

## CARE OF EXTERIOR SIDEWALLS & GRAPHICS

A common topic of conversation is the proper care and maintenance of the exterior of your motor home, especially as it pertains to fiberglass, plastics and vinyl graphics.

Each of these materials has its own unique characteristics and care and maintenance procedures. However, no matter what type of material that we are dealing with, the first step involved in proper motor home care is a clean vehicle. Your vehicle should be washed whenever a build up of dirt or grime becomes apparent and when placing the vehicle into and out of storage.

### Fiberglass

Fiberglass is a generic term that encompasses a variety of composite materials. As a general definition, we can state that fiberglass is a substance consisting of reinforcing fibers set in a rigid medium. It is used in various areas of the motor home. Some common fiberglass components include:

1. Sidewalls
2. Front and rear caps
3. Roofs

The exterior surface of a fiberglass component will be finished in one of two methods, gel coat or automotive paint. Both types of finish have their advantages. However, regardless of the type of finish the basic care and maintenance procedures remain the same.

### Washing the Vehicle

By following these simple steps, you can ensure a good wash job and a great looking coach.

1. Do not wash the vehicle in direct sunlight. The hot sun can cause the water to evaporate before it can run off the vehicle which will leave a soap residue behind. It is better to wash the motor home in smaller sections so that this does not occur.

2. Always use a quality automotive or marine soap.

3. Remove the dirt and grime from the vehicle's surface by wet scrubbing the vehicle with a soft bristled brush, soft sponge or an extendible washing wand which makes reaching those hard to get at high spots a much easier process.

4. Completely rinse the vehicle with clean water.

5. Wipe the vehicle down with a clean chamois to prevent water spots.

### Oxidation

The number one enemy of any finish is oxidation. Oxidation is caused when ultra-violet rays from the sun react with the finish. This causes a chemical process in which the bonds that hold the molecules in the outer layer of the finish are weakened. And the molecules begin to slough off. The physical signs of oxidation are fading and chalking.

While oxidation can become a problem, it is readily preventable by the prudent use of an automotive wax. Once oxidation has occurred, it can usually be repaired by following a few simple steps:

1. Wash the vehicle
2. Buff out any areas that have faded or are chalking with polishing compound such as Dupont™ 606S or Dupont™ 1500. Please note that the 1500 is not as aggressive.

### Buffing

1. Apply a small amount of compound to the surface of the vehicle in the area that is to be polished.

2. With a clean soft cloth, rub the compound on the vehicle surface using circular strokes.

**WARNING:** The use of power buffers is not recommended. Only properly trained and experienced persons should use power buffing equipment.

3. Once the luster has been restored, wipe the surface clean with a fresh soft cloth.

4. Apply a coat of quality automotive or marine wax.

### Waxing

1. Wash the vehicle and dry completely.
2. Apply wax as per the manufacturer's direction.
3. Hand buff the surface to a shine with a fresh soft cloth.

### Plastic

Exterior plastic components can be made from various types of plastic compounds. Because of plastic's durability and ability to be easily shaped it is well suited for many applications. Typical exterior plastic components are:

1. Bumper Facia

2. Bumper End Caps
3. Cargo Doors
4. Wheel Well Trim
5. Assorted Trim Pieces

Regardless of the type, all exterior plastic components should be cared for in the same manner as the exterior fiberglass components. However, it should be noted that plastics may be more sensitive to abrasives and cleaning agents than fiberglass so proper care should be taken when selecting cleaning and protective products for use on plastics.

**CAUTION:** Never use caustic or abrasive cleaners on plastic components.

### **Care of Film Graphics**

Film graphics used on Winnebago Industries motor homes are die cut from "cast" vinyl. High quality cast vinyl assures that the graphics will be dimensionally stable and long lasting. A pressure sensitive backing is used to bond the graphic to the exterior surface of the motor home.

Film graphics require little maintenance and should be treated similarly to a painted surface. Some suggestions for care include:

1. Wash the motor home graphics with plain soap and water or any car wash soap. Rinse thoroughly.

2. Keep high pressure nozzles at least 18 inches from the edge of the graphics. High pressure spray may cause the edge of the graphic to peel.

3. Test cleaning solutions on a small section of the graphic before using on the entire surface.

4. Do not use aromatic solvents such as acetone, M.E.K., toluene, paint thinner or lacquer thinner on the graphics. Solvents may soften or smear colors.

5. Do not overcoat the graphics with clear plastic.

6. Do not allow gasoline or other fuels to drip or remain on graphics for any length of time. If a spill occurs, wipe off and rinse with water immediately.

7. Do not paint over graphics.

8. Do not apply wax over graphics, especially if the wax contains a petroleum distillate. Wax that has dried between stripes can be removed by softening it with rubbing alcohol and cotton swabs. Make sure the area is rinsed after cleaning.

9. Care and caution should be taken when storing the vehicle. Vinyl graphics and other items such as dashboards, tires and flexible rubber products will have a shorter life expectancy when exposed to severe heat and sunlight.

Remember to examine seals and sealants when washing and polishing your motor home and repair or replace as needed to protect and prolong the life of the sidewalls and roof. With a little attention your Winnebago Industries product will remain looking like new.