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THE ART & TECHNIQUES **OF WATER FED POLES**

Welcome to this ebook. Our aim is to give hints, tips & techniques in the use of water fed poles (wfp)

This ebook assumes you have little or no knowledge of the procedures involved, & we humbly suggest you read right through it, even if you feel “ I know this bit “ because it is full of tips & hints, anyone of which could save you the price of this book, many times over, in time money or speed. We hope it helps you.

Before we start it will help you to understand that there are two different types of glass you will come across. Hydrophilic glass & hydrophobic glass. The easiest way to explain this is, hydrophilic glass attracts water, which is to say when you pour (rinse) water down it, it covers the glass in a sheet of water. With hydrophobic glass the water runs down it in a lot of little rivers/dribbles, & **NOT** a sheet. This makes it a lot harder to see if you have rinsed it totally & you use a lot more water just to be sure. This reaction is not down to your technique it's just the type of glass.

When using wfp different methods & mindsets need to be employed. Doing a third or fourth storey window from the ground

is a lot different to up a ladder, close & personnel. The main thing to keep in mind is you will be coming in contact with the frames a lot more than with traditional methods. This cannot be helped especially when you consider you are waving a brush on a 30, 40 even 60 foot pole from ground level, hoping to clean a relatively small patch of glass. The frames are a key to doing a good job because muck & dirt can run/dribble off of them long after you have finished. This is a major cause of runs & spots & hence a poor job.

Before moving on to methods & techniques for cleaning it might be wise to cover one other topic.

CARE OF YOUR PURE WATER

When new to water fed poles any number of things can cause any number of problems. If you can say “ well I know my water is ok” that will eliminate one possible cause.

It is most important to ensure your water is as pure as possible, when it is coming out of your brush. Always keep an eye on your total dissolved solids (tds) purity of water readings. Most people buy their ro/di unit for the production of pure water. These usually come with a built in tds meter which reads the figure (parts per million,ppm) when it comes out of the reverse osmosis (ro) membrane & again after it comes out of the deionization (di) unit. You want these figures as low as possible. Most systems have a tap which allows you to back flush (clean) the ro membrane by forcing water back through it to clean it. Use this at least weekly. It usually needs only 5 or 10 minutes to do, depending on your model, but the purer the water that you then put through your deionising unit, the less work it has to do to bring the parts per million down to zero, so the longer the resin lasts.

We have found it also pays to invest in a hand held tds meter so you can check the water in your storage tank, & vehicle tank or containers. We actually let our tds figure get up to about 5 ppm before changing the di resin & have found this figure has no affect on our results. We have heard of people using even higher figures & good luck to them, but we & you should go for caution & not push our luck. If you keep water production & purity to a high standard you can eliminate water as a cause of any problems you may have.

We have also used our hand held tds meter to silence the odd cynic who thinks pure water is hoey. Simply ask the doubter to get a cup of water from his kitchen, whilst you fill a cup with pure water. Take a reading from your water & then a reading from his. The difference in figures should show him some things going on **but** then put your meter back in his water showing him the reading, then ask him to put a couple of his fingers in the water & wiggle them about. **Watch the figure shoot up & watch the look on his face.** Explain the pure water does not want to stay pure, but to return to its former impure state, hence it takes the dirt from his fingers, exactly the same as it does on the windows. If you don't believe us about this trick, try it at home on your self & see, it works.

Now we move on to actually cleaning the windows. Whether you are changing to water fed poles from traditional methods or are new to the industry, the first time you do a house or building with wfp you will have to get the windows up to a standard where wfp can be affective. This is generally known as a first clean.

FIRST CLEANS

First cleans are the key to successful water fed poles. Also they are usually the first experience of this new method for your customer, so it pays to get them right. They take considerably longer to do. Now weather you charge your customer extra for this is up to you. We have never really resolved this one, its tricky to try & charge double for the first time, with a procedure the customer has probably never had before. However we have all been caught by the people who have you once then cancel or worse still are only renting, & want to have the windows cleaned to help save their deposit, & have moved out next time you go to clean them. Care at the quotation stage saves us a lot of problems but we still get caught now & again.

When taking on a new customer & doing the 1st clean we give them a short explanatory note telling them that it may take a couple of cleans to get their windows up to standard. This we explain is because we now clean the frames as well, & have to remove soap residue from under the seals & years of baked on bird muck, dirt & pollution. This may result in the odd run or spots, but if it is excessive we say we will do the window again free of charge. These notes are more to give us a bit of leeway than anything else, but help to keep the customer happy & we have never had to go back yet.

