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Dear Automobile Owner,

If you are like most people, you don't know much about auto upholstery or convertible tops. The owner's manual of your car has little (if anything) to say about these subjects. There is some information on the Internet, but it is widely scattered and often conflicting. So far as I know, there is no one place you can find out how to care for your car's convertible top and interior.

Nor is there much information about how to select a shop when you need auto top or upholstery service. The typical convertible car owner replaces their top about every 8-10 years and needs interior work even less frequently. That is not often enough to select a company based on your own experience or those of your friends. There is no service like *Consumer's Reports* to tell you what to look for and to provide independent ratings. Your challenge is figuring out which shop will do a great job BEFORE they work on your car.

My wife Suzanne and I own Premier Auto Tops and Interiors. Premier provides convertible top and auto interior services to the San Francisco Bay Area. We created this FREE **Convertible Top and Interior Care Guide** to fill the need for a "one stop" consumer resource for this overlooked auto repair niche.

The Guide has two parts. First, it will teach you how to quickly and confidently identify good top and interior shops. **In 15 minutes you'll learn how to separate shops that will do your job right from those that will rip you off before you ever step through their doors.**

Second, this Guide also covers how to take care of your top and interior and how to figure out if you need service. Even if you don't need convertible top or interior service right now, the guide will show you how to extend the life of your current convertible top and upholstery.

We hope that you will find the Guide useful. Please direct any comments or suggestions to me at 408.241.7090. Plan to visit our shop when you need service or just have questions. Call us if you need directions.

Sincerely,



Roth S. Schleck, Owner

How to Choose a Shop for Top and Interior Service

Ask most auto top and interior shops why you should do business with them and most likely they'll tell you how many years they have been in business. Everybody says they've been in business 20 or more years.

“When one shop told me they had been in business for 60 years, I pictured some 90-year old men working on my car.”— Recent Premier customer

Years in business tell you nothing about what matters - the quality of their work, the commitment to service of the shop and front office staff. The shop may have changed hands or the shop staff could be a revolving door. They may have years of experience, but never worked on your make and model vehicle.

Or never learned how to do it right. In a recent survey of auto top and upholstery shops in the Silicon Valley area, 36% *recommended the wrong solution* to a simple and common upholstery repair problem.

This section of the Guide we will show you **how to determine which convertible top & upholstery shop will do the job right and make your car look great.**

The Three Biggest Problems with Most Convertible Top and Interior Repair Shops

A survey of Bay Area automobile owners who'd had convertible top or interior work done found they experienced three major problems:

- **The quality was not as good as I thought it would be, not like factory.** The challenge is to know who will do a good job before you agree to let them work on your car. How can you know given the infrequency of requiring this service, the lack of standards within the industry, and the absence of any independent rating service?
- **Being without my car was a real pain.** Everybody hates to be without their car. Not only that, but there is the added complication of dropping off your vehicle and getting from the shop to where you need to go and back again.
- **The job cost more than was quoted!** The survey uncovered reports of “low balling”, incomplete quotations, imprecise verbal quotes, hidden additional costs, and other unpleasant surprises.

The Auto Top & Interior Shop Selection Checklist

Using these problems we put together an effective shop selection checklist. Now, you can quickly and easily overcome all the above problems. Ask these questions to be sure that your work will be **done right** and **look great with no surprises**.

- **Do they work for at least 5 major new car dealers and 10 auto body shops?** Even if you got a great referral from your best friend you still want to know how the shop performs today, not three years ago when your friend had their work done. Commercial operations like new car dealers and body shops need top and interior work done often so they have plenty of recent experience. They want it done right because their reputation is on the line. Why 5 dealers and 10 auto body shops? You want to be sure the shop isn't getting all their dealer business from relatives or good-old-boy connections.
- **Are they independently rated high in customer satisfaction?** Past customer satisfaction statistics are the best indicator of likely future satisfaction. In the Bay Area, the American Ratings Company independently rates consumer service companies. The best companies are certified with the Diamond Certified award. See www.diamondcertified.org for more information.
- **Are they an Insurance Direct Repair Facility?** Insurance companies also use top and interior shops on a regular basis, and track customer satisfaction. To stay as a direct repair facility a shop must have consistently high customer satisfaction ratings.
- **Do they provide a minimum two-year written warranty on all installation, workmanship and materials?** High-quality work and materials will easily last longer than two years.
- **Do they provide at least 3 years pro-rated factory warranty on all convertible tops?** Since most convertible top manufacturers' warranties are "pro-rated", anything less than three years is next to useless.
- **Are written quotes offered on all jobs?** It's not "for sure" unless it's in writing.
- **Are they recognized by standards organizations with a code of ethics like Diamond Certified, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) or the Automotive Service Councils of California (ASCCA)?** These organizations protect the consumer as they require shops to deal ethically with customers. For more information visit www.premierupholstery.com or contact the Diamond Certified, ASCCA or BBB.
- **Are convertible tops replaced in two days or less?** The vast majority of top replacements can be completed in 12 hours or less.

