CHAPTER 106: MOST COMMON DETAILING MISTAKES

There are a ton of detailing mistakes we make during the cleaning and protecting process; however, the common beginner mistakes can easily be avoided.

01 | CLAYING YOUR PAINT UNNECESSARILY.
Notice how we didn’t add it to the wash process (Chapter 104) because it’s not 100% necessary every time you wash your car. This tool can be incredibly helpful, but only when it’s required. The mistake is using it to much when it’s not needed.

Remember these facts:
1. Clay is an abrasive and may scratch your paint if used improperly or too frequently.
2. Clay does not remove scratches.
3. If you drop clay on the ground, throw it away.
4. You can use clay with car soap during the wash process (if necessary)

02 | ALL-PURPOSE CLEANER ON THE INTERIOR OF YOUR CAR.
APC typically leaves the fibers in a high pH state after cleaning. This residue can make the fibers stiff and crusty, while setting the stain permanently in the fibers. If you do use APC, and it does dry...the next time you get in the car with wet shoes, the water from your shoes reactivates the APC, then the chemical cleans your dirty shoes, which drops back into the carpet, creating more stains. Do not use APC on interiors.

03 | PULLING THE VACUUM HOSE THRU THE CAR.
Always have the vacuum on the same side of the car when you are working. If you drag the hose through the interior to the other side, it will dry the dirty hose across the seats and cause a stain. Don’t be lazy!

04 | USING ONLY 1 BUCKET.
Using just one bucket for the wheels and the paint is very bad. Very very bad. It breaks our Core Detailing Principles #4 of cross-contamination. Brake dust consists of tiny sharp pieces of metal from the rotors and brake pads as they touch. Using your wheel mitt on the paint is basically the same as dropping your wash mitt in rocks and washing the paint. It’s very dangerous.

05 | CLEANING THE WHEELS LAST.
It’s not only inefficient, but potentially dangerous to your paint. When you clean your wheels as a last step procedure (or after you wash and dry your paint) you risk the chance of getting water back on your dry paint. This will require you to re-wipe the paint that you just wiped dry. It’s unnecessary and will cause the paint to endure excessive wiping that will increase the chance of love marks. Clean your wheels first!

06 | DISH SOAP VS. CAR SOAP.
Although most people realize dish soap is not the same as car soap, they tend to use it in a pinch. Dish soap is not a substitute or short-term solution for cleaning your paint during a maintenance wash. It can be helpful mixed 50-50 with AMMO Foam to strip the paint of old wax and oils, prior to compounding or adding a coating, but is not relevant in this particular beginner series.

07 | DIRECT SUNLIGHT.
Washing in direct sunlight causes a lot of extra work because the product is drying prematurely on the paint, leaving it un-lubricated during the wipe. Washing in the early morning or late afternoon is usually the safest time to work outdoors.

08 | INCORRECTLY WASHING DETAIL TOWELS.
Detailing towels are my #1 detailing tool, so caring for them properly is essential. Remember, never wash them with other clothes or towels because the microfiber will collect lint and become useless. Always use a liquid detergent, not a powder because any undissolved powder could scratch the paint, and dry the towels separate from clothes on low heat. High heat will singe the hooks causing them to curl over and not pick up anymore, defeating their useful life.

09 | DRY WIPING THE PAINT.
Touching the paint without the proper lubrication is worse than not touching it at all. Your hand is an abrasive, so wiping the hand across the paint is going to scratch it. Unless there is an emergency like bird poo, where you need to remove it quickly since the acid in the poo will etch the paint, leave the dust and dirt alone until you can wipe, clean, and wash it properly with water as a lubricant.

10 | PROTECT YOUR SKIN.
Wearing gloves and closed-toe shoes is very important. We are working with chemicals and safety should always be the priority. You must protect your eyes and skin during and car wash. It’s a super simple preventative measure. Remember this, if you wouldn’t drink the product, then it’s a good rule of thumb to not get it on your skin. Your skin has pores and will absorb chemicals, so avoid skin contact by wearing protective gear.

11 | DON’T USE CAR DUSTERS.
Car dusters violate our Core Detailing Principles. They do not pick-up and hold (after a few wipes the cloth is full), no lubrication is used, and the cloth is not re-folded to a clean side after it gets full. That’s strike 3. Anytime you remove dust from a car is must be done with a lubricant (water or spray wax) and a clean MF towel that will be discarded when full.
12 | AVOID CHAMOIS, BEACH TOWELS, AND WATER BLADES.
Using these tools to dry your paint with cause LOVE MARKS due to no lubrication, no hooks-loops (in MF towels) and direct paint contact that can cause scratches over time.

13 | CLEAN YOUR TOOLS.
Most people get so excited about a clean car that they forget to clean their tools before cleaning their car. Make sure your buckets, grit guards, wash mitts, and brushes are cleaned out briefly before you jump right into your detail.

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