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How To Flock A Dashboard, Headliner, Or Similar Large Surface

GENERAL INFORMATION

Prepare The Surface

Because the flock finish will follow the contour of the surface showing imperfections it is important the surface be repaired (if necessary) and smoothed. All holes and cracks must be filled (Bondo works) and the surface should be relatively smooth, although fine sanding is not necessary. If working on a large piece of wood make sure the surface is completely sealed before applying the finish (see basic instructions).

If you are working on a dashboard, once it is prepared and smoothed, wipe it down with acetone to remove any grime, oils or surface dirt. Allow the acetone to evaporate before applying the adhesive.

Suede-Tex Adhesive – Preparation

Suede-Tex undercoat adhesive is colored to complement the Suede-Tex fibers – because the flock fibers do not cover every fraction of an inch it is possible to see the surface through the fibers, therefore, Suede-Tex undercoat adhesive is colored. The adhesive will dry with enough flexibility to apply to padded vinyl, but it is too stiff to apply to soft surfaces such as seats.

Suede-Tex undercoat adhesive is self-leveling and, after application, will quickly smooth out to an even texture.

Working time with the adhesive is 10 to 15 minutes. Larger projects, such as dashboards, need a slightly heavier coat of adhesive to extend the working time to its 15 minute maximum and provide sufficient working time to apply the fibers.

Application of the Suede-Tex undercoat adhesive can be with:

1. regular paint spraying equipment (*2.0mm orifice recommended*);
2. a 3" paint roller with a short (1/4") nap – **NOT FOAM**;
3. a natural bristle paint brush – **NOT FOAM**. The paint brush is *not recommended for a large surface* such as a dashboard; it can be used for touch-ups.

If you are using spray equipment to apply the adhesive, thinning may be necessary. Add just enough mineral spirits (paint thinner) to the adhesive to allow it spray evenly through the spray applicator - too much and the solids in the adhesive that hold the fibers in place can break down.

Suede-Tex Fibers – Preparation

Whether you choose to use the Air-Assisted Spray Applicator (AASA) or the Mini Flocker, you'll want to have your flocking equipment filled (1/2 full) and set aside ready to be used. To more easily fill the AASA make a funnel out of a sheet of 8 1/2"x11" paper (*see illustration*) and gently drop the fibers from the top of the funnel.



The Mini Flocker can be easily filled by scooping up the fibers with the back section of the Mini Flocker (no holes). Gently place the end with holes over the back section and slowly push the two cardboard tubes together aiming it away from your face.

When working on larger surfaces such as a dashboard or headliner Flock It! recommends using the Air-Assisted Spray Applicator (AASA) to quickly and evenly apply the Suede-Tex fibers to the Suede-Tex adhesive. If a compressor is not available it is possible to apply the fibers using the Mini Flocker, but this requires much more time than the AASA. If you do select to use the Mini Flocker, Flock It! suggests you purchase two and find a friend to help.

Work Area – Preparation

HINT – Lighting – Set up a light to shine on the surface you are coating. 1. This light will reflect on the adhesive to indicate it is wet and liquidy (see illustration) when applied.



2. When applying the fibers, the reflection of the adhesive will disappear when sufficient fibers have been applied. I often wear a miner's headlamp when doing coating work.

If you are planning on reclaiming fibers set up a "clean" area, perhaps putting newspaper on the floor. Plan a separate area for applying the adhesive so that the "clean" fibers do not become contaminated. Any fibers that are kept clean can be reused.

Application of Adhesive and Fibers

Once you have set up your area and prepared the piece you are coating it is time to apply the adhesive.

Apply the adhesive using a spray gun or a paint roller (3" with ¼" nap – NOT FOAM). Because of the limited time available to apply the adhesive, Flock It! does not recommend using a brush when working on large objects except for touch-ups. Once you feel you have applied sufficient adhesive (see illus) go back over the surface with a quick misting if using the spray gun, or quickly run the roller back over the adhesive once. This will extend your working time to the full maximum of 15 minutes.

Prop up your piece so that you can aim your applicator as close to 90 degrees as possible (*see illustration*).



HINT – While 10 to 15 psi should be enough pressure to move the fibers from the AASA I usually turn my compressor up to approx. 30 psi; then I gently pull the trigger until the fibers start to flow. When using this method do not pull the trigger all the way as this will cause too much air which will blow past the fibers and could dry the adhesive prematurely.

Immediately begin applying the fibers holding the Air-Assisted Spray Applicator on a slightly downward angle - this allows an air pocket at the outlet nozzle so that the fibers can spray evenly (*see illustration*).



Begin spraying the fibers moving from the bottom of your piece to the top –this minimizes the excess fibers that fall on the uncoated section. The fibers will hit the surface at whatever angle they are sprayed so it is important that you continue to hold the applicator at the same angle to the piece (when possible) and move it up and down

– **do not tilt it.**

When working on large objects you will need to refill the canister with fibers at least twice (probably more). An extra canister is suggested to make this change quick and seamless. Just unscrew the empty canister and attach the filled one. An assistant can be refilling the canister as you continue spraying the fibers into the wet adhesive.

Once again using a light shining on the surface, sufficient fibers have been applied when you no longer see the reflection of the light in the adhesive.

DRYING TIME

Once you have completed the application of the flock fibers set the dashboard aside. **DO NOT TAP OR SHAKE** off excess fibers until the initial drying time is completed. Drying time differs when working on a large object. Typically, Suede-Text adhesive takes approx. 10 to 15 hours (*overnight is best*) for an initial drying. When working on a large object extra adhesive may have been applied to extend the working time which may require extra drying time.

HINT – To determine that the adhesive has dried sufficiently place your hand lightly on the finish. It will feel cool to the touch if is not dried sufficiently.

Because the adhesive dries from the outside in, the initial drying time is enough to remove the excess fibers, but an additional drying time of 72 hours to one week is necessary for the finish to cure completely. At this point you can vacuum the rest of the fibers or you can blow the fibers away using compressed air.

