

Tidy Car replies to car care questions

Tidy Car was one of the first automotive aftermarket companies to recognize the need for more effective methods of prolonging the useable life of the family car through appearance and protection treatments. Instead of marketing and manufacturing products through traditional retail channels, we realized that car protection was a service, not a product business, that would best be performed by a trained network of independent businesspeople - people who would take pride in their work and an interest in their communities. Indeed, they would "live" with their performance promises and stand behind their professional workmanship and warranties. Today, a network of franchised dealers throughout the world have treated more than one million vehicles with important appearance and protection services. Tidy Car Inc. maintains its own chemists, research and development and manufacturing facilities - one of the few such companies to do so. Our processes are marketed only through qualified franchised dealers, and the information contained in this pamphlet is a result of the experience of Tidy Car dealers around the world and from technical personnel in our R and D Center.

Q: How can appearance protection services enhance/improve the value of my automobile?

A: According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, the average age of the cars on the road in 1982 was 8 1/2 years. It is projected that by the end of this decade, 20 per cent of the cars on the road will be over 10 years old. The fact is that with the high replacement cost of today's new car, more and more people will be driving their vehicles longer.

A consumer who elects to own a medium-priced car for 10 years will save approximately \$17,000 (compared to the cost of replacing a car every 3 years). However, this means that it is extremely important to take a few extra steps to ensure that the car's appearance is maintained in addition to the mechanical maintenance required to keep a car in proper care and condition.

A car which is subjected to rust-producing elements not only loses most of its value at resale or trade-in time, it is actually unsafe - unless the vehicle is protected against rust before it's too late.

In addition to its cosmetic value, auto paint seals and protects the metal from rust or oxidation. However, paint itself is subject to oxidation and deterioration and, if left unprotected, will degrade and fade over a period of time. A professionally applied paint sealant maintenance program can prolong the life and shine of the paint, thereby retaining the new-car look and value.

More and more, fine fabrics are being utilized in new-car interiors. A fabric interior can be easily soiled and permanently stained if it is left unprotected. Soiled and stained interior upholstery and/or carpeting will reduce the resale or trade-in value tremendously; replacing these expensive fabrics can be even more costly. In addition to the added pleasure of driving in a spotlessly clean auto interior, it pays to keep it that way - and to ensure against permanent stain damage with a professional fabric stainproofing system.

Vinyl roofs and leather interiors require professional care as well. If the vinyl or leather is to stay looking clean and new, professional vinyl and leather treatments are available to keep these materials clean, bright and new-looking.

Evidence of the importance of maintaining the appearance of one's automobile is contained in the Official Black Book, a guide which is produced 24 times per year for use

by car dealers and financial institutions in determining the value of used cars. The difference between a vehicle in "Average" condition and one in "Excellent Clean" condition can be as much as several thousand dollars in resale or trade-in value on the identical year, make and model of car!

Q: Don't most new cars come with rust-perforation warranties today?

A: Many automobile manufacturers offer limited rust-perforation warranties extending for up to five years for new car buyers. However, due to assembly-line techniques, protected sections of the vehicle are often limited to only the most vulnerable areas of the car and often overlook critical areas in and around the engine compartment, trunk and inside fender wells and less accessible areas such as dog legs, door posts and inside the doors themselves.

Q: I have a used car that's never been rustproofed. Isn't it too late to do anything about protecting it against rust now?

A: Probably not. A rustprotection system is available which utilizes a penetrating chemical to seek out and neutralize existing rust prior to application of the rustproofing sealant material. Depending on the extent of existing rust damage, it may even be possible to obtain an insured warranty on rust protection for your used vehicle. However, warranted or not, buying a good rust protection system can slow down future rust degradation, alleviating further deterioration, depreciation and the chance of a very unsafe vehicle.

Q: How can rust make the car unsafe?

A: Today's cars are constructed with unitized bodies, whereby components are welded to each other, not to a central body frame as they were previously. Corrosion of a unitized body can seriously jeopardize the structural integrity of the body meaning its overall strength is diminished as rust and corrosion deteriorate the metal. As a result, in the event of even a minor collision, the car's ability to protect its passengers is greatly reduced.

