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Self-Serve
Benchmarking Survey
see pages 51-66**Q: What is a swirl remover?****A polish? Do you need both?**

A: A swirl remover is a product that removes buffer swirls in the paint. Depending on how you define the term "remover," this could mean removing the swirls permanently or just filling them.

For some companies a polish can also be called a swirl remover, while others have a non-abrasive product for shining and smoothing paint that they call a polish.

In my opinion you do not need both. If you do your homework, you can find a product that will both remove swirls and polish at the same time.

Q: What are waxes, sealants, express waxes and fast waxes? Do you need all these paint protection products?

A: These are products designed primarily to protect paint from the elements, but they can also enhance the shine.

When a chemist is formulating a paint-protection product, there are a number of factors to consider:

- Ease of application and removal;
- Durability;
- Depth of shine; and
- Resistance to soaps and detergents.

No one product can provide all of these things. For example, a product that has more shine is less durable and a product that is more durable will not provide as much shine.

Here are some other helpful definitions:

Waxes - A paint-protection product that uses one of many different waxes in its formulation:

- Carnuaba Wax: This is taken from the leaves of the Brazilian palm trees.
- Beeswax: This is taken from beehives.
- Microcrystalline Wax: This is a synthetic wax. While not natural, it is more durable than carnauba.
- Montan: This is extracted from coal.

Other ingredients include, water, oil, solvent, silicone, color and fragrance.

Waxes are available in hard pastes, cremes or liquids. As particular requirements arise in the marketplace, chemical formulators come up with different types of waxes such as Fast Wax, Spray Wax and Express Wax. Often, these waxes are not of the same quality as the typical carnuaba paste or liquid wax. They are often formulated to meet a price or a need in the marketplace.

Sealants - Technically speaking, sealants are nothing more than an evolution of the wax technology. Paint sealants are either liquids or cremes and may contain waxes.

The major difference between waxes and paint sealants is the use of amino-functional silicones instead of plain silicone fluids.

When it air dries, the amino functional silicone will tend to bond to the paint finish rather than simply sit on the surface. As a result, the paint sealant will last longer than a wax.

By all means, you do not need all types of waxes or paint sealants. I recommend the use of a paint sealant because they are easy to apply and remove, leave a good shine, and last up to six months.

Q. How long do paint protection products last?

A: The very best wax product will last about 30 to 45 days. While a properly applied paint sealant may last up to six months under the best conditions, sealants will typically last three or four months.

There is no way that a paint sealant will last one, two or three years without periodic re-applications. Most guarantees will require the sealant be reapplied every six months.

This is an excerpt from an article appearing in Professional Carwashing & Detailing, February 2002 issue. The author, R.L. Bud Abraham, is president of Detail Plus Car Appearance Systems, Portland, OR. He is a 25-year veteran of the car care industry.