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CHAPTER RIDER EDUCATOR

Windshield and Face Shield care

One of the common mistakes people that are new to motorcycles and their plastic shields make is using the wrong cleaning products and technique to remove dirt, bugs, and other things. Most are used to cleaning the glass on their cars and think plastic is the same. A review is in order.

Leaving accumulated bugs and road grime on your windshields and helmet can be difficult to clean whether fresh or old. What has happened is all of those bugs have engraved themselves into the plastic. For safety reasons, virtually all windshields and face-shields are made from polycarbonate, Plexiglas or another type of plastic. These materials react adversely to body fluids from bugs which acts like acid on the windshield. If left and not removed in a timely fashion, usually within 2-3 days, they will etch the plastic or paint, sometimes permanently.

The best way to remove hardened bugs is to place a wet towel over the surface and let it remain there for at least 15 minutes. The water will loosen the bug remains, thus making their removal easier. Using either warm soapy water (preferred) or plain water clean the surface and wipe away the remains with a cloth. DO NOT use paper towels which will scratch the surface.

If using a glass cleaner does not work the next step is to try a polish made for plastic. Meguires makes a number of polishes for clear plastic products available at most motorcycle shops or auto parts stores. Apply and remove the polish in the direction your eye sees thru the plastic, horizontal for a face-shield, and vertical for a windshield.

A word about "bird poop" is also in order. Not only is bird poop highly acidic but a close inspection (if you want to) may disclose small pebbles which are used by some flying reptiles to assist in the digestion of their food. To spare the water in this case is to ruin the finish. So be especially careful when removing bird poop and do it as soon as possible after the deposit. This stuff will scratch your windshield, face-shield, and bodywork quickly and permanently if not removed properly.

Lastly, and after getting the windshield/face-shield as clean as possible apply a coat of wax. Like painted surfaces, the wax will provide a protective layer against the elements, as well as hide minute imperfections in the plastic. There are numerous products such as Honda spray, Plexus, or even Pledge that will do a good job.

Other tips;

Avoid using petroleum products, i.e., WD-40, or RAINEX

Avoid paint polishes which will scratch the surface

Take a small hand towel and washcloth on trips for use to remove bugs and grime. Squeegees at gas stations can scratch and have small bits of gravel embedded from other vehicles

Remember, Think safety, Ride safely