When doing a 1st clean remember you are getting the windows & frames up to a suitable standard. Start by doing the frames only. You can do upstairs & downstairs at the same time now, rather than the entire upstairs THEN all the downstairs as on a normal clean. On a normal clean it is best to do all the upstairs first, then the lower ones because water will drip off of the window after you have finished the top ones & the longer you can leave it before you do the window below the less chance it has of dripping on it after you have finished.

First give the frame a good soaking. Then scrub the frames, start across the top of the window frame. Be very careful if there is a vent on the top, not to force water into it, because dirty water will dribble

out of it for ages. Scrub across the top of the frame, then down the sides & lastly across the bottom. Now clean the sill by changing the angle of your brush downwards. On upstairs windows you probably can't see the results of this bit so give an extra scrub for luck. Your explanatory letter will also give you a bit of leeway with most customers.

Now rinse the frames by holding the bush away from the window frame a couple of inches & directing the jets on to it. First do the top, remembering not to force water into the dreaded vents if present. Then do the sides & bottom. You don't have to worry about the sills because water running off the rest will take care of them. It is most important to really rinse the frames well, even turn your water up. Now move on to the next window & repeat.

As said you can do both up & downstairs on each side at this stage because by the time you've scrubbed all the frames any dripping will have stopped on the first ones. It saves water to fold the thin brush pipe over to stop the flow when moving between windows.

Now you have cleaned & rinsed all the frames its time to go back to the first one to clean the glass. It is safest to do all of the upstairs windows before you do the downstairs because this allows longer for drips etc to come off the upper windows. In time you will spot which types of windows you don't have to worry about drips with such as those deeply set back in the brick work or those with concrete sills but to start with play safe.

First clean the top of the glass, scrub across & back 2 or 3 times keeping your brush OFF of the frame because it is the top of the frame which tends to dribble muck onto the glass after you have gone. The easiest way to do this is to put your brush on to the middle of the glass & push it up to the top, bending the bristles back on themselves as shown below



Picture A shows the effect you are trying to achieve, because this creates a small gap between your brush & the top of the frame & stops you dragging muck off of it. In pic B the bristles can cause you to make the top wet & create potential runs etc. it is a knack to get the brush to do this but it works.

Having done the top of the glass drop down an inch or so to get clear of the frame, scrub across the glass in strip about 12 to 18 inches wide in a continuous w shape wwww remembering you want your action to bring the dirt towards the bottom of the frame. Now do another strip below, overlapping with the first one a little bit & so on until you reach the bottom. The width of the strips doesn't really matter.

Now rinse the glass. Hold the brush a couple of inches off the glass & start at the top, rinse across a couple of times being careful to avoid the top of the frame & any vents. Now zigzag down the glass covering it all, still avoiding the frame.

This is where you will see the difference between hydrophilic (sheeting) glass & hydrophobic (non sheeting) glass. With sheeting glass you can see you have rinsed it all where as non sheeting looks like lots of little dribbles, just rinse more carefully here. It also pays with non sheeting glass to rest your brush on the side of the frame & aim one jet down the edge of the glass, so you know you have rinsed

right up to the edge. Once you have rinsed well move on to the next until all upstairs is done.

Now you can do downstairs starting under the first window you did. This allows plenty of time for any dribbles & runs to have done their worst to the windows below. We tend to do downstairs with traditional methods, because it's what customers are used to & is usually just as quick especially on domestic houses. If you are going to wfp them it's the same as upstairs only easier because you are up close & personnel to the job. Infact it helps you perfect your technique to see what happens close up.

When doing first cleans it pays to have a bucket of pure water with a few drops of glass gleem 3 detergent in it, to clean the brush every now & again, especially when cleaning the frames where it can get very dirty, very quickly. The slight bubbles this creates also makes it easier to see that you have rinsed every thing well. GG3 is ok to use with wfp & is available from most suppliers, it is designed for use with soft water, which is what your pure water is. Even if you live in a hard water area the pure water you create is soft ! The use of a small amount of detergent also helps on first cleans to remove stubborn marks & stains.

ORDINARY CLEANS

With an ordinary clean it should not be necessary to clean the frames every time, just look out for bird muck etc & clean as necessary.

