

Understanding Rust & Corrosion on COLORBOND® Steel Pool Surfaces

COLORBOND® Steel is built for durability, but exposure to moisture, salt, pool chemicals or coating damage can lead to corrosion. Regular care and early treatment help maintain its appearance and performance.

Why can COLORBOND® steel develop problems?

COLORBOND® steel is designed for long-term durability in Australian conditions and uses multiple layers of corrosion protection, including a metallic coating, pretreatment, primer and a baked-on exterior paint finish.

Like all coated steel products, however, it is corrosion resistant rather than corrosion proof. Its long-term performance is influenced by the environment, maintenance and condition of the protective coating.

The presence of surface rust does not necessarily indicate a manufacturing or structural defect. Corrosion can develop where moisture, salts, pool chemicals or contaminants remain against the surface, or where the protective coating has been damaged.

Common Causes

Prolonged Moisture

The horizontal middle overlap seam, around the rivets and the lower few corrugations of a pool can be particularly susceptible to corrosion because moisture may remain in this area for extended periods. Rain, pool splash-out, condensation, irrigation, and poor drainage can all contribute.

Salt & Coastal Exposure

Airborne salt in coastal environments and saltwater pool splash-out can accumulate on external surfaces. When salt remains on coated steel for long periods of time, and particularly in damp or sheltered areas, it can accelerate corrosion.

Pool Chemicals

Chlorine, salt, acids and other pool chemicals can affect protective coatings when concentrated residues are repeatedly deposited or allowed to remain on the surface. Chemical spills and splash-out should be rinsed away with fresh water.

Ground Contact & Landscaping

Soil, mulch, leaves, grass clippings and other materials can trap moisture against the bottom of the pool. Avoid building landscaping materials against the shell and ensure surrounding areas drain away from the pool.

Scratches & Coating Damage

Deep scratches, chips and abrasions can compromise the protective coating and expose the underlying steel. Damage should be addressed promptly before corrosion develops.

Identifying Surface Corrosion

Regularly inspect the exterior of the pool (at least monthly), particularly the lower edge, sheltered areas and locations exposed to regular splash-out.

Look for:

- Reddish-brown spots or staining
- Bubbling, blistering or lifting paint
- Scratches or chips in the coating
- Corrosion concentrated around the lower edge
- Persistent discolouration in damp areas

Surface vs Structural Corrosion

The appearance of rust does not automatically mean that the pool shell has structurally failed.

Corrosion often begins locally at the surface following environmental exposure or damage to the protective coating. When identified early, affected areas can generally be treated and recoated before the corrosion progresses.

Extensive corrosion, perforation or significant deterioration of the steel should be referred to Outback for assessment.

Preventative Measures

Keep the Base Clean & Dry

Remove leaves, soil, mulch and other debris from around the pool. Maintain adequate drainage and avoid allowing landscaping materials to remain against the shell.

Rinse Salt & Chemical Residues

Regularly rinse the exterior with clean fresh water where it is exposed to saltwater splash, pool chemicals or coastal salt deposits. Pay particular attention to sheltered areas that are not naturally washed by rain.

Clean Gently

Use clean water, mild detergent and a soft cloth or soft-bristled brush. Do not use steel wool, metal brushes, abrasive cleaners or tools that could damage the coating.

Inspect Regularly

Check for scratches, coating damage, rust spots and areas where moisture or contaminants regularly accumulate. Early attention can prevent more extensive corrosion.

Remedial Actions

Treat corrosion promptly rather than simply painting over it. Active rust beneath a new coating can continue to develop and cause premature coating failure.

Remove loose rust, flaking coating and contamination, preparing the affected area back to clean, sound material.

Small Chips & Scratches:

Use a colour-matched touch-up paint or paint pen to seal and protect the exposed surface.

Larger Areas:

Treat exposed steel with a suitable corrosion-inhibiting primer compatible with pre-painted steel, followed by an appropriate exterior-grade, colour-matched topcoat.

Speak with your local hardware or paint supplier for suitable products available in your area.