

WINDOW MULLIONS REQUIRE MAINTENANCE TO RETAIN THEIR LUSTER AND COLOR

Most people realize that window glass needs to be washed regularly to maintain cleanliness as well as restore its luster and optical clarity, but what many people don't often consider is that the mullions—the metal that makes up the window frame—also need periodic attention. Just like the metal on an automobile, the metal frame of a window will fade and corrode if it is not maintained properly.



Valcourt recently completed mullion cleaning and coating for the Sheraton Eatontown Hotel in New Jersey, which returned luster and color to its mullions.

Although window washers wipe down the mullions to remove surface dirt when they are on a building, the outside contaminants that can cause stains on glass such as ultraviolet light, acid rain, air pollution, precast runoff, and even water from sprinklers can also cause window mullions to oxidize and corrode. Without more comprehensive care over time the mullions will lose color and sheen and, even worse, will degrade to a point where their protective layer fails and the metal starts pitting. At this point the repair options are very expensive and include total replacement—a much more costly alternative than periodic cleaning and coating. Regular maintenance every few years can greatly extend the life span of window mullions and prevent the need for replacement.

In general, the time span for maintenance of mullions differs significantly depending on a building's location. Ray Fahmy, General Manager of Valcourt's New Jersey Window Cleaning Branch, points out that buildings near a body of water (especially sea water), in direct sunlight, in an area where there is heavy traffic (a source of carbon fumes), or where there are other airborne pollutants are especially vulnerable and need more frequent attention. He adds that buildings in heavily congested urban areas tend to become more soiled than those in less densely populated suburban

areas. In addition, says Ray, a building's elevation can have an effect on the soiling and deterioration of window mullions.

Recently, Valcourt's New Jersey Window Cleaning Branch was selected to wash the windows and also clean and coat the mullions of the Sheraton Hotel in Eatontown, New Jersey. This Starwood property, built in the early 1990s, was undergoing a major renovation of both its interior and exterior. Mullions on the 1,250 windows of the six-story hotel were discolored and corroded from years of neglect. In addition, work done during this façade facelift had left the mullions covered with a heavy film of dirt.

According to Ray, Valcourt first provided Sheraton's building management with a sample test of the process they would use on the mullions. Property management was very pleased with the results, so Valcourt's crew then proceeded to deep clean the mullions and apply a clear sealant. Sheraton Eatontown's Chief Engineer, Ray Bricker, was quite pleased with the procedure and the final results. "The quality of the completed mullions and window cleaning was very good and was what we had hoped for when we contracted with Valcourt," he says. **"Valcourt worked in a totally safe and OSHA-compliant manner, and the scope of work remained consistent, which kept our budget in line."** He notes that he was also "very pleased with the professionalism of Valcourt; both the service managers and crewmen were very courteous to our guests and staff."



Ray Fahmy advises property managers to look at their window mullions and see how they have worn over the years, because it may be time to clean and seal them to avoid more costly restoration or replacement. "There's a substantial improvement in curb appeal when both the windows and mullions are clean, and maintaining the mullions is certainly a lot less expensive than replacing them."