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Appearance Care

This section features care, inside and out, of your Mazda...how best to keep it clean and looking good.

Be aware that appearance is not the only reason for cleanliness. Road grime tends to eat away at the metal, so keeping your vehicle clean in the way Section 7 prescribes will help prevent its early deterioration and rusting.

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How to Minimize Environmental Paint Damage

The paintwork on your Mazda represents the latest technical developments in composition and methods of application.

Environmental hazards, however, can harm the paint's protective properties, if proper care is not taken.

Here are some examples of possible damage, with tips on how to prevent them.

■ Etching Caused by Acid Rain or Industrial Fallout

▼ Occurrence

Industrial pollutants and vehicle emissions drift into the air and mix with rain or dew to form acids. These acids can settle on a vehicle's finish. As the water evaporates, the acid becomes concentrated and can damage the finish. And the longer the acid remains on the surface, the greater the chance is for damage.

▼ Prevention

It is necessary to wash and wax your vehicle to preserve its finish according to the instructions in this section. These steps should be taken immediately after you suspect that acid rain has settled on your vehicle's finish.

■ Damage Caused by Bird Dropping, Insects, or Tree Sap

▼ Occurrence

Bird dropping contain acids. If these aren't removed they can eat away the clear and color base coat of the vehicle's paintwork.

When insects stick to the paint surface and decompose, corrosive compounds form. These can erode the clear and color base coat of the vehicle's paintwork if they are not removed.

Tree sap will harden and adhere permanently to the paint finish. If you scratch the sap off while it is hard, some vehicle paint could come off with it.

▼ Prevention

It is necessary to have your Mazda washed and waxed to preserve its finish according to the instructions in this section. This should be done as soon as possible.

Bird droppings can be removed with a soft sponge and water. If you are traveling and these are not available, a moistened tissue may also take care of the problem. The cleaned area should be waxed according to the instructions in this section.

Insects and tree sap are best removed with a soft sponge and water or a commercially available chemical cleaner.

Another method is to cover the affected area with dampened newspaper for one to two hours. After removing the newspaper, rinse off the loosened debris with water.

■ Water Marks

▼ Occurrence

Rain, fog, dew, and even tap water can contain harmful minerals such as salt and lime. If moisture containing these minerals settles on the vehicle and evaporates, the minerals will concentrate and harden to form white rings. The rings can damage your vehicle's finish.

▼ Prevention

It is necessary to wash and wax your vehicle to preserve its finish according to the instructions in this section. These steps should be taken immediately after you find water marks on your vehicle's finish.

■ Paint Chipping

▼ Occurrence

Paint chipping occurs when gravel thrown in the air by another vehicle's tires hits your vehicle.

▼ How to avoid paint chipping

Keeping a safe distance between you and the vehicle ahead reduces the chances of having your paint chipped by flying gravel.

Exterior Care

NOTE

- The paint chipping zone varies with the speed of the vehicle. For example, when traveling at 56 mph (90 km/h), the paint chipping zone is 164 feet (50 meters).
- In low temperatures a vehicle's finish hardens. This increases the chance of paint chipping.
- Chipped paint can lead to rust forming on your Mazda. Before this happens, repair the damage by using Mazda touch-up paint according to the instructions in this section. Failure to repair the affected area could lead to serious rusting and expensive repairs.

Follow **all** label and container directions when using a chemical cleaner or polish. Read all warnings and cautions.

■ Maintaining the Finish

▼ Washing

To help protect the finish from rust and deterioration, wash your Mazda thoroughly and frequently, at least once a month, with lukewarm or cold water.

If the vehicle is washed improperly, the paint surface could be scratched. Here are some examples of how scratching could occur.

Scratches occur on the paint surface when:

- The vehicle is washed without first rinsing off dirt and other foreign matter.
- The vehicle is washed with a rough, dry, or dirty cloth.
- The vehicle is washed at a car wash that uses brushes that are dirty or too stiff.

- Cleansers or wax containing abrasives are used.

NOTE

- Mazda is not responsible for scratches caused by automatic car washes or improper washing.
- Scratches are more noticeable on vehicles with darker paint finishes.