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- **Do they offer transportation solutions?** Don't be stuck trying to get back to your office or home. Make sure any courtesy rides are FREE, available during the hours you need them, and will actually get you where you need to go (many shuttles are limited to a 2 mile radius).
- **Premium Interior Replacement** - Precise color and texture matching is key to a great looking interior. A long lasting result requires automotive grade materials.
- **Post Installation Inspection** – Replacing convertible tops and upholstery are multi-step processes that typically require many hours. Any quality shop will have a formal quality control procedure to make sure the job is done right.
- **Convertible Top Care Advice and Products** – The typical car owner's manual provides little useful information about proper convertible top care and operation. Consumer education should be part of any convertible top job.
- **FREE First "Fold Down" Service** – The first turndown is critical, because it sets the fold patterns for the life of your convertible top.
- **Unlimited Post Sales Consultation** – Car owners will have questions about their convertible top or upholstery from time to time. The company doing your work should be willing to be an information resource for the rest of your life.

The Case for Premier Auto Tops and Interiors

At Premier, our only business is convertible top and interior/upholstery work. The volume of work we do is greater than 98% of the top and interior shops in the Bay Area. Our craftsmen average 13 years experience in the industry, including experience in 16 specialty areas such as classic restoration, custom upholstery, convertible mechanics, seat mechanics, headliners and sunroofs.

At Premier we do something unique in our industry – we’ve designed our operations to eliminate the problems car owners have with shops servicing their convertible top or interior.

Premier Solves the Three Biggest Problems with Convertible Top and Interior Repair Shops

- **Our workmanship and quality is up to dealer standards and better.** 29 dealers and 96 auto body shops have their work done at Premier. We guarantee *in writing* we'll do it right. Every job includes a FREE consultation so you know exactly what options are available, what will be done, and how it will be done. The work on your car will be inspected, not once, but twice before you pick up your vehicle. At that time you will receive a top or interior car care package to insure a great looking result for many years to come.
- **We offer transportation solutions.** We minimize any inconvenience by offering quick turnaround and several transportation solutions - FREE rental car for work exceeding \$700 and low-priced rental cars for other jobs, FREE AM courtesy rides, early bird drop box, one day service and two convenient locations.
- **We eliminate surprises.** At Premier you get same day quotes and scheduling, no hidden charges. We are the only shop recognized by both the Automotive Service Council of California and Better Business Bureau Code of Ethics standards organizations. Premier was independently rated very high in customer satisfaction by the American Ratings Company and received the coveted “Diamond Certified” award.

