

Economic Need for Cosmetic Car Care

The automobile is one of the consumer's biggest investments, next to their home. Today's troubled economic times are requiring consumers to keep their vehicles longer and take better care of them. Part of that maintenance must be cosmetic car care because that is one of the key factors in a vehicle's resale value and appearance. The National Auto Dealers Association (NADA) reports that a cosmetically maintained (detailed) vehicle brings over \$500 more on the sales price.

Today's clear-coat paint finishes are unique and

require special care and protection from insect residue, bird-droppings, leaves, road tar, salt air and acid rain; that is why a motorist must remove these elements from their vehicle finish immediately. You must also regularly wash the vehicle (at least twice a month or more in salt-areas) and should apply a coat of wax or paint sealant at least two to three times a year to provide maximum paint protection.

The interior is also an area that is often neglected. The concentration of dirt and grit in

carpets will prematurely wear out carpet fibers, and if stains from coffee, tea, soft drinks, etc. are not immediately removed they can cause irreparable damage.

The special leathers used in today's vehicles also require special care, not only in cleaning but also conditioning to keep them from prematurely cracking and wearing.

It is necessary for the consumer to better understand the kind of cosmetic car care their vehicle requires, whether they educate themselves or have it done by a detailer.

All About Clear Coats

A clear coat is the top coat of a paint that contains no pigmentation or color. In a typical automotive paint surface, there is a primer coat which is what is sprayed on the metal or plastic body surface, a base coat, which contains the color and a clear coat. A clear coat's purpose is to provide depth and gloss to the finish and to protect the base coat from the elements, including the harmful UV (Ultra-violet) rays of the sun.

Clear coats require special consideration. Because they are clear, scratches and swirls tend to become more prominent since the clear characteristic causes such defects to be magnified. For this reason, avoiding scratches and swirls is critical if you want your clear coated surface to look good.

Most detailing products available today are clear coat safe and are so labeled. This generally

means that they are non-abrasive or minimally abrasive.

The protection provided by a clear coat will not prevent oxidation but it does help the situation considerably. The clear coat itself can lose its oils which makes it vulnerable to oxidation, the surface dull.

Although a clear coat's protective properties make modern paint jobs last longer, they still have

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to be maintained with oils (applies as part of a polish job) and a protective wax. Unmaintained, a clear coat can disappear, leaving the base coat exposed to the elements something that it was not designed for. If your clear coat is gone, a new paint job is required.
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