**6 Tips For Preventing Rust**

Rust is the name for the orange-brown flakes of iron oxide that form on the surface of any metal containing iron that is exposed to air and water. The rusting process begins when iron reacts with oxygen in the presence of water, saltwater, acids, or other harsh chemicals. Eventually, large areas of rust form that may cause the entire metal structure to disintegrate.

A ferrous metal is one that contains iron and only iron can rust.

**Keep It Clean and Dry**

Water is enemy number one when it comes to rust, because it’s the oxygen in water molecules that combines with iron to form iron oxide. If the object is located in a humid indoors environment, such as a garage or basement, install a dehumidifier. Any type of mud or dirt adhered to the surface can hold water, so it’s important to keep metals clean.

**Prevent Scratches**

Scratches or cracks in the metal expose more metal and hold water, allowing it to remain in contact with the iron.

**Apply A Protective Coating**

Dipping metal objects, such as clocks, into a bluing solution of water, sodium hydroxide, and potassium nitrate, provides strong corrosion resistance.

**Use Stainless Steel**

Stainless steel alloys contain iron, but it resists rust because it also contains a high percentage of chromium which is even more reactive than iron. The chromium in the alloy oxidizes quickly to form a protective layer of chromium oxide on the metal surface which prevents oxygen from reaching the underlying steel.

**Use Galvanized Metal**

Galvanization is a process used to preserve steel rust-free for many years. In the galvanizing process, a piece of steel is coated with liquid zinc.

**Regular Maintenance**

Because rust spreads quickly, it’s important to scrape it off as soon as it appears. Then, scrub with warm water and soap and apply a metal conditioner or other protective coating to prevent further oxidation.