To minimize scratches on the vehicle's paint finish:

- Rinse off any dirt or other foreign matter using lukewarm or cold water before washing.
- Use plenty of lukewarm or cold water and a soft cloth when washing the vehicle. Do not use a nylon cloth.
- Rub gently when washing or drying the vehicle.

- Take your vehicle only to a car wash that keeps its brushes well maintained.
- Don't use abrasive cleansers or wax that contain abrasives.

⚠ CAUTION

- Don't use steel wool, abrasive cleaners, or strong detergents containing highly alkaline or caustic agents on chrome-plated or anodized aluminum parts. This may damage the protective coating; also, cleaners and detergents may discolor or deteriorate the paint.
- To prevent damaging the antenna, retract it before entering a car wash facility or passing beneath a low overhead clearance.

Pay special attention to removing salt, dirt, mud, and other foreign material

from the underside of the wings, and make sure the drain holes in the lower edges of the doors and rocker panels are clean.

Insects, tar, tree sap, bird droppings, industrial fallout, and similar deposits can damage the finish if not removed immediately. When prompt washing with plain water is ineffective, use a mild soap made for use on vehicles.

Thoroughly rinse off all soap with lukewarm or cold water. Don't allow soap to dry on the finish.

After washing the vehicle, dry it with a clean chamois to prevent water spots from forming.

⚠ WARNING

Driving with Wet Brakes:
Driving with wet brakes is dangerous. Increased stopping distance or the vehicle pulling to one side when braking could result in a serious accident. Light braking will indicate whether the brakes have been affected. Dry the brakes by driving very slowly and applying the brakes lightly until brake performance is normal.

▼ Waxing

Your vehicle needs to be waxed when water no longer beads on the finish. Always wash and dry the vehicle before waxing it. In addition to the vehicle body, wax the metal trim to maintain its luster.

1. Use wax which contains no abrasives. Waxes containing abrasive will remove paint and could damage bright metal parts.
2. Use a good grade of natural wax for metallic, mica, and solid colors.
3. When waxing, coat evenly with the sponge supplied or a soft cloth.
4. Wipe off the wax with a soft cloth.

NOTE

A spot remover to remove oil, tar, and similar materials will usually also take off the wax. Rewax these areas even if the rest of the vehicle doesn't need it.

■ Repairing Damage to the Finish

Deep scratches or chips on the finish should be repaired promptly. Exposed metal quickly rusts and can lead to major repairs.

CAUTION

If your Mazda is damaged and needs metal parts repaired or replaced, make sure the body shop applies anticorrosion materials to all parts, both repaired and new. This will prevent them from rusting.

■ Bright-Metal Maintenance

- Use tar remover to remove road tar and insects. Never do this with a knife or similar tool.
- To prevent corrosion on bright-metal surfaces, apply wax or chrome preservative and rub it to a high luster.
- During cold weather or in coastal areas, cover bright-metal parts with a coating of wax or preservative heavier than usual. It would also help to coat them with noncorrosive petroleum jelly or some other protective compound.

■ Underbody Maintenance

Road chemicals and salt used for ice and snow removal and solvents used for dust control may collect on the underbody. If not removed, they will speed up rusting and deterioration of such underbody parts as fuel lines, frame, floor pan, and exhaust system, even though these parts may be coated with anticorrosive material.

Thoroughly flush the underbody and wheel housings with lukewarm or cold water at the end of each winter. Try also to do this every month.

Pay special attention to these areas because they easily hide mud and dirt. **It will do more harm than good to wet down the road grime without removing it.**

The lower edges of doors, rocker panels, and frame members have drain holes that should not be clogged. Water trapped there will cause rusting.

 **WARNING**

Driving with Wet Brakes:

Driving with wet brakes is dangerous. Increased stopping distance or the vehicle pulling to one side when braking could result in a serious accident. Light braking will indicate whether the brakes have been affected. Dry the brakes by driving very slowly and applying the brakes lightly until brake performance is normal.

■ Aluminum Wheel Maintenance

A protective coating is provided over the aluminum wheels. Special care is needed to protect this coating.

NOTE

- Don't use a wire brush or any abrasive cleaner, polishing compound, or solvent on aluminum wheels. They may damage the coating.
- Only use a mild soap or neutral detergent and always use a sponge or soft cloth to clean the wheels. Rinse thoroughly with lukewarm or cold water. Also, be sure to clean the wheels after driving on dusty or salted roads. This helps prevent corrosion.
- Avoid washing your vehicle in an automatic car wash that uses high-speed or hard brushes.
- If your aluminum wheels lose luster, wax the wheels.