Clean the top of the glass first, 2 or3 scrubs across the window remembering to have bent the bristles back as shown in the picture above. Then drop down an inch or so to get clear of the frame, scrub across the glass in strip about 18 inches wide in a continuous w

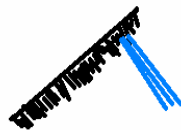
shape wwww remembering you want your action to bring the dirt towards the bottom of the frame. Now do another strip below, overlapping with the first one a little bit & so on until you reach the bottom. The width of the strips doesn't really matter, it's just what you feel comfortable with.

Now rinse the glass thoroughly. Hold the brush a couple of inches off the glass & start at the top, rinse across a couple of times being careful to avoid the top of the frame. Now zigzag down the glass covering it all.

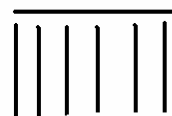
When washing & rinsing the windows there are two ways of moving the brush on the glass. One, you can make the motion with your arms & shoulders, this is fine on houses or low windows. It is not so easy on higher jobs or when you are trying to clean over a conservatory or similar.

The other method is to hold the pole comfortably & step back without moving your arms, this has the effect of moving the brush down the window, stepping forward pushes it back up again. Try this on your own house & you will see what we mean. It's a lot easier to use the stepping method on high windows, unless you want to end up looking like Arni swartzineger.

It is also easier on higher windows when rinsing to rest one corner of the brush head on the glass & rinse with one jet as shown in pic a below,



a



b

picture b shows the rinsing method first across the top then down the length of glass in strips. If you are rinsing as in pic a you start the strips on the right & work across to the left, so that you don't

rest the brush on the strip of window you have just cleaned. This method is much easier on the arms & shoulders than trying to hold the brush off the glass at height. Again it's a matter of practice

SPOTS ON THE WINDOWS

Spots left on the windows after they have dried & you have left are the curse of wfp. There are many causes for this, but as you know your water is pure it's not that. The answer is to make sure you scrub & rinse very well, then rinse again if you're not sure. Here are some of the other causes of spotting,

Rinsing....a badly rinsed window can leave spots. It will do no harm to regularly dip your brush in the gg3 & pure water bucket mentioned earlier, the suds from the scrubbing on the glass will make it easier to see you have rinsed it all, until your experience & confidence grows enough that you don't need it.

A dirty brush... see the following section on care of your brushes

Soap residue... this can be left behind from previous traditional methods. It tends to get into corners & under seals where trad methods don't get it out, but the more efficient wfp does. The answer is to really scrub the frames on first cleans, get the brush right into the corners & rinse well.

Bird muck & other stain/marks....if you don't get it all off the glass these can & will leave spots. Use the scouring pad trick explained in the general tips section coming up.

Vents.....it's the dreaded vents again. If you force water into a vent above a window it has to come back out again, bringing with it years of muck & grunge, to drip & dribble down the glass leaving spots & runs after you have gone. Take great care when cleaning them & don't squirt water into them.

Oxidized (old, tired peeling) paint....this can be a problem with wooden window frames, the paint can break down through age or wear & tear, leaving runs, spots or stains when drying after cleaning. Pure water seems to accentuate the problem. This may only happen on the odd window, north facing maybe. The answer is to test any dodgy looking wooden windows at the quote stage. Wet a finger & run it across & down the frame. If you get a white powder or film on that finger the window is going to give you problems. If it's just the odd one, clean the frame & let it dry completely before you clean the glass. On future visits don't touch the frame at all.

If it looks like most of the windows will probably do it, at the quote stage, beat a diplomatic retreat or price the job so as not to get it. These windows will be a total pain & you should soon have enough work not to need to get involved with them. The only answer we have found is to only clean the frames once, let them dry completely before you clean the glass & rinse, rinse & rinse. Avoid the frame on future visits. Even this approach is not fool proof, as said if it looks like this will be a problem avoid the job.

Old aluminium frames especially "crittle" ones.....these can cause the same problems as oxidized paint, but they can be easier to spot at the quote stage, the aluminium tends to be grey & dull. The finger test works for these as well & the action taken is the same. Newer ones don't seem to be as bad, but still be aware of it. Crittle window are the worst of the lot & as they usually have peeling paint as well, are best avoided unless you can really check them out. If in doubt with oxidized paint or aluminium windows price high, if you get the job the extra will cover the extra time involved & if you don't it is probably for the best.

As mentioned we give an explanatory note when first starting a new job, that it might take a couple of visits to get the windows up to scratch. As this is when spots are most likely to occur, it does give you a bit of leeway to start with. However it does pay to check with customers that they are happy with your job rather than count on the note as a “get out of jail free” card.

