

Airstream Service Tips  
HOW TO CLEAN YOUR AIRSTREAM

All aluminum will oxidize, the rate of oxidation depending chiefly on the atmospheric conditions where the trailer is kept. This oxidation appears either visibly, as a white powder in very small granules, or by feel, as a roughness on the surface. This bulletin is designed to explain the procedures for cleaning your Airstream trailer after oxidation has taken place.

We have used and tested a great number of commercial cleaners and special preparations designed for cleaning aluminum and have reached the following conclusions:

Under no circumstances would we suggest or recommend that a customer attempt to use any acid etch cleaner that is available on the market as a trailer cleaner. This is very dangerous for an amateur to use and, unless carefully handled, can be harmful to both the user and the trailer.

There are several ready made preparations designed for aluminum in the Aircraft Industry. These are Klad Polish, Never Dull and Burnishine. These we have found very expensive and no better than the product we will recommend.

We have found to be most successful DuPont's No. 7 Rubbing Compound (available at most hardware or auto supply stores) used with the following procedure:

- 1 First, wash your trailer well with a good detergent in moderately hot water. This is to remove all dirt, mud and as much of the road asphalt as possible. If asphalt remains on the trailer after washing, use a small amount of kerosene or coal oil on a rag and wipe the spots individually, being careful not to scratch the aluminum.
- 2 Following this, using hot water and a fairly large soft cloth dipped into the water and wrung half dry, spread some DuPont's No. 7 on the rag and rub lengthwise of the trailer or parallel with the grain of the sheet, which is evident if you look closely at the sheet. Do one complete sheet or section at a time. It is very important to keep rag wet while rubbing the Compound on.
- 3 After the original application has picked up a color (usually a dark gray or black) which indicates that the oxidation is being removed, use a wet rag to remove the last traces of Rubbing Compound. Do not allow your rag to get dirty, either in applying or removing the compound as this will rub the dirt back into the pores of the metal.
4. After all Compound has been removed with wet rag, use a soft, dry cloth to rub a shine onto the aluminum.
5. We DO NOT recommend the use of a buffer except in the hands of a thoroughly experienced person (if not expertly used the buffer will leave a pattern on the aluminum surface).

We have found Glass Wax (made by Johnson) very useful to remove the last marks made in rubbing off the oxidation. Also, it is well worthwhile to apply a good coat of wax and wash the trailer every few months. Especially if you have traveled over salty roads or have been in a highly industrialized area, it is wise to wash the trailer frequently and keep well coated with wax.