Q: What should I be aware of in the warranty's "fine print"?

A: Some rustproofing warranties offer only to refund the purchase price of the original application in the event of a claim. However, if the claim involves several hundred dollars in rust damage, it is unlikely that a rebate on the original cost of the rustproofing will cover the cost of repair. Look for a warranty that offers to repair or replace the damaged sections of the automobile that are covered under the warranty.

Most rustproofing companies ask you to return for periodic inspections in order to validate the warranty. This is not unreasonable since they are interested in detecting any potential rusting before it becomes too serious to correct. Furthermore, if they are legitimately offering to repair or replace rust-damaged parts in accordance with their warranty, it stands to reason they deserve the right to limit their liabilities as much as possible. However, you should check to see if there is "an inspection fee" and, if so, what the fee is.

If you are rustproofing a used car, certain areas of the vehicle may be excluded from the warranty due to the extent of existing rust in those areas. Your warranty should clearly spell out in advance what those excluded areas are.

Q: What's the difference between "rustproofing" and "undercoating"?

A: Some parts of the continent are not considered critical rust zones. In states or provinces void of snow and ice in the winter, damaging road salt does not create a problem (provided you do not drive during the winter in parts of the country which employ road salt). Coastal areas of the country can be critical rust zones due to the corrosive salt air and in these regions of the country it is important to rust protect vehicles. However, someone living in west Texas, for example, will not have to worry about rust corrosion like someone in Houston, Texas just a few hundred miles away!

Unlike rustproofing, which is designed to protect the metal parts of the car from the windowline down, "undercoating" is a protective spray that is applied strictly to the vehicle's undercarriage. In those regions of the country where rust deterioration is not a serious problem, it is a good idea to apply a type of undercoating which will retard undercarriage rust damage caused by simple exposure to mud puddles or rainwater. Some undercoatings double as sound deadeners to reduce ambient road noise - an important consideration in compact automobiles which have a tendency to give a much noisier ride than a luxury automobile.

Some "sound-deadening" or "noise-reducing" undercoating systems claim to reduce ambient road noise by over 75 per cent! For this reason, many people choose to buy the sound-reducing undercoating process in conjunction with the rustproofing application - normally for only a few dollars more than the cost of the rustproofing alone.

Most rustproofing companies re-

quire that the warranty be registered with the parent company in order for the terms of the warranty to be validated and backed by the parent or franchisor. This is particularly important if the warranty is protected by an independent insurance company. In this event, you will likely receive an official warranty in the mail within a few weeks after the car has been treated. Be sure that the piece of paper you receive at the time of the job being performed is not passed off as your official warranty if it is simply an application for a warranty. The Warranty Application will usually call your attention to the fact that the parent or franchisor will issue the official warranty within a few weeks, once the registration is received by the parent company or the franchisor's headquarters.

Q: What can I do to protect and preserve my vehicle's exterior finish?

A: In addition to regular car washings, the paint and chrome surfaces should be periodically "deoxidized" to remove oxidation and pollution which are constantly attacking your car's exterior finish. Regular polishing or waxing every couple of months will help lay a protective barrier over the paint and chrome surfaces. In other words, you should be prepared to invest several hours of your time every two

or three months if you are going to attempt to maintain your car's paint and chrome surfaces in a like-new condition for a period of years.

If you do not have the time or inclination to spend a lot of time and effort maintaining your car's exterior finish as described above, you do owe it to yourself to have your car maintained by a professional appearance maintenance service. In the long run, the small additional investment you make in periodic exterior maintenance of your automobile will pay long-term dividends.

Q: What about these "never-wax-again" paint sealant products and processes?

A: Claims that sound "too good to be true" usually are! In particular, beware of do-it-yourself "wonder products". Unlike conventional waxing and polishing, a good paint sealant application is best left to a professional.

The most reliable paint sealant treatment generally requires more time and effort to prepare the paint for the application of the sealant than to actually apply and buff out the sealant product itself.



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