

CARE OF CANVAS CURTAINS

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Recently there was an inquiry one of the internet discussion groups on the care of the plastic windows in canvas side curtain. I have had side curtains for many years and have learned how to care for them, as well as preventing window scratches in the first place.

Having really good visibility through the windows is a safety issue that should not be dismissed.

Advice on removing scratches usually starts with various liquids for that purpose. After trying motorcycle shops for face shield scratch remover with no useful results. I have had the most luck with Novus products that I got from an internet seller. The package came with #1 which is advertised to “clean, shine, and protect”. Novus No.2 says it is for scratch removing and is the only one I have used so far. Novus No.3 says for heavy scratches so I have not yet used it.

After removing the side curtains I worked on the picnic table outside that was covered with a piece of cardboard for a uniform surface to work on. I washed both sides of the windows with dishwashing soap. Then I applied the No.2 in the areas where there was vertical strips of hazing, after carefully looking to see if the scratches were on the inside or outside.

For the actual scratch removal I used a cheap rotary polisher that plugs into a cigarette lighter.

A spare 12 V battery and a lighter socket allowed me to work away from the motorcar. After spreading some of the Novus liquid I polished the plastic windows for about 1 minute. Then I wiped the excess off with a damp paper towel, followed by a wet paper towel. A final polishing with an old, clean T-shirt finished the task. I inspected the result and re-did some areas that I could identify. I could not always tell whether the last scratches were on the inside or outside so I worked on the same area on both sides as necessary. While I did not do a perfect job, my window was much better afterward.

Equally important is preventing the scratches in the first place. I carry my curtains stowed at the front of the car instead of at the rear because it seemed to be a way of

keeping them cleaner. They do not get the dirt stirred up by the wheels. Eventually I discovered that many of the scratches were coming from the places the windows were folded and rubbed on each other. As a result, I now never fasten the upper straps when stowing the curtains, and use only the lower straps, not very tight as well. Before towing I now pull the top of the curtain several inches to the rear so that the folds in the window area are not so tight.

Since I use a full canvas cover over the motorcar while towing, I notice that the airflow pulls the cover away from the curtains at the front so it should not be causing rubbing and scratches on the windows. I did not think to establish whether the scratches were mostly on the inside or mostly on the outside. That would be useful information.

The rear curtain is a different situation. It tends to get dirt brought in from the wheels by the airflow. Probably a lot comes from the airflow bringing fine dirt particles up to the rear of the curtain. On it I need only to wash it now and then. Some scratches come from the support pipes and I have not figured out a good method of protecting the rear window from them.

Removal of the rear curtain which uses the OEM method of attachment is a large task, so for scratch removal I have a helper hold a cardboard covered piece of plywood up on the inside of the curtain, and I do the polishing from the outside. Then we change places.

I have been cleaning the curtain windows for seven years now and they look nearly new.