Premier Meets or Exceeds All Auto Top & Interior Shop Checklist Standards

- **Do we work for at least 5 major new car dealers and 10 auto body shops?** Our workmanship and quality is up to dealer standards and better. 29 dealers and 96 auto body shops have their work done at Premier. We guarantee in writing we'll do it right.
- **Are we independently rated high in customer satisfaction?** Premier is independently very high in customer satisfaction by the American Ratings Company and has earned the coveted "Diamond Certified" award for the last four years.
- **Are we an insurance Direct Repair Facility?** Premier is an insurance Direct Repair Facility.
- **Do we provide a minimum two-year written warranty on all installation, workmanship and materials?** All work carries a minimum two-year written warranty - three years on convertible top replacement.
- **Do we provide at least 3 years pro-rated factory warranty on all convertible tops?** All convertible tops offered by Premier have a minimum 3-year manufacturer's warranty. In addition, we have a Supplier Quality Assurance Program that constantly monitors the quality of tops that come through our shop and removes vendors from consideration if they fail to provide a consistently high quality product.
- **Are written quotes offered on all jobs?** We offer every customer a written quote prior to scheduling the job. The quote details the work to be performed and the total "out the door" cost.
- **Are we recognized by standards organizations with a code of ethics like the Better Business Bureau or the Automotive Service Council?** Premier is recognized by both the Automotive Service Councils of California and the Better Business Bureau Code of Ethics standards organizations.
- **Are convertible tops replaced in two days or less?** 62% of our jobs are completed within 1 day, 99% within 2 days.
- **Do we offer transportation solutions?** FREE rental car for any job over \$700. We'll arrange your rental reservation and pickup and delivery from our shops. We offer FREE AM courtesy rides, early bird drop box, and a convenient location.
- **Premium Interior Replacement** - At Premier, we only use automotive grade upholstery, carpet, and thread. We constantly monitor upholstery material suppliers through our ongoing Supplier Quality Assurance Program to insure you the highest quality material. Because most interior work requires precise color and texture

matching, we carry over 27,458 swatches of upholstery materials. Even the upholstery thread and stitch pattern is matched.

- **Independent Post Installation Inspection** – Every convertible top goes through a 14-point inspection after the work is completed. Similarly, interior work goes through a 10-point inspection. We know your top and interior work will be done right because we have in place the quality control processes that make sure the job is done right.
- **Free Convertible Top or Interior Care Package** – When you pick up your vehicle, you will receive free top or upholstery care training, our Care and Service Guide, and a free bottle of protectant, conditioner or cleaner.
- **Free First Fold Down Service** – Two or three weeks after your top is installed you will be invited to return to the shop so that we check your new top and help you fold it properly into place.
- **Unlimited Post Sales Consultation** – Call us or drop in at any time with your top care questions, even if it's ten years later.

In summary, Premier exceeds The Auto Top & Interior Shop Checklist Standards outlined above. *None of the other 143 convertible top and interior shops in the Bay Area provide customers with the comprehensive service package that we do.* Whether you need a convertible top replaced or auto interior repair/replacement, Premier has a service package that is unparalleled.

How to Care For Your Convertible Top

Convertible tops are expensive to buy and repair. You will get the most out of your top by taking proper care of it. Follow the guidelines below to maximize the life of your convertible top. (We are indebted to the Robbins Auto Top Company, Haartz Corporation and Wolfsteins for many of these guidelines.)

Top Operation

Opening and Closing Your Top

- Always follow the instructions in your owner's manual for lowering and raising your top. Unlatch your top at the front **before unzipping** your rear window or zip the window closed before latching the top unless the owner's manual or top manufacturer directs otherwise.
- Do not use your convertible top boot (the space where the top goes when it is folded down) as a storage area. Even small items stored there can damage your top, window, and frame. **This is especially crucial if your top has a glass rear window.**
- Put the top up after driving with it down. When your top is folded and scrunched down in the well, it is wearing and rubbing against metal parts and itself. Scratches in the rear plastic window increase with every vibration of your moving car. Also, creases in the topping material become more pronounced the longer your top is stored in the well of your car. Tops should not be left folded down overnight.

The Sun and Your Top

- Do whatever you can to keep sun off your convertible top - park in the shade or use a car cover. The sun destroys the material over time.
- If you must park in the sun and you have a plastic rear window, park facing south when possible. The sun moves across the southern sky during the day. Parking with the rear window facing away from the sun will keep it from "baking" during long summer days.
- Periodically inspect your top and window for early signs of wear or damage. If you spot these, your top can often be saved by a timely convertible top repair or rear window replacement.

Dos and Do Nots....

- Do not lower your convertible top and/or the rear window curtain when the temperature is less than 40 degrees. If your top has a plastic rear window, don't fold the plastic window when the temperature is less than 60 degrees.
- Do not lower your convertible top and/or rear window curtain when the top is wet to avoid mildew, discoloration or other damage to the topping or inside backing.
- Do clean the plastic window before folding your top down. If your window is left dirty, grit on the window inside the fold works like sandpaper on the plastic as the car moves.
- Do use common sense and resist the urge to perform one of our "Top Ten Stupid Convertible Top Tricks" (see our website at www.premierupholstery.com for the list).

