

BRASS HARDWARE

When a consumer chooses brass hardware for a particular application, it is usually because of the attractiveness and brilliant luster of the polished base metal. The consumer may be unaware that to maintain the beauty of the hardware a certain amount of care is necessary. The following few paragraphs contain information which will be helpful to anyone interested in brass hardware.

All polished brass hardware usually has a protective lacquer coating. Brass hardware, whether applied in exterior or interior applications, will eventually show signs of finish breakdown or tarnishing. Small dark spots appearing in high contact or wear areas are usually the first indication of deterioration of the protective lacquer coating.

Over time, all brass hardware will eventually develop tarnishing. The rate at which tarnishing occurs will depend upon surrounding environmental conditions. Areas with high levels of automotive and industrial pollutants, ultra-violet rays, and coastal areas will tend to see accelerated levels of tarnishing with the salty sea air of coastal applications being the most severe.

Many cleaning solvents and lubricants will also dissolve the protective lacquer coating. Ask solvent and lubricant manufacturers whether or not their products damage lacquer coatings before using the product on your hardware or test for potential damage by applying any solvents or lubricants to hardware surfaces that are hidden.

Brass hardware should not be installed on any surface that has recently been painted, varnished, or otherwise finished for a least two days after the final coat has been applied. This step will avoid any interaction of the curing process of the paint or varnish with lacquer finish which can also cause tarnishing.

CARE FOR TARNISHED BRASS HARDWARE

When tarnishing of the hardware reaches an undesirable level, the brass hardware components should be refinished. When refinishing is necessary, Woodstone recommends the following procedure:

1. The hardware must be thoroughly cleaned-removal of all remaining lacquer and other foreign materials. When cleaning the hardware, it should be first removed from the door to avoid any unnecessary damage to the door during the refinishing

process. Woodstone recommends using fine steel wool (No.0000) soaked in a light oil or soapy water to keep metal abrasion to a minimum. For tough to clean hardware, try soaking the hardware in high quality lacquer thinner or paint reducer for fifteen minutes.

2. Once the hardware is thoroughly cleaned, you can restore the hardware's brilliant luster with any commercially available polish.

3. The refurbished brass surfaces must now be protected. It is impractical to reapply a lacquer coating unless the proper tools and experience are available. Therefore, Woodstone recommends several coatings of a quality automobile wax. The finish can then be prolonged with follow-up wax applications.