

Stainless Steel Quick Facts

- Stainless steel often develops minor surface rust over time, especially in coastal applications.
- Stainless Steel is corrosion resistant – not corrosion proof.
- There are many grades of stainless steel with different chemical compositions, some are more corrosion resistant than others. FFI has products in many grades of stainless steel, including 304, 430, and 316-L Marine Grade.
- Some grades of stainless steel are moderately magnetic; using a magnet is actually not a valid test of whether an item is stainless steel.
- Stainless steel grades with higher chromium content are less likely to rust, but it still can occur.
- Stainless steel undergoes passivation when exposed to oxygen, forming a passive film to protect itself from corrosive rust.
- The passivation film can be attacked by salt water, acidic water, and other strong chemicals such as chlorine, leaving the stainless surface vulnerable to corrosion.
- Do not store or install stainless steel where it will touch steel, iron, or other dissimilar metals. Contact between dissimilar metals damages the passive film and encourages galvanic corrosion.
- Use brass or stainless steel screws and bolts with stainless steel handles and tracks (don't use steel or aluminum fasteners).
- Corrosion starts when oxygen is absent (anaerobic environments) and where moisture lingers, such as under bolt heads.
- Mild surface rust on stainless steel can be unsightly, but it will not cause product failure, and for most cases does not merit a warranty claim. See FFI warranties for more details.
- When installing stainless steel, it's recommended to protect it with a coating of Boeshield T-9 or lemon oil.

Stainless Steel Maintenance

- Monthly cleaning of stainless steel handles, locks and tracks is recommended for corrosion prevention.
- Clean surface debris and residue regularly using water and mild soap or vinegar and a soft cloth.
- Clean surface discoloration and rust use brass/bronze cleaning wool or a mildly abrasive green pad such as Scotch-Brite.
- Do not use bleach, chloride detergents, or other strong cleaners on stainless steel; this encourages corrosion and will void the warranty.
- Never use steel wool or steel brushes; steel and stainless steel are dissimilar metals; contact between these metals encourages corrosion.
- Never use abrasive materials which will damage the surface, cause corrosion, and void the warranty.
- Maintenance for stainless steel should include a protective coating of Boeshield T-9 or lemon oil at least annually.

Contact FFI for more information on our stainless steel products:

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