Cleaning Your Convertible Top

Consult the owner's manual of your car for the manufacturer's advice on top cleaning. If omitted or incomplete, follow the instructions below.

Washing

- When cleaning your top, Premier recommends vacuuming it first using an upholstery brush attachment to pick up dust, dirt, bird droppings, etc. If your top is clean simply rinse it with water and you're done. You don't always need to wash your top with soap when you wash your car.
- If your needs washing, we recommend *hand washing* it in the shade. When done, put the car in the sun to dry the top. While the top should never be folded down wet, install top boots and tonneau covers *while still damp* to preserve fit and shape.
- **RAGGTOPP Cleaner** is the only product Premier recommends for top cleaning. We recommend it because it is the only cleaner recommended by The Haartz Corp., maker of 99% of the world's top material. Use it on both canvas and vinyl tops, as well as boot covers, SUV tops, tonneau covers, etc. Premier always has RAGGTOPP Cleaner for sale in our office.
- Wet the top and spray RAGGTOPP Cleaner evenly over the entire roof. Let stand for 10 to 15 minutes, then use a sponge or *soft* bristle brush to lightly scrub the top. *Never use a stiff bristle brush* because it can scuff the outer vinyl or canvas layer. After washing, rinse the top thoroughly to remove all traces of soap.
- Use cool to lukewarm water on the top. If you live in a hard water area you will want to soften your cleaning water. Do not use hot water.

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- In spite of our recommendation, some people will still use a car wash to clean their convertible. If you use a car wash, use one that uses water jets and hanging cloths – heavy barrel brushes can damage top material. Do not let the car wash put spray wax or other chemicals on the top.

Heavily Soiled Areas

Heavily soiled areas may require extra attention. Let RAGGTOPP Cleaner stand on these areas for longer periods and try several cleanings. For other suggestions see Haartz Corporation's website at www.haartz.com. Except as instructed by Haartz, *do not use detergents, abrasive cleaners, cleaners or conditioners containing silicones, organic solvents, petroleum distillates, or plasticizers. They can permanently damage your top.*

Protectants

Once clean, your top can be made more resistant to soiling and ultraviolet sun damage by application of a fluorocarbon-based protectant product. Premier highly recommends **RAGGTOPP Vinyl Protectant** for vinyl tops and **RAGGTOPP Fabric Protectant** for canvas tops. Apply two or three light coats to a dry top allowing 10 minutes between coats. When finished put in the sun for an hour to cure the protectant's UV stabilizers. Premier has both these protectants available at our office.

Cleaning Convertible Top Windows

- **Glass rear windows:** Clean glass windows with water-based glass cleaners. Do not allow the cleaner to drip into seams or heat seals. Heater/defroster glass windows should be cleaned very gently to avoid damage to the element lines and/or the power source connection.
- **Plastic rear windows:** Plastic rear windows should be cleaned in the shade. The first step is to get the fine grit off the window. We recommend thoroughly rinsing loose particles off the window. Next, use a damp cloth or paper towel to "blot" up the remaining grit, turning the side after each blot. Use a blotting motion - not side-to-side, up and down or circular motions - these movements can scratch your window. After all the grit is off the window wash it with mild solution of dish soap and water. If the window is not the "scratch-resistant" type, a plastic polish specially made for plastic windows can then be applied as a final cleaning step. Finally, apply RAGGTOPP Vinyl Protectant to give the window an extra layer of UV protection. *We do not recommend the use of any other products on your window.*

How to Care For Your Auto Interior

Leather Care

Leather is often chosen as an auto upholstery material because it lasts. It is also easy to care for, feels better than vinyl, and resists stains and rips and burns better than cloth. When you buy a car with a leather interior, you have a \$2,000 to \$5,000 investment inside the car - that's the replacement cost of your leather upholstery. Whether that investment lasts for a short time or for many years will depend on how you care for the leather.

Cleaning Leather

As durable as it is, leather inside the car eventually becomes soiled from use and exposure. Soiling greatly accelerates wear - leather is surprisingly susceptible to scratching from even small specks of dirt.

Your leather interior will last longest if a cleaning program is initiated early and done often. Even a very simple program can be hugely effective. Blot up spills immediately and do not let dirt sit on the leather. To clean, first vacuum the leather to remove grit and other debris. Then wipe it off lightly with a damp cloth. You may find this is all you need to do to keep your leather clean.

