In addition, always check with the manufacturer of your roof membrane to ensure that any cleaning solution, stain, oil, deck brightener, or bleach will not compromise or damage the waterproofing membrane. Remember to use safety glasses, respirators, and gloves in handling any materials that contain chemicals. Refer to product manufacturer's SDS for more information on chemical components and safe handling practices. Finally, DO NOT scrub tiles with wire, iron, or steel brushes.

**Cleaning:** If spotting or staining occurs, first try to remove the stain or spill with warm water, mild dish soap, and a non-metallic stiff bristle brush. If unsuccessful, try applying a Q-tip soaked in bleach to a spotted area in an inconspicuous location as a test. If the tested spot DOES NOT start to clear up, skip to the following paragraph. If the spot does start to clear up when bleach is applied, then the issue is likely a natural occurrence of mildew, and Bison recommends using oxygen bleach (sodium percarbonate) based cleaners to clean the area affected by mildew. The following manufacturers offer cleaning products: 30 Seconds Outdoor Cleaner, Charlie's Soap Oxygen Bleach, and OxiClean. DO NOT use chlorine bleach (sodium hypochlorite) to clean your entire wood deck, as it dries out the wood and will give it a washed-out look. Follow the oxygen bleach cleaner manufacturer's instructions for best results. Once the affected area is cleaned, you MUST apply a deck brightener to restore the wood to its natural pH and neutralize the oxygen bleach cleaner. Brightener manufacturers include Messmer's, Penofin, and Defy.

If the spot does not clear up with warm water and mild dish soap and is not mildew, use a deck cleaner and brightener such as Messmer's Part A/B, Penofin Pro Tech Wood Cleaner/Brightener, Defy Wood Cleaner/Brightener, or other wood cleaners (containing sodium percarbonate as the active ingredient) and brighteners (containing oxalic acid as the active ingredient) in an inconspicuous location. Remember to follow the manufacturer's instructions and repeat as needed to clean stubborn stains. Some stubborn stains may never be completely eliminated but typically fade over time with exposure to the elements. Rinse the deck, adjacent walls, and surrounding areas thoroughly with water prior to and after using any wood cleaner or brightener. Once clean, you may apply a sealant, UV finish, or stain to the wood if desired. *NOTE: For step-by-step cleaning guidance, please see [Bison Wood Tile Cleaning Recommendations](#), which can be found online at [www.bisonip.com](http://www.bisonip.com).*

**Sanding:** If you plan to seal or stain your Wood Tiles, a light sanding is highly recommended. Use 120 grit sandpaper to reduce the appearance of any minor marks, scratches, or imperfections. Use 200+ grit sandpaper to lightly sand the Wood Tiles for a more uniform appearance. After sanding, sweep the tiles and use water to rinse away any remaining dust. Allow to dry thoroughly before applying sealer. Exercise caution when sanding Bison Ribbed Wood Tile surfaces. DO NOT use steel wool to sand any wood tile. Always use gloves, eye protection, and dust respirators when sanding.

**Sealing & Staining:** Wood stabilizers or sealants can help mitigate the loss of moisture and minimize checking and splitting. Cleaning and/or sanding the surface of the wood prior to applying the sealer can help the product penetrate deeper into the wood grain. Due to the density of the hardwood, all the applied product may not be absorbed. Follow manufacturer's recommendations to gently wipe off the excess stain for a more even uniform appearance. To minimize checking or small cracks, the installer should consider sealing any cut ends with an appropriate glue or end sealer specifically designed for use on exterior wood such as PVA Wood Glue by Elmer's or Gorilla. Apply end sealer with a foam brush to the cut ends only. **CAUTION:** Be very careful to not get any on the top surface of the wood, as a glossy discoloration will appear. Small checks and splits are normal and a natural part of the wood as the wood balances with the humidity of the surrounding climate. The following manufacturers offer sealing products specifically designed for use with exotic hardwoods: Messmer's, Penofin, Defy, or TimberPro.

**Maintaining Tile Color:** To better maintain the rich coloration of the Wood Tiles, you can apply a natural oil finish or stabilizer with UV blocker. These products offer UV protection as well as mildew protection. Before applying any finish, first clean and remove any residue from the Wood Tiles as described above. After your initial coat is applied, an annual maintenance coat will help keep the coloration vibrant for years to come. Reapply the natural oil finish, stabilizer, stain, or sealant per the product manufacturer's recommendations for optimal results. The following manufacturers offer UV protection products specifically designed for use with exotic hardwoods: Messmer's and TimberPro.

**Natural Aging:** Left to weather naturally and depending on climatic conditions, Bison Wood Tiles will develop a silvery-gray patina. If you prefer this look, apply a coat of wood stabilizer after installation. Some products provide UV protection, allowing your wood tiles to acclimate more uniformly as weather and environmental conditions season the deck. **NOTE:** Each board has unique characteristics and will weather at different rates. The amount of direct and indirect sunlight, temperature, humidity, moisture, furniture placement, and other local conditions will factor into the aging of the deck.

**Pressure Washing:** You may use a pressure washer to remove built-up dirt, stains, spotting, or mildew from your Bison Wood Tiles. Start with the pressure at 500 to 600 PSI and test in an inconspicuous area, being careful to use the wand in even strokes to avoid lap marks. A maximum of 1200 PSI is suggested for Bison Wood Tiles. **NOTE:** Do not use a power washer to clean your Bamboo Tiles.

**Commercial Buffing Machines:** Commercial floor scrubbers or floor buffing machines are not recommended due to their potential to damage the deck system.

**Snow Removal:** Sweeping: A non-metallic, stiff-bristled broom is recommended for removing snow from a wood deck, as it causes the least damage to your decking material. The use of mechanical snow scoopers and blowers is NOT recommended on Bison Wood Tiles or Pedestal products. Shoveling: Never use a metal shovel, as this can gouge, scrape, or otherwise cause damage to the decking material. Use a plastic shovel and shovel along the length of the deck boards (instead of across) to minimize damage to the wood grain. Avoid chipping away at ice with a shovel or pick, as this can also damage the decking material. Small or narrow plastic shovels may be purchased to help get into tighter areas such as stairs.

**Ice Removal:** Salts or deicers should never be used on a natural wood deck because of the corrosive nature of the salt. Deicers come in a range of compositions, including: Sodium Chloride (NaCl), Magnesium Chloride (MgCl<sub>2</sub>), Calcium Chloride (CaCl<sub>2</sub>), and Potassium Chloride (KCl) as well as many other more expensive components. These chemicals can erode any waterproof stain or finish and leave water marks on the wood itself. Wood absorbs and releases moisture and expands and contracts over time. Deicers absorb most of the moisture in natural materials, which makes the wood more brittle and will cause additional cracking and checking. As an alternative, carefully pour hot water over the iciest areas of the deck and use your outdoor broom to remove the ice and excess water. Post signs alerting pedestrians of the slippery conditions.

**Bamboo Tile Maintenance:** The Bamboo Tiles have a primer coat of Woca Exterior Oil (Natural Color) pre-applied. After several months, the bamboo fibers will open, and this is an opportune time to apply a first coat of penetrating oil. Woca Exterior Oil or Messmer's deck oils are recommended for bamboo, though most penetrating oils work. Follow the oil manufacturer's instructions for best results. Test any stains, stabilizers, or sealants in an inconspicuous area to ensure they will not cause discoloration or other unintended damage. **NOTE:** Do not use a power washer to clean your Bamboo Tiles.