

INTERIOR DETAILING

By Brad Bean:

As with my previous columns on detailing, this is not intended to prepare a Corvette for NCRS Top-Flight or Bloomington Gold competition, but these methods have served me well. Most of these applications are based on the assumption you are working on an older Corvette with a vinyl interior.

When asked to judge a show or when attending a participant judged show, next to dirty tires the items that attract my attention are dirty carpet and a smudged interior windshield. These because the driver can easily remedy them and they don't normally occur while driving between home and the show. So let's take a look at preparing your Corvette's interior for a show.

Normal Maintenance

The majority of the interior clean up should be part of an ongoing interior maintenance program and completed prior to leaving the comfort of your garage. Then only minor touch up work will be required upon arrival at the show.

As part of your regular vehicle maintenance program, I suggest wiping down the dash, console and door panels with a wet cotton cloth and cleaner such as Simple Green, Fantastic, or 409, followed by an application of a low-gloss vinyl protectorate of your choice (Pledge furniture polish also works nicely). This will keep the vinyl from drying out and cracking.

Since more things come in contact with your seats (like you), they require a little more attention – they should occasionally be removed from the car and cleaned with a mild detergent, medium bristle scrub brush and water. This will remove dirt from the crevices and from the grain in the vinyl pattern. Once the seats are dry, they can be returned to the car and a vinyl protectorate applied.

The carpet should be vacuumed regularly and shampooed as needed. Caution, shampooing too frequently can result in fading and frayed loop pile ends of your early Corvette's carpet. If possible, car doors should remain open and the car outside to accelerate the drying process. This will minimize the chance of the carpet mildewing. If the carpet remains wet too long and often, it can result in a breakdown of the glue that bonds the fibers together resulting in a deterioration of the carpet.

Assuming your interior stainless has already been buffed and is only in need of a general cleaning, periodically use a stainless and aluminum metal cleaner/polish and buff off residue for a bright shine. I prefer Wenol (red or blue) metal polish for this application.

At The Show

Carpet

Most drivers start detailing on the outside of their car. This is important, as most sprays will spot the paint if the surface is too hot. If the sun is not yet too intense I suggest first removing the floor mats, if they are not being shown in the car (NCCC requires a Corvette to be shown without mats). Use a small whiskbroom to sweep the carpet clean. Water and a cloth will usually remove any mud that may have come in contact with your carpet that morning. If not, use some cleaner and rinse area thoroughly with clean water. Do this early enough to dry before judging.

Once you have completed the remainder of your detailing, return to the carpet before shutting the doors for the last time and remove any stray particles such as lint or grass. A good way to do this is to use a lint removal roller or wrap some masking tape around four fingers (tacky side out) to pick up loose particles.

Windows

Everyone has “their method” of cleaning windows... well, here is mine. First, wipe your windows with a clean damp cleaning cloth to pick up loose dust and remove bug residue. Spray a low lint paper towel (similar to the ones you find at a gas station) until wet, with glass cleaner (I like Eagle One glass cleaner because it does not streak, but this is your call) and wipe down a section of glass not more than two foot square. This way it will not dry and spot before you have a chance to wipe it down with a second, dry paper towel.

This same glass cleaner and the same type paper towels are good to use on your gauges and interior chrome to remove smudges.

Vinyl

Wipe down your seats, dash and door panels with a damp cloth (using liquid cleaner, only if necessary). Apply a thin coat of the vinyl protectorate for a low gloss finish. Also, use this cloth to go over any rubber weather-stripping that is visible to the interior, when the door is opened and the rubber shift boot.

General

Check the stainless to see if you need to touch it up to remove smudges on the door panels and door trim moldings. Normally a dry cloth is all that is necessary, but some areas may require using a little metal polish and a clean rag to remove residue and buff to a shine.

Use a small soft lint brush to clean out all dust and loose particles from all cracks and crevices. I find a women's make up blush brush works well for this purpose.

If you must use props, keep them to a minimum and remove personal items not original to the car when it came off the show room floor.

Good Luck! 🚗