

# Plastic and Tire Surface Care

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Featured Products:

## **Vinyl-Rubber Care and Protectant Cockpit Premium**

In automotive surface care, there are three main surface types. One of them is paint. We learned about paint care in the "**Keep It Clean**" articles "**The Benefits of Car Polish**" and "**Car Wax: Protecting Your Car's Paint Finish**". The other surfaces, and the ones we will address in this article, are those made of plastic and rubber. Go to any auto parts store and you'll find a large selection of products made for the dashboard, exterior plastic trim and tires. Unfortunately, many of these products are made to enhance the appearance of these components rather than maintain and protect them.

## **High Shine Equals Short Life**

While the trend for high shine dressings is on the decline due to both a change in trends and new environmental regulations concerning how plastic and rubber treatments are formulated, there are still products on the market that offer the high shine look without doing much other than that.

To achieve this high shine look, car care companies formulate their dressings with petroleum-based ingredients that have the consistency of baby oil. They offer a high shine finish but are greasy and goopy. They also happen to be dirt and dust magnets. But worst of all, they can harm the surfaces they are applied on.

Everyone knows the infamous cracking dashboard story. If you're not familiar with it, the story is about a well known dash and tire dressing product that users have blamed for the cracking of their dashboards after years of use. Unfortunately, this story is not a myth. Not only was the issue prevalent and the subject of news stories, but the problem also existed with tires cracking, which of course is far more dangerous. Tire installers who inspect a failed tire will glide their finger across the surface of the failed tire to see if any greasy residue is picked up alerting them to the use of a petroleum-based tire dressing.

While the company that produced this product and other companies that produced similar products have

since reformulated their dressings and therefore the issue is not as prevalent, the concern has managed to linger in the car world and still rouses concern with customers. Let's discuss why this issue happened in the first place.

Not too long ago, you'd be hard pressed to find a tire dressing or dashboard treatment that was water-based like **einszett Vinyl-Rubber Care and Protectant** since most products were petroleum-based. They offered a high glare shine that provided the 'wet look' customers wanted on their dashboard and tires. That's where the problem lies.

When applied on plastic or rubber surfaces, petroleum breaks down the flex agents in the material weakening them over time and reducing their ability to flex. Simply put, it dries out the surface allowing it to become brittle and prone to cracking.

For years and even until today, many blamed the issue on silicone used in the products to increase the shine and water-resistance. But, silicone was never the issue. Silicone is a harmless raw material that adds shine, weather resistance and when used in polishes and waxes, it makes the product easier to apply and buff off.

Silicone became the scapegoat while petroleum continued to cause harm. As the issue became pervasive and customers avoided tire dressings and dashboard treatments made from petroleum, the issue became less of an issue. They soon sought water-based treatments. The irony is, water-based products like einszett Vinyl-Rubber Care actually condition and treat the surface (not just dress it up) and last longer than their petroleum-based counterparts. However, the transition was slow going in North America because water-based products don't provide a high shine finish like the petroleum-based products. In Europe, the wet look never became trendy like it did in North America. Instead, Europeans opted for a low-shine, natural looking finish. It was only in the early 2000s when North Americans began to take on this trend. Good timing too because the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began restricting VOC's (Volatile Organic Compounds) in consumer products. Classified as a VOC, petroleum distillates got the axe and as a result, many companies switched their products from petroleum-based to water-based. Still, many products out their continue to use petroleum.

## **Plastic and Vinyl**

Car makers created car components made of plastic to withstand stresses of the surrounding environment such as extreme heat and cold. For example, the dashboard was designed to withstand high temperatures when sitting in direct sunlight in the summer.

In order to accomplish this, manufacturers incorporate flex agents into the components. These flex agents are usually non-organic oils that allow the plastic or the vinyl to flex, therefore, preventing drying and cracking.

However, this does not mean that plastic and vinyl doesn't have to be treated. Over time, components can dry and become brittle even if a petroleum-based dressing hasn't been used to treat them. Temperature and UV rays are enough to dry the surfaces and shorten their life. Often you will see the color of unpainted plastic exterior trim white instead of black.

## Treating Exterior Plastic Surfaces

To restore the plastic to its original condition, apply einzett Vinyl-Rubber Care on a regular basis until the original color is restored. This generally takes a few applications. Over time, you will need to apply less often as Vinyl-Rubber Care restores the plastic to its original condition and seals the finish.

What sets Vinyl-Rubber Care apart from other water-based brands is its patented weather-resistant finish that allows the UV blockers and conditioners to remain in the surface instead of washing away during a car wash or rain storm. It also doesn't attract road grime and dust. Since it can withstand the elements longer, it's able to protect the surface longer. As you use Vinyl-Rubber Care, you will need to use the product less frequently since it penetrates deep into the surface treating the components from the inside instead of merely dressing them.

## Treating Interior Plastic Surfaces

Today's interior surfaces benefit from the latest in automotive glass that filters out the majority of harmful UV (Ultra Violet) rays. UV causes surfaces to age quickly and to lose their color. While UV rays have been significantly reduced, the interior is still prone to fading due to heat. einzett created **Cockpit Premium** specifically to address all interior surfaces. It cleans all clear and colored plastic interior surfaces such as the dashboard, arm rests, audio/navigation screens, shift knob, steering wheel, gauge cluster and pedals while protecting them from the fading effect of heat. It goes on easily and leaves a no-shine finish.

## Convertible and Boat Interiors

When treating open air interiors such as convertibles and boats that are exposed to UV, we suggest you occasionally apply Vinyl-Rubber Care which contains strong UV blockers. Apply only on dashboard and

armrests and avoid spraying on seats and control surfaces such as the steering wheel, shift knob and pedals due to the slippery characteristic of silicone in the product. While silicone makes the surface water-resistant, which is ideal for carwashes and rain, it makes the surface slippery and therefore potentially dangerous when applied on control surfaces.

## Treating Tires

Vinyl-Rubber Care treats tires in much the same way as plastic. Like plastic, rubber is sensitive to petroleum-based dressings. They can dry and become brittle.

Rubber in its natural form is susceptible to the harsh effects of Ultraviolet (UV) light and ozone. These two elements cause rubber to rot. In order to combat this natural effect, tire manufacturers add anti-degradants in the rubber. Petroleum-based dressings break down these 'anti-degradants' allowing the tire to be exposed to the oxidizing effects of UV and ozone.

This is why it's important to use a water-based treatment that will not cause harm to the anti-degradants but aid it by applying UV blockers.

Use einzett Vinyl-Rubber Care and Protectant and get these additional benefits:

- Water-based formula will not stain, drip or splatter during application or driving.
- Dust-resistant and water-resistant for a long-lasting finish.
- Leaves a low shine, silk matte finish that looks more natural instead of greasy.

## Summary

When detailing a car, you are able to make a better choice as to the car care products you choose when you have a better understanding of the surface you're treating. When you know the surface, you know what can benefit it or damage it. Plastic and rubber are the next most prevalent surface to care for on your car. Treating it properly will serve your car better and keep it looking exceptional for years.