For more stubborn dirt or stains, a good place to start is your automobile owner's manual for the manufacturer's advice on cleaning your leather seats. For example, the Audi owner's manual suggests a very mild solution of liquid soap and water to clean more persistent soiling. In some cases, the owner's manual will tell you what *not* to do, which is as important as what to do. This is especially true if your seats are still new because use of the wrong cleaning product can void your warranty.

For soiling that resists soap and water, clean the leather with a product specially made for leather surfaces. There are several fine leather cleaners available. At Premier, we use **RAGGTOPP Leather Cleaner** and it is the cleaning product we sell. *Use Raggtopp or other cleaning products exactly according to directions. Test products in a small, unobtrusive spot to confirm they will not discolor your leather.* Never use all-purpose cleaners and detergents because their harsh chemical ingredients can damage and discolor leather.

Do not rub too hard or too long when using any leather-cleaning product. Excessive cleaning can wear away the protective dye on the leather and cause drying and cracking. If the stain or spot doesn't come clean after the first or second application the cleaner probably won't work on it. A last resort for certain types of stains (also odors) is to take the leather seat cover(s) off and dry clean them.

If the leather can't be cleaned, it could be dyed or the leather panel(s) replaced with new leather. Dyeing leather works best in areas that get little wear. Most automotive leather can be matched quite easily and well for replacement.

Preserving Leather

Leather is skin - it's a cow's hide. A useful guide to preserving leather upholstery is how to care for your own skin - the same general rules apply.

First and most important is to minimize the leather's exposure to the direct sun – this will make far more difference than anything else you can do. The direct sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays and heat do tremendous damage to leather - repeated exposure dries and shrinks it, eventually making it hard and brittle. Therefore, starting when the leather is new, keep it out of the sun as much as possible. Keep the car garaged during the daytime, park in the shade, use window shades. Just like people who have protected themselves from the sun preserve youthful looking skin, the cumulative effect of protecting upholstery from the sun will be to preserve the softness and suppleness of the leather. In this case an ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure - once the damage is done it is irreversible. (Despite many claims to the contrary, we have yet to find a product that works to make leather soft and supple once it is hard and cracked.)

Second, keeping the leather clean helps to lengthen its life. Automotive grade leather is finished at the factory with a surface coating to help it stand up to heavy usage and resist damage from UV rays. While generally very durable, leather is surprisingly susceptible to damage from grit and dirt. If not kept clean, grit and dirt cause scratches allowing UV rays to breach the protective finish coating. Scratches also create a place for additional dirt and grit to accumulate, exacerbating the original damage. See our **Cleaning Leather** section above for advice on this subject.

Third, regular applications of a “sunscreen” will significantly lengthen the life of leather upholstery. Any car that's driven will have its leather exposed to the sun. To avoid sun damage, the leather needs protection. The leather's finish coating contains some UV protection, but that breaks down and wears off with time. A product like **RAGGTOPP Leather Protectant** acts as a sunscreen by giving the leather an extra layer of UV protection. It also protects against body salts/oils and scuffing. The areas on the leather seats that generally require the most protection are those with the most exposure to sun and wear. They are 1) the driver's seat cushion, 2) the outer edges of both the driver and passenger seat backrests, and 3) the top edge of the rear seat backrest (under the rear window).

Finally, applying “moisturizer” to the leather in the form of leather conditioner will help to keep it soft and pliable - *only if the above three steps are followed first*. A common misconception is that leather conditioners work miracles. They don't. Sun-damaged leather cannot be made new again by applying conditioner – the damage is irreversible. Conditioner applied to undamaged leather will replace the oils and moisture that must be periodically replaced. For best results, a leather conditioner program should be started early, before the original finish coating is cracked or worn through. We recommend that you treat your leather interior to a conditioner treatment two or three times a year. A minimum schedule might be a treatment once in the spring

and once in late summer. The high exposure areas mentioned above can be "spot-treated" more frequently.

