

DR_X Beasley's™

CERAMIC COATING MAINTENANCE GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION TO CERAMIC COATING MAINTENANCE

Ceramic coatings are the latest advance in automotive paint protection – think of them as the high-tech evolution of wax. These nanoscopic invisible barriers improve on the durability, longevity and self-cleaning abilities waxes are known for, making them an indispensable part of car care in the 21st century.

Here's the problem, though:

A lot of ceramic coated vehicles are not getting the results they should be getting.

Why?

Poor maintenance.

While coatings are remarkably durable, **you do need to clean and maintain coatings occasionally to keep them performing at the maximum level.** Thankfully it's a lot less work than regular waxing!

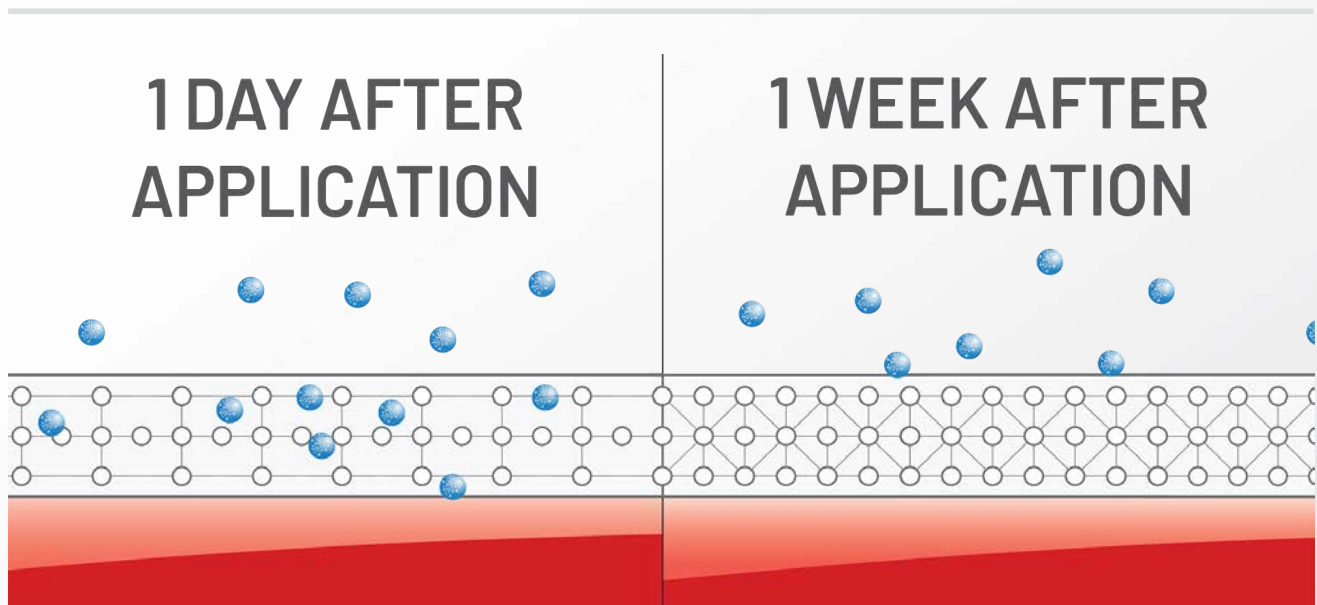
In this guide, we'll detail every aspect of coating maintenance, why it's necessary, and how to do it best. We'll also answer some frequently asked questions at the end. Let's dig in!

HOW TO MAINTAIN A CERAMIC COATING

FIRST WEEK MAINTENANCE

In the first week after application, the coating is actually still curing on the surface. The coating's ceramic nanostructure (the physical thing that actually protects your paint) becomes more and more dense, sort of like a loosely knitted fabric becoming tighter and tighter.

Because there are still gaps in the coating's protection during this period, you want to prevent destabilizing elements from getting through if possible. Otherwise, the coating's bond with the paint may not take hold, which means a failed coating only a week into its lifespan. To help visualize it, here's a graphic showing protection in the first week vs. protection after:



FIRST WEEK AFTER APPLICATION (CONT'D)

So what are these “destabilizing elements”? Dirt and grime are the most obvious examples, but water can actually ruin a new coating, too. Water is a lot less pure than you think it is, and those impurities can prevent a durable bond from taking hold. For that reason, **DO NOT WASH A COATING UNTIL A WEEK HAS PASSED FOLLOWING APPLICATION.**

So obviously the best way to avoid any contamination is to keep the vehicle garaged. But what about daily drivers? How can you avoid water and contaminants when the freshly coated vehicle is on the road?

Well, **IF YOU NEED TO DRIVE THE VEHICLE IN THE FIRST WEEK AFTER APPLICATION, APPLY A COATING MAINTENANCE SPRAY TO PROTECT THE CURING COATING.**

Now, let’s say something happens and a contaminant appears during the first week – water spot, bird dropping, etc – what do you do if you’re not supposed to wash?