RINSING THE GLASS

This is the key to successful wfp window cleaning. To begin with use plenty of water, as you get more experienced the amount will reduce. You are better off running out of water & having to go home to refill than you are losing a customer through poor work.

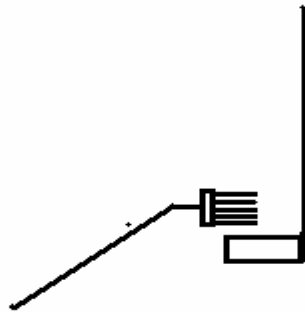
Always rinse with care, start across the top avoiding wetting the frame. Then zigzag across & down the glass. If it sheets you can see you have rinsed the whole thing very easily, but if it doesn't, take more time & water to make sure you have got it all. It can help to turn your water pressure up a bit to rinse non sheeting glass, this is where a flow control tap on the end of your hose comes in handy. Resting on side of the brush on the glass can help when rinsing higher windows as explained earlier.

There is a debate between window cleaners as to whether it is necessary to keep the brush off of the glass at all when rinsing, especially as some manufacturers claim their brushes are self cleaning. We have done many experiments on & off the glass & yes sometimes it work, sometimes it doesn't. This is a tricky decision for anyone, do you want the speed of not holding the brush off the glass, or do you want the knowledge it's definitely rinsed well. This one is down to you, experiment at home & make up your own mind.

What we do is hold it off the glass EXCEPT when doing frosted bathroom & toilet windows, because if the brush leaves the odd mark on them the customer can't see it.

WINDOW SILLS

Cleaning the window sills makes the job look finished to the customer, but can be a pain for you. The ground floor is easy, just carry an old cloth & give them a quick wipe over, because these are the ones the customer is likely to spot if they haven't been done. Higher up they can be a bit harder but they come under less scrutiny than downstairs. At the end of each side of the building we just nip back & rub the bottom side of the brush along the sills. This gets the muck off & doesn't cover the main working face of the brush in dirt (see pic below.) We don't worry about rinsing them. You can however turn off your water & dry wipe them just to get off excess water & reduce drips



CARE OF YOUR BRUSHES

Just as it is good to know your water is pure, it also pays to know your brush is up together.

Firstly stand the brush head in a bucket of pure water with a few drops of gg3 in it over the weekend. Doing it overnight as well does no harm if you can. The gg3 helps to loosen any ingrained dirt. Give

the brush a good shake about in the water & again out of it before you take it on to work. Do not take the brush out & let it dry out still resting on its head. This will cause the bristles to dry bent & they can be a right *** to get straight again. Also you just get the head dirty again

Carry the bucket with fresh pure water & gg3 in it in your vehicle to clean the brush at the start of each new job. The bubbles from the gg3 will disappear on the first or second window & do no harm as explained earlier.

But do you want a bucket of water splashing about in the back of your van, no. What we have done is take an old bucket we used to use with the applicator when doing windows traditionally & put a wooden lid on it. These buckets are long & thin hence perfect for cleaning brushes in.

Next every month or so give your pole a service. Clean & adjust the clamps. Then spray & polish the pole itself with a silicon lubricant as this cleans & eases sliding the pole up & down. Silicon lubricant is available from hardware type shops, but obviously avoid getting it on the brush head itself.

When transporting your poles it is not necessary to do the clamps up, this just wears them out quicker, they are just made of plastic. This is especially true if you use pole carriers on your roof rack, where can it go if the clamps are undone ?

Now we come to the section of the book that doesn't fit a clear bit so we are listing them under various general tips

GENERAL TIPS

☆ Buy a good strong notebook (preferably waterproof !)
Divide it into four sections. Keep ¼ for general notes & divide the rest by the number of weeks in your round. Now you can keep tabs on all those details, for example. No 42 xzy street, study window leaks, etc etc. we find a quick look each day is all you need, & it helps for any customer changes. It also looks better to the customer than the back of a cigarette packet.

☆ Buy a good pair of sunglasses. That might sound a bit odd
But its VERY easy to damage your sight when you look up to check the window you are doing & find you are staring straight into the sun. They also help to take some of the glare & dazzle off of the windows in the summer.

☆ use hand cream to protect them. Pure water can suck the the moisture out of your hands & it can be painful once it starts to crack your skin, so don't let it start.

