

Specialised Detail

AVOIDING PAINT DAMAGE
DURING A CAR WASH





Our top tips to avoid damaging your vehicles paint.

- » **Rinse and apply a pre-wash**
The aim of a rinse and pre-wash is to remove as much dirt and contamination as possible before contact is made with a wash mitt. Thoroughly rinse the vehicle down with water (pressure washer is best) before applying a pre-wash product such as snow foam or traffic film remover (TFR) and allow to dwell. Thoroughly rinse off the vehicle before moving onto washing the vehicle.
See product instructions for dwell time, do not allow the product to remain on the vehicle for long a period of time.
- » **Use 2 Buckets – one for wash & one for rinse**
If you use only one bucket then you're recycling that dirty water back onto your vehicle. By using 2 separate buckets you can rinse off the dirt into one bucket and use the fresh soapy water from the other bucket.
- » **Adding a Grit Guard and Washboard to your Rinse Bucket**
Placing a grit guard to the bottom of the rinse bucket helps to separate the dirt from your wash mitt and keep it at the bottom of the bucket. Adding a washboard to the grit guard is an ergonomical addition that's easier on the wrist at a 135-degree angle. Agitate the wash mitt against the guard to release the trapped dirt from the mitt fibers.
- » **Replace the sponge with a microfibre wash mitt**
Microfibre wash mitts are designed to lift the dirt and contamination into the fibers before being removed in a rinse bucket. Sponges are more likely to drag the abrasive dirt and contamination across the surface during removal.
- » **Use a separate bucket to clean wheels**
Iron metal particles from brake components are very hazardous on paint so eliminate the risk by using a completely separate bucket to clean wheels, tyres and exhaust.
- » **Don't dry your vehicle with cheap microfiber towels**
Only use good quality microfiber drying towels - cheap microfibres can scratch your paintwork and are poor at absorbing water. You might save a couple of dollars but incurring hundreds, even thousands of dollars in damage to your paint in the long term.
- » **Don't wash your vehicle with dishwashing liquid**
Dishwashing liquid contains salt that will embed itself into micro scratches on your paintwork. The salt will then enlarge every time it is exposed to water, making the micro scratches larger.



- » It's important to dry your vehicle
By not drying your vehicle you're leaving water marks, the water evaporates but leaves behind the limescale. Limescale is mildly caustic and etches into your paint.
The damage becomes more severe with time and can require serious paint correction to remove.
- » Don't use quick detailing spray on a dirty car
A common sight at many car shows, the vehicle is washed at home, driven to a show and has a quick detailer applied and removed with a microfibre towel - usually a cheap one. The combination of the towel; abrasive contamination on the surface; and, friction between the two, equals some very unwanted scratches.
- » Don't wash in direct sunlight on hot days.
This promotes chemical etchings from dried shampoo not being rinsed quickly, or effectively, and water spotting from not being able to dry the vehicle in time.
- » Avoid the local car wash
The brooms, although highly lubricated with soap will scratch your vehicle. They hold dirt that is abrasive because it isn't safely removed and the bristles are too aggressive for paint. The automatic car wash is even worse as the bristles are even more aggressive.
The automatic touchless car washes don't remove all the contamination so once the wash is finished you'll scratch your paint whilst removing left over contamination with your drying towel; or, if you don't dry your vehicle you create water spotting.
- » Wash off bird excrement with shampoo, not just water.
Many make the mistake of removing bird poo with water alone; however, if the acid content in the bird poo has taken hold then it needs to be neutralised with a PH neutral shampoo, otherwise it will etch into your paint. The speed and severity at which it does depends on the bird's diet. I strongly recommend maintaining a sacrificial layer of protectant on your paint such as a wax, or better yet, coating to absorb the damage.
- » Invest in a protective coating for your paint
Many titles are used - glass coatings, nano coatings, ceramic coatings, etc.
I urge you to look past the confusing titles and b/s marketing surrounding them because the benefits are very real. If you combine the added scratch resistance (+ the other many benefits we'll mention another day) a coating provides with the above preventative measures and your vehicle's paintwork will look great for years to come.