In this case, **IMMEDIATELY CLEAN ANY CONTAMINANTS THAT APPEAR DURING THE FIRST WEEK WITH A LIGHT DETAIL SPRAY.** This will remove the contaminant without affecting the curing process.

With that explained, let’s review:

- Don’t wash a coating or get it wet until a week has passed following application.
- If the coating is on a daily driver, protect with a coating maintenance spray for the first week to resist water and contaminants.
- Remove any contaminants that do appear with a light detail spray ASAP.

BI-MONTHLY MAINTENANCE

Once the coating is fully cured, maintenance boils down to bi-monthly washes and as-needed spot cleaning. Why is this necessary? It has to do with the way coating protection works.

If a coating is too dirty, that layer of grime will block out both its contaminant resistance properties and its hydrophobic properties. Without those, your vehicle will be more difficult to clean, which kind of defeats the whole purpose of a ceramic coating in the first place!

With this in mind, the best way to keep that protection in shape is to **WASH COATINGS TWICE A MONTH (OR AS NEEDED)**. In addition, you'll want to **KEEP SPOT CLEANING CONTAMINANTS AS THEY APPEAR**.

The only difference is that now you can use more aggressive cleaners than light detail sprays.

Here are some general guidelines for washing and spot cleaning:

- Avoid automatic washes — they have coarse, dirty bristles that can damage a coating's protective abilities
- Avoid washing in direct sunlight — this can cause water spots to form. Only use soft wash pads designed for automotive washing
- Only use soft microfiber towels to dry. Do not use household towels or chamois.
- Rinse your wash pads in a Grit Guard-lined bucket of water to remove contaminants from the pad while washing.

BI-MONTHLY MAINTENANCE (CONT'D)

- Contact the manufacturer for guidance if you plan to wax after washing — some coatings and coating warranties do not allow for waxing.
- When spot cleaning, always use a microfiber towel to remove and avoid using excessive pressure while doing so.

QUARTERLY MAINTENANCE

In addition to washing and spot cleaning, **COATINGS BENEFIT FROM A MAINTENANCE SPRAY TREATMENT EVERY FEW MONTHS**. This has a couple benefits.

First, it reinvigorates the water repellent (beading) effect, which is crucial for maintaining self-cleaning properties. Second, it adds more ceramic material to the coating itself, prolonging and reinforcing its durability.

Most coating maintenance sprays use a simple spray and wipe application. Here are some additional guidelines for applying maintenance sprays quarterly.

- Coating maintenance sprays can also be used as-needed.
- Only apply coating maintenance sprays after washing the vehicle first.
- Do not apply a maintenance spray to a dirty vehicle.
- Avoid applying coating maintenance sprays in direct sunlight.

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE

After a year into a coating's lifespan (especially if it's one designed to last for multiple years) YOU SHOULD HAVE THE COATING INSPECTED ANNUALLY. After all, it's not always obvious when a coating needs to be repaired or re-applied.

A coating inspection is typically conducted by first washing the vehicle to ensure the coating's condition is clearly visible. Then, a close inspection is conducted using a powerful LED light.

This exposes any defects sustained by the coating. In some cases a paint thickness gauge is also used to determine if the coating has significantly worn away.

If the scratches and/or wear are severe enough to put the coating's protection in danger, the coating may need to be removed with a machine buffer and re-applied. Just imagine if it had been the paint sustaining all that wear and tear! Otherwise, an application of the coating maintenance spray will suffice.

If a professional detailer installed your ceramic coating, you may want to ask them about scheduling an annual, quarterly or even bi-monthly maintenance service.

In some cases a coating under warranty may require annual inspections to ensure the warranty remains valid. Check with the coating manufacturer or your detailer to see if your coating is under warranty.

COATING MAINTENANCE FAQs

Can I Apply A Ceramic Coating At Home?

In many cases, yes! A good number of ceramic coatings are user-friendly enough to be applied by enthusiasts or even home consumers! Contact the manufacturer to see if the coating you want is right for home application.

How Long Can A Coating Last?

If the technology is right, the installation is done correctly and maintenance is upkept, a coating can last for a vehicle's lifetime. Always check with the manufacturer to verify their durability claims.

How Can I Tell If My Coating Is Still Working?

Look for typical signs of coating viability such as water repellency or contaminant resistance. If you're not seeing that kind of performance, even after application of a coating maintenance spray, the coating may require re-application.

How Can I Remove A Ceramic Coating?

How you remove a ceramic coating will depend on durability. Some entry level coatings can be removed with a strong solvent, while others are so durable they can only be removed with a machine buffer. Consult the manufacturer before taking any steps to remove a coating.

Are There Coatings For Other Surfaces Than Paint?

Yes! Many companies manufacture coatings for paint protection film, vinyl wraps, glass, plastic trim, headlights, metal and even upholstery.

**HAVE MORE COATING QUESTIONS?
LOOKING FOR A COATING INSTALLER?**

GIVE US A CALL OR SEND AN E-MAIL!

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