■ **Convertible Top Maintenance**

The convertible top is made of a special high-grade material, but if it's not taken good care of, hardening, staining, and loss of luster will result. Maintain it under these guidelines.

▼ **Washing**

Don't wait until the top gets really dirty before cleaning it. Dirt that's there too long will cause deterioration.

1. Gently clean the top with a synthetic neutral detergent, lots of water, and a soft brush.
2. Rinse it thoroughly with clean water to remove all the soap.
3. Wipe it as dry as you can before the water dries on it.
4. Then allow it to dry completely before lowering it.

⚠ CAUTION

- Automatic and high-pressure car washes are harmful to a convertible top. Avoid them.
- Don't spray water directly on the area where the window glass and the top meet. This would probably cause water to enter the cabin.

▼ **Appearance**

Dress the top once a month after washing and drying it well. For best results, use a water-based leather treatment or vinyl top dressing.

⚠ CAUTION

- Some leather treatment products can ruin the top's gloss. Be careful of the one you choose.
 - Don't get any car wax on the top. If you do, remove it with a good leather cleaner.
 - Too much treatment on the top can be as damaging as too little. Follow the manufacturer's directions.
- Don't overdo it!
- Let the top dry completely before lowering after applying treatment or dressing.

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■ Detachable Hardtop Maintenance

▼ Washing

To help protect the hardtop's finish, use a soft cloth or sponge to wash it.

Insects, tar, tree sap, bird droppings, industrial fallout, and similar deposits can damage the finish if they are not removed immediately. When prompt washing with plain water is ineffective use a mild soap made for use on vehicles.

CAUTION

- Don't use an automatic car wash.
- Don't use strong soap, chemical detergents, or hot water, and don't wash the hardtop in direct sunlight or when the surface is warm.

Thoroughly rinse with lukewarm or cold water. Don't allow soap to dry on the finish.

▼ Waxing

Wax the hardtop when water no longer bead on the paint. Always wash and dry it before waxing.

NOTE

A spot remover to remove oil, tar, and similar materials will usually also take off the wax. Rewax these areas.

CAUTION

- Wiping off dust or dirt with a dry cloth will scratch the finish.
- Don't use abrasive wax. This may damage the protective coating and discolor or deteriorate the paint.

Interior Care

■ Dashboard Precautions

Prevent caustic solutions such as perfume and cosmetic oils from contacting the dashboard. They'll damage and discolor it. If these solutions get on the dashboard, wipe them off immediately.

■ Cleaning the Upholstery and Interior Trim

▼ Vinyl

Remove dust and loose dirt from vinyl with a whisk broom or vacuum cleaner. Clean vinyl with a leather-and-vinyl cleaner.

▼ Leather

Real leather isn't uniform and may have scars, scratches, and wrinkles. Clean it with a leather cleaner or mild soap.

Wipe it with a **damp** soft cloth; then dry and buff it with a **dry** soft cloth.

▼ Fabric

Remove dust and loose dirt from fabric with a whisk broom or vacuum cleaner. Clean it with a mild soap solution good for upholstery and carpets. Remove fresh spots immediately with a fabric spot cleaner.

To keep the fabric looking clean and fresh, take care of it. Otherwise its color will be affected, it can be stained easily, and its fire-resistance may be reduced.

CAUTION

Use only recommended cleaners and procedures. Others may affect appearance and fire-resistance.

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■ Cleaning the Lap/Shoulder Belt Webbing

Clean the webbing with a mild soap solution recommended for upholstery or carpets. Follow instructions. Don't bleach or dye the webbing; this may weaken it.

WARNING

Damaged Seat Belt:

Using damaged seat belts is dangerous. In a collision, damaged belts cannot provide adequate protection. Have your Authorized Mazda Dealer replace damaged belts immediately.

■ Cleaning the Window Interiors

If the windows become covered with an oily, greasy, or waxy film, clean them with glass cleaner. Follow the directions on the container.

CAUTION

Don't scrape or scratch the inside of the rear window. You may damage the rear window defroster grid.