



Polishing of Refinish Topcoats

Polishing a paint finish to remove defects is a normal and necessary operation for both OEM manufacturers and collision repair shops. OEM factories reduce the need to polish because they work with clean body shells in dedicated, highly specialized paint facilities with advanced air filtration systems and robotic application processes. Collision Repair Shops are not able to duplicate the application and dirt isolation processes used by the OEMs, and therefore are faced with the inevitable need to remove dust and dirt particles from the finish before the vehicle is delivered to the owner. Collision Industry suppliers and repair technicians have developed excellent polishing techniques that remove dirt and other surface imperfections, enabling the vehicle to be restored to pre-accident condition. The following process describes some finer points regarding polishing a vehicle.

Before You Start

Be certain the surface is clean and dust free. Any dirt will create scratches in the finish that will be very difficult to repair.

Optimum Times

Refer to the applicable Product Data Sheet for optimum times to polish the finish. The times range from immediately after cool down to 72 hours after the bake cycle.

Sanding

Use 1500 grit or finer to remove imperfections.

Compounding

Use finishing compound. Apply a thin ribbon of material to the area to be polished. Use a double-sided wool polishing pad. Maintain air polisher or variable speed buffer at 1200-1800 rpm. Remove excess finishing compound with a clean soft cloth prior to applying finishing polish.

Polishing

Use finishing polish (shake well before using). Apply a ribbon of material to work a 2 – 3 foot square area. Use a foam pad or a terry cloth cover. Maintain a variable speed buffer or an orbital polisher at 1200 – 1500 rpm. Keep the polisher/buffer moving at all times. Overlap each pass approximately 50%. As finishing polish begins to dry, stop polishing. Wipe off excess finishing polish with a clean soft cloth. Hand buff with a clean soft cloth as a finishing touch.

Tips for Success

- Always use clean water to wet sand and add a few drops of soap to help reduce clogging of the paper.
- Always use a foam interface pad when DA sanding.
- Do not use medium to heavy-duty compounds.
- Use clean cloths and pads to insure that the clear or topcoat does not get scratched with dirt particles from old or re-used cloths or pads.
- Do not wax for the first 120 days after painting.

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