

Ask the Experts

What's the best way to clean aluminium before welding? Frank Armao



Frank Armao

Within the walls of The Lincoln Electric Company are some of the brightest minds in welding, but we wouldn't be The Welding Experts® if it weren't for the expertise of our customers. Learn with us from questions submitted by real customers and answered by the real experts.

Preweld cleaning requires two operations: oil/grease removal and oxide removal.

Take the following steps before welding aluminium:

1. Remove oil, grease, and water vapour using an organic solvent such as acetone or a mild alkaline solution like a strong soap. You may also use citrus-based degreasers, but be sure to rinse and dry the part before welding.
2. Remove surface oxides with a stainless steel wire brush (used only for aluminium) or strong alkaline or acid. Many welding suppliers sell oxide-removal solutions in spray or squeeze bottles for local application. Exercise extreme care when handling these solutions, and again, rinse and dry the part before welding.
3. Assemble the joint. If it won't be welded immediately, cover the joint with brown kraft paper to prevent dirt and grit in the air from getting into the joint.
4. Keep the aluminium dry and at room temperature.
5. Weld within a few days. Clean the joint again if it isn't welded within that time.

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