Before using any leather product, check the owner's manual for your car to find out what the manufacturer recommends. *Follow product directions exactly. Try new products first in a small, unobtrusive spot to confirm they will not discolor your leather.*

Repairing Leather

Sometimes small scratches, cracks and holes in leather can be repaired – or at least made to look better - by a combination of filling, texturing and recoloring. There is an element of artistry to these repairs and our recommendation is to use a professional specialist for this work. Our experience is that "do-it-yourself" kits do a poor job and screw up the damaged area so it will then be harder for the professional to repair. We offer these repairs at Premier and would be glad to look at your car to see if they would work in your situation. If the leather is too damaged to be repaired the only other option is replacement.

Cloth Care

Cloth used in auto upholstery is tough stuff, specially made to wear like iron and resist soiling. Though the replacement cost of cloth upholstery is about half that of leather, it is well worth the effort to care for it.

Cleaning Cloth Upholstery

Cleaning cloth can be tricky and there is no tried and true solution to every situation. Permanent damage to your upholstery can be minimized by *taking fast action*. *Blot* up spills immediately and do not let dirt sit on the cloth. To clean, first vacuum the cloth to remove soil and other debris. Try wiping spots *lightly* with a damp cloth. For general cleaning and for spots that water won't clean we use **Malco Carpet and Upholstery Cleaner**. Use Malco *exactly according to the directions and wipe it on lightly*. We generally do not recommend soaking the cloth in cleaner because the color from its foam backing can further discolor it. Cloth seat covers that are very dirty or water stained can be taken off and dry-cleaned.

If cloth cannot be cleaned the only other option will be to replace it. For many cars cloth is available that exactly matches the original. At Premier we have cloth samples that go back to 1955.

Preserving Cloth Upholstery

Cloth is most often damaged from both soiling and UV. Keep as much dirt off the cloth as possible, and clean often (see above). If you drive with your bare skin contact with the seat cloth, put a towel or other barrier between you and the seat. Park your car

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in the shade or use sunshades when parked in the sun. There are protectant products available that both “scotch guard” cloth and add a coating of UV protection. With regular use they will make your cloth last longer. We recommend **303 Fabric Guard** for this purpose.

Repairing Cloth

Small blemishes and burn holes in cloth can sometimes be repaired using a texturing process called flocking.

Synthetic Suede Care

Cleaning synthetic suede

Each brand of synthetic suede has proprietary cleaning instructions - it is recommended that before cleaning that the specific advice from the manufacturer be consulted. In general, stains on synthetic suede break down between water soluble and non-soluble. For soluble stains (coffee, beer, tea, juice, milk, etc.) manufacturers recommend water only or water in combination with mild soap, white vinegar, or lemon juice. Many can be machine washed separately. For non-soluble stains (grease, oil, shoe polish, etc.) manufacturers recommend different solutions to include naphtha (lighter fluid), mineral spirits, powders sprays such as K2R , spot removers containing dry cleaning or other chlorinated solvents. Most synthetic suede can be commercially dry-cleaned.

Preserving Synthetic Suede

The luxurious feel and lustrous look of synthetic suede is maintained by vacuuming the material and then light brushing with a suede brush. Although highly stain-resistant, this protection can be enhanced by applying a product like Scotchgard. Before applying any product to synthetic suede always test a small area first to make sure the color, texture, and hand of the material will not be affected. There is no process to repair this material.

Vinyl and Plastic Care

Interior vinyl and plastic are the most durable, stain resistant materials in the car and the easiest to care for.

Cleaning Vinyl and Plastic

Periodically wiping down vinyl and plastic with a damp rag will clean up most spots and keep surfaces free of grit. Clean up spills and heavy soiling right away. Try using a rag soaked in a mild solution of dish soap and water if a damp rag alone won't

work. For more stubborn stains we recommend cleaning with **Malco Leather and Vinyl Cleaner**. Our experience is that there are very few stains on vinyl and plastic that will resist Malco. Vinyl and plastic that can not be cleaned can be easily dyed to cover discolorations. Dyeing works best in areas that get little wear.

Preserving Vinyl and Plastic

As with leather and cloth, keeping as much sun as possible off the vinyl and plastic is the key to preserving it. Park in the shade when possible and use sunshades when not. Stain resistance and additional UV protection is enhanced by regular application of a protectant product. We recommend regular use of **RAGGTOPP Vinyl Protectant** for this purpose.