SAFETY

☆ The hosepipe that connects from the tank in your vehicle to Hose reel you use. Make it long enough that you don't have to have the reel on a public pavement etc where some one could trip & sue you. If you just have the pipe on the pavement it's easy to put a mat over it or a sign. Also have a "stop the water type" hoselock connection on it so you can reel & unreel the hose out of people's way & connect it up at the last minute.

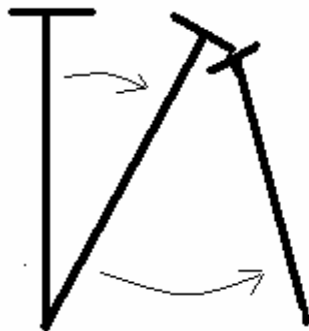
☆ Do not wfp the front door. This is for the obvious reason that you don't want the main entrance swimming in water, especially in the winter when it's likely to freeze.

☆ Be careful & aware when raising & lowering your pole. It is

very easy to catch a tree branch or washing line, but not so funny when it's the 240 volt mains or you've just broke the telephone line. Avoid slinging the pole over your shoulder and moving on; you might get around the corner but its amazing what damage the other end can do.

Take care when moving between windows especially at height because the pole can quickly get out of your control.

A good method to move the brush at height is to TURN THE BRUSH AROUND so the bristles don't get dirty & lean it on the wall. With the base on the ground & lean the pole in the direction you want to go, put the back of the brush back against the wall & move the bottom of the pole under the brush & repeat until you reach the next window. I think this picture should explain that better.



Try to never leave your pole unattended especially when it's up in the air. Also watch yourself, it's all too easy to step back into a pond etc etc when you are concentrating on the top of it.

MORE GENERAL TIPS

☆ Start work at the furthest point from your vehicle, unreel the hose to there & work back. It is much easier this way round than trying to drag more hose off the reel to reach the next window when every thing is connected up.

☆ When reeling the hose back in at the end of a job, as you turn the handle use your other hand to load the hose on the drum, so you can fit it all back on. Also hold the hose in an old rag as you do it, because your hands get filthy & can be cut by grit & crud picked up by the hose but mainly its dog doings to watch out for !

☆ When cleaning over a conservatory or flat roof throw an old cloth over the point you rest your pole on. Not only does this protect your pole from rough edges, it also protects the edges from you. The cloth you clean the downstairs sills with will do

☆ Attach a kitchen scouring pad to one edge of your brush, as shown in the picture below, so that when you come across that stubborn stain or bird muck that just won't shift, here's what to do, turn off your water & scrub it off. Use the non scratch type of pad. The screws holding it on to the brush are in little brass cups available from any hardware store, to protect the glass.



☆ Never lean your brush face on the wall or ground, its

amazingly easy to pickup grit & muck. Brick or cement dust can easily scratch glass.

☆ Remember the finger test when quoting wooden or aluminium windows. It is easier to back out of a job at the quote stage, than after you have cleaned a few window frames on the 1st clean & have discovered the problem from the mess you've made.

☆ Don't be afraid to ask that you (or the customer) view the finished job from the inside, because you can see a lot more problems from there. It also shows the customer you care about the quality of your work.

☆ If asked to clean the inside of the windows as well do the outside first. This is because it's easier to get all the marks off of the inside if you know the outside is clean, so the mark must be on the inside. You can also check the quality of your outside Work as you do inside, & correct any missed bits before you leave. Obviously you will have to do the inside with traditional methods but you can still use pure water & gg3.

☆ **DON'T WASTE WATER & PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE**

You can use your own house to practice on time & time again. Once the windows are dry & hopefully spotless you can do them again & any marks spots or runs you create this time will show up on the previously clean windows. Check them from inside to see what the customer would see. Also use friends, relatives & neighbours as well. Get as much practice as possible before you

take on the paying public, & no one minds you cleaning their windows for free.

Lastly we come to spares. It can be extremely frustrating to lose hours of work for want of a few spares. This is the list we carry & it might seem a lot but they literally fit in a box the size of a shoebox.

SPARES TO CARRY

- Hoselock connectors (or which ever type you use)
- Jubilee clips (or which ever type you use for your pump connections)
- Plumbers tape for leaks
- Fuses for your battery/pump connection
- Spanner/screwdrivers for your pump box, trolley, jubilee clips etc
- Socket to remove a blocked jet
- Stiff wire to unblock jet
- Small container of gg3 (its too easy to leave at home)

Well, thank you for buying & reading this ebook & we hope it has been of use to you. We wish you good luck with your wfp window cleaning career.

Should you wish to contact us please email

wfpc2006@hotmail.co.uk

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