

# SuperyachtNews

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## Maintaining grey and white caulking on deck

How should after-care and maintenance procedures be adapted for the nuances of light-coloured caulking?



A recent SuperyachtNews.com article discussed the rise in popularity of grey and white caulking on superyachts over the more traditional black caulking. Speaking to teak deck specialists, it was acknowledged that lighter-coloured caulking can create a more modern-looking superyacht deck, but the qualities necessitate that more attention should be paid to the installation and maintenance processes. Since the article was published, Teakdecking Systems (TDS) has been in touch to outline the after-care guidelines that should be followed when it comes to white and grey caulking.

While TDS's SIS 440 Teak Deck Caulking products in white and grey offer the same performance results as black caulk, the different pigmentation formulas make it necessary to adapt procedures for application, cure time, sanding and general maintenance. The lighter-coloured caulks are essentially not as "forgiving" as black caulk and, therefore, subject to environmental staining and possible discolouration. The following suggestions for the after-care of TDS's lighter-coloured products are worth noting to prolong the fresh look of the deck.

### Maintenance

Light-coloured deck caulking is like other light-coloured accessories such as boat cushions and upholstery: dirt and contaminants will show more and require more maintenance. Caulk is a flexible material, so seams may raise and lower depending upon the moisture content of the teak. If seams remain high (relative to deck surface level) for more than six months, it may be necessary to sand or cut the seams to plank level. Walking on high seams creates pressure and may cause damage to seams. Annual sanding of decks is recommended for routine maintenance.

## Cleaning

Teak releases oil naturally and this oil will discolour caulk, showing more on white and grey caulk. This teak oil is most prominent on new decks and will diminish as the teak ages. Other oils, sealers, and coatings are likely to show more against light-coloured caulk too. Dirt, soot, or oily stains left on a deck for extended periods of time may leach into the caulking and cause staining and discolouration. Furthermore, it is worth noting that varnish will not properly adhere to any SIS 440 Teak Deck Caulking.

For normal cleaning, TDS suggests using TDS ECO-100 (Powder) and ECO-300 (Liquid) Teak Cleaners, designed to be used as often as desired. They are both US Clean Marina and MARPOL compliant for safe discharge into waterways or marinas. When possible, use these cleaners with medium grit scrubbing pads, for example Scotchbrite-type medium grit, as these are very effective and will help to smooth the deck. Problematic stains such as diesel, wine, fish blood, etc., must be cleaned immediately with the aforementioned products or, if this is not possible, spot cleaners such as K2R Marine Cleaner can also be effective.

For stubborn stains, TDS suggests that a light sanding of the seam with 80 grit sandpaper may remove stain(s). For best results, finish the seam with 100 or 120 grit sandpaper to ensure a smoother finish on the caulk surface.

## Repair

For particularly stubborn stains that cannot be removed, or if the caulk is gouged or damaged, it is easy to make a repair. TDS advises to cut out a small amount of caulk in a 'V' shape, wipe with a clean lint-free rag soaked in acetone and then tape and re-caulk the area with SIS 440 Teak Deck Caulking. It will strongly adhere to the old caulking, making it impossible to separate the old and new caulk areas once cured. To help blend the colour, the repaired area can be lightly sanded after curing or simply wait. With time, repairs will be almost impossible to see.