Repairing Vinyl and Plastic

Sometimes scratches, cracks and holes in vinyl or plastic can be repaired by a combination of filling, texturing and recoloring. There is an element of artistry to these repairs and our recommendation is to use a professional specialist for this work. Our experience is that “do-it-yourself” kits do a poor job and screw up the damaged area so it will then be harder for the professional to repair. We offer these repairs at Premier and would be glad to look at your car to see if they would work in your situation.

Many scratches, holes, and cracks can't be repaired as described above. In those cases replacement may be the only alternative. Vinyl can usually be easily matched. At Premier we have vinyl samples dating back to 1955.

Carpet Care

Carpet gets the most abuse in a car and is made to stand up to it. Carpet is probably the simplest material to care for.

Cleaning Carpet and Floor Mats

For spot cleaning we recommend **Malco Fabric and Carpet Cleaner**, which is what we use at our shop. For widespread soiling have the carpet shampooed at a detail shop or car wash. For water damage we recommend getting the carpet out of the car as soon as possible to prevent mildew from getting started. Once it's out of the car it can be thoroughly cleaned and completely dried. Carpet that can't be adequately cleaned will probably need to be replaced. Dyeing carpets is possible, but current technology has yet to come up with a long lasting dye.

Protecting Carpet

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Use floor mats, bed liners and other covers in your car to provide the most protection to the carpets. Floor mats, those areas of the areas of the carpet not covered by mats and package trays can be protected from soiling and sun by using a product **RAGGTOPP Fabric Protectant**. Use the product exactly according to the directions.

Repairing Carpet

Tears and holes in carpets can often be repaired at modest cost and usually with good results. The edges of tears can be sewn together. Holes can be patched by fitting in a piece of carpet borrowed from some other part of the car where the carpet is not visible.

Headliner Care

The headliner is the interior trim that hides the underside of the roof. Headliners are covered by the most delicate material in your car. Sun visors, pillars and sail panels are often covered with the same material so these recommendations apply to them as well.

Cleaning Headliners

Headliner material can get dirty from fingerprints, items scrapping the headliner and from water stains. As long as the headliner material is in good shape all the forgoing can be *carefully* cleaned except for water stains. For cleaning headliner material we recommend **Malco Fabric and Carpet Cleaner** *applied very gently and lightly*. If the dirt or stain doesn't come out right away it is not going to come out – rubbing harder or soaking will make things worse. For water stains and stains that won't clean replacing the headliner material is the only other option.

Protecting Headliner Material

Headliner material is best protected by allowing nothing to touch it. For areas like sun visors and pillars that are more likely to be touched apply a *light coat* of **RAGGTOPP Fabric Protectant** (as always test first in a hidden away area).

Repairing Headliner Material

In some cases, small cuts and burns in headliner material can be repaired using a procedure called flocking. If the material is severely damaged or is hanging down the only fix is to replace it.

Do You Need Top or Interior Service?

It may or may not be obvious that you need the services of top and interior shop. We at Premier use the checklists below when we are looking at cars to better help our customers. Please use these checklists to determine for yourself whether you need the services of a professional.

Convertible Top Checklists

Convertible Top Visual Inspection Checklist

The San Francisco Bay Area, while the perfect climate for driving a convertible, also creates the need for convertible top repairs and replacements. The sun bakes plastic windows and gradually breaks down top canvas and vinyl. Putting the top up and down creases the topping material and creates wear and tear. Zippers wear out. Vandals slash convertible tops to steal items inside the car. Eventually tension straps lose tension, frames go out of alignment, and mechanical parts need replacement.

- **Top cover:** Is the top fraying, cracking or brittle? Are there wear spots on the top? Are the stitches rotting out? Is the top loose or sagging? Is the top excessively dirty? Are there any other obvious problems with the top? Are you using a product to protect the top?
- **Top frame:** Is the frame rusty, broken or missing paint? Are any bows bent or twisted?
- **Side and rear cables:** Are the sides of the top loose? Are the cables fraying, broken or rusty? Are the ends attachment points intact? Are the springs stretched?
- **Side window alignment:** Do the side windows hit the top/seals when the doors are closed? Are the quarter windows aligned correctly?
- **Weather seals:** Are the seals all there? What is their condition? Are they worn or cracked? Are there any gaps between the seals and the windows? (Weather seals last about three years.)
- **Top pads:** Are the pads frayed and worn? Are they cut? Are they sagging? Are they firmly attached at both ends?
- **Listings:** Are the listings attached to the bows? Are they frayed or torn?
- **Rear window:** Is the rear window intact? What is the condition of the seal around the window? Is the top material around the rear window in good shape?
- **If the top frame** uses hydraulics, are there leaks in cylinders, fittings, motor and hoses?

