**Washing**

**Everything begins with washing**; whether it’s Detailing or simple maintenance. This is one of the most overlooked and most important aspects of detailing. Imperfections that occur in paint surfaces such as swirls, scratches & water spots happen during the washing and drying process.

Using various methods to properly wash a vehicle, along with the right products, tools & techniques you can eliminate or reduce these issues. In this section you will learn about:

* Pre Wash Decontamination
* Iron Removers
* Clay Bar/ Mitt
* Two Bucket Wash Method

**Pre Wash Decontamination**

When there is heavy built on a vehicle you will want to use a stronger cleaner than just your wash shampoo; like an all purpose cleaner. This will help break up and loosen dirt, tar, sap, bird droppings, and other stubborn forms of contamination. It is recommended to degrease before you shampoo a vehicle. As you shampoo your vehicle, this will ensure there is no cleaner remaining on your vehicle after the final rinse. It's important that you know most cleaners will usually remove layers of protective sealant or wax; so an all purpose cleaner isn’t needed every time. You'll also need to re-apply your coat(s) of protection afterwards.

**Iron Removers**

Iron removers will effectively and safely dissolve iron buildup on or in the paint. Using an iron remover reduces the need for a clay bar or clay mitt. Iron removers are not a substitute for using clay; it is to aid in the removal of deeply embedded contaminates that clay bar alone will not remove. Only use this product **out of direct sunlight.**

**Clay Bar/ Mitt**

Clay Bar or Clay Mitt is a pliable synthetic substance in the form of a bar or layered onto a wash mitt that is used to remove contaminates from non- porous surfaces like paint, glass & rims.

“Clay Bar/Mitt **will not remove scratches or swirls**” . Clay is used after a vehicle has been washed and you should only use light pressure when claying. The more pressure you use the more chances of marring the paint.

Each of these decontamination methods will vary depending on the condition of the paint and can be used individually or in a combination. The purpose of any of these processes is to ensure the paint is as free of any type of contaminates as possible. The cleaner the paint will make any buffing, polishing or protection easier to apply.

**Washing & Drying**

**Two Bucket Method**

The two bucket method of washing a vehicle is the safest way to wash by minimizing the possibility of adding imperfections onto paint surfaces.

One bucket is used for shampoo

Second bucket is used to rinse

A third bucket should be used separately for rims & tires. Never cross contaminate any of these buckets.

Grit Guards **are a must** when using any bucket. They trap debris, dirt and contaminates at the bottom of the bucket, so they are not redeposited back into your wash medium. This is one of the main sources of swirls & scratches in paint. It should also be noted that when washing only little to no pressure should be used while washing.

Start from the top & work your way down, flip the wash mitt after every panel. Rinse mitt after every two panels and make sure to run the mitt across the grit guard.

**Drying**

Drying is the other biggest source of swirls & scratches on paint surfaces. It is best to blow air in those nooks & crannies before and or after drying to help prevent that continuous drip run.

Microfiber & shimmies are recommended because they don’t leave behind lint like a cotton towel will & they both hold 4 to 5 times its weight in water. Avoid dragging the towel as much as possible(blot Dry) and use only light pressure.

Before any drying method is used CHECK to ensure towel is clean & free of contaminates; an the blower is also free of embedded debris and has a rubber tip.