

3M VentureShield Installation

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We all know how easy it is to scratch the paint on a 3rd generation Dodge truck. Rock chips, touching the paint with anything, climbing in the bed over the tailgate, fender flares rubbing; it seems like all you have to do is look at it funny before those eyesores appear. So what can you do to prevent it? The most obvious thing is to not ever touch your truck, but that's not practical. That's where 3M VentureShield comes into play. 3M VentureShield is a clear laminate that is applied to the vehicle directly over the paint. It provides a barrier to help protect your paint from scratches and nicks. It's sort of like applying bed liner to the inside of the truck, but it's nowhere near as thick and looks better.

I had a set of fender flares installed on my truck for two weeks. I got my truck into a little mud so I decided to take them off and clean behind them. When I took the flares off, I had noted a line where they had rubbed the paint. It was already through the clear coat, but not through the paint yet. This simply wasn't going to work, so I decided to have some VentureShield applied to the area where the flares touched to help protect the truck body. While I was there I decided to have the entire tailgate laminated as well to help protect it from the scratches it receives from people climbing in the back, and had both headlights laminated to help protect from rock chips and to keep them from oxidizing, which causes them to turn yellow and cloudy over time.

This project started by going to the 3M website and locating a dealer in my area to install the laminate. The website put me in contact with the guys from [Pleasant Details](#) in Mt. Pleasant, SC. They were the only certified dealer in my area so that limited the choices. Honestly, even if they weren't the only dealership listed, I highly suggest giving these guys a call. Outstanding work and top notch customer service. They perform the VentureShield installation, as well as window tinting and several other services. I will definitely be going back there for any future work on my truck. They also informed me that anyone who mentions CarboniteCummins.com will receive a 15% discount. How cool is that?

Since I wanted to have the area under the flares laminated, they had to be removed. Due to time constraints, I pulled them off before I went down there so I could be in and out quicker. If you do this, be sure to put them in the bed and take them with you. You need to mark where the laminate must be installed using the flares. I also removed the tailgate handle so they could laminate around it.

Remove the flares by removing the screws securing them to the bottom of the fender. To remove the tailgate handle, you must remove the cover plate on the inside of the gate by taking out the torx bolts holding it on. Once the cover is removed, you can unlatch the two connecting rods that connect the handle to the tailgate latches, then remove the two nuts holding the handle to the tailgate and pull it out.



We started with the flare area first. The flares were held onto the truck and the perimeter was marked with a yellow grease pencil. This gives you a clear line to put the VentureShield on the truck and the grease pencil will wipe right off of the paint when finished. The first picture is of the rub mark left by the flares. If you look closely at the second picture, you can see the yellow grease pencil line and you can also see the flare rub mark directly below the line. It was really hard to get a picture of this to actually show up.



The area is first cleaned very well to remove all dirt and contaminants so the film will adhere properly. The film was then cut into 1 inch strips and applied directly below the yellow grease pencil line. They utilized some scraps they had around from previous projects to save me some money, and you won't see them when the flares are on. It goes on just like window tint. The area is saturated with a solution and the film is applied. They had a nifty little homemade backpack thing to apply all the solution required. Once the film was positioned correctly, a squeegee was used to squeeze out all the solution from under it. This allows the film to adhere to the surface. Just like window tint, there will be some small air bubbles under the film, but they will dissipate on their own after a few days.



The tailgate is applied the same way, only it utilizes a much larger piece of film. The entire tailgate is cleaned and saturated with the solution, and then the film is applied starting at the top. Once the top was aligned with the edge of my Line-X, a squeegee was utilized to apply the rest of the film. When the entire piece was securely adhered to the tailgate, the excess was cut off.



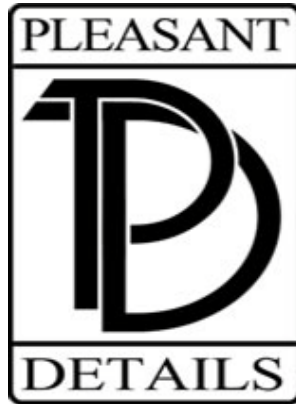
The headlights were a little different due to their odd size. A single piece was cut for the entire headlight and it was stretched to cover the entire thing. First, a small part was attached to the front inboard side of the light, and then it was pulled towards the back to cover the headlight. This allows the flat part on the front to stretch while leaving the top side un-stretched to create a wrinkle free installation. Just like the tailgate, once the entire headlight was covered, the excess was cut off.



Finally, reinstall the tailgate handle and the fender flares to complete the project.

After the installation, you honestly can't tell the headlights or the tailgate were ever covered. You can see the strips around where the flares were covered, but only when the light reflects a certain way. Besides, the flare strips will be covered with the flares anyway.

Special Thanks To:



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