Convertible Top & Interior Care Guide

- **Paint and moldings:** Is there rust, scratches, chipped paint or other damage in areas where work will be done? Walk around the car and note scratches, dings, and dents.
- **Headliner:** Is the convertible headliner sagging or loose? Is it cut or frayed?

Convertible Top Operation Checklist

- **Top and frame:** Does the top raise and lower correctly, without irregular motion? Is the top being poked, pinched or twisted in the frame? Do the frame joints need lubrication?
- **Tension straps and elastic:** Are the tension straps/elastic placing the top/frame in proper position to fold down? When was the last time these items were changed?
- **Latches:** Do the latches operate correctly? Are the latches aligned properly?
- **Fold Down:** Is the top folding down properly?

Convertible Water Test Checklist

- Are the top seals preventing leaks?
- Is the top leaking?
- Are there any leaks around the rear window?

Interior Checklists

Interior upholstery problems are generally cosmetic problems - or at least they start out that way. By visually inspecting your interior as described below you will find the most typical problems requiring attention.

Headliner Visual Inspection Checklist

Headliners (the interior trim that hides the underside of the roof) are designed by car makers to last many years. Eventually, heat and use take their toll and the headliner material separates from the foam backing and sags.

- Is the headliner sagging or loose? Are there “bubbles” or pockets where the headliner material is sagging? Is it cut or frayed? When you touch the headliner with your finger does the impression stay in the material?

- Is the headliner material disintegrating along the edge that faces the back window?
- Are there holes or tears in the headliner material?
- Is the headliner material stained or soiled?
- Do you like the color or texture?
- Is the headliner material on the sun visors sagging or loose?
- Is the headliner material on the sail panels sagging or loose?
- Is the plastic trim around the headliner brittle, broken or missing. Are any headliner clips missing?
- Is the headliner board intact?

Seat Visual Inspection Checklist

A wide variety of materials are used for seat covers - vinyl, leather and cloth are used most often. Not everything in these checklists will apply to your vehicle. Look through the lists and use those that apply to your situation.

- Are there holes worn in any of the seat panels, especially the outer bolster panels?
- Are cracks appearing in leather or vinyl?
- Are seams splitting out between panels?
- Does your leather have a "cardboard" feel - hard and stiff?
- Is the cloth or leather excessively worn?
- Is the cloth excessively faded?
- Are the seat covers excessively cut, scratched, or stained?
- Have the seat listings come undone so that the seat is loose?
- Are any springs or frame parts sticking up through the seat covers?
- Is the seat padding excessively worn out? Does the padding have holes or is it falling apart under the seats?
- Are the seat backs bent to one side, or are the seats obviously misaligned or broken in some other way?
- Are seat covers a source of smell from mildew or pet accident?

Convertible Top & Interior Care Guide

- Do you want to change the color of your interior?
- Do you want to change material - cloth to leather for example?
- Do you want to upgrade the look or comfort of your seats? Examples include projects like inserting perforated leather panels or panels of contrasting color.

Carpet Visual Inspection Checklist

In a car, the carpet is one of the first places to show wear and tear. Worn, soiled carpets make a car look shabby.

- Is the carpet excessively stained, faded, or worn?
- Are there holes or cuts in the carpet?
- Is the carpet pulled up or loose?
- Any water damage due to flooding?
- Carpet is source of smell from mildew or pet accident?
- Do you like the carpet color?
- Do you want to change the carpet texture - pile to loop for example?
- Do you want to upgrade the quality by using a finer carpet material?

These checklists do not cover other areas of the interior like door panels, pillars, dashes and package trays. Any good shop will also inspect those areas. If you are unsure of the condition of your convertible top or interior, **Premier will be glad to look at your vehicle free of charge.** Just visit us in Santa Clara we will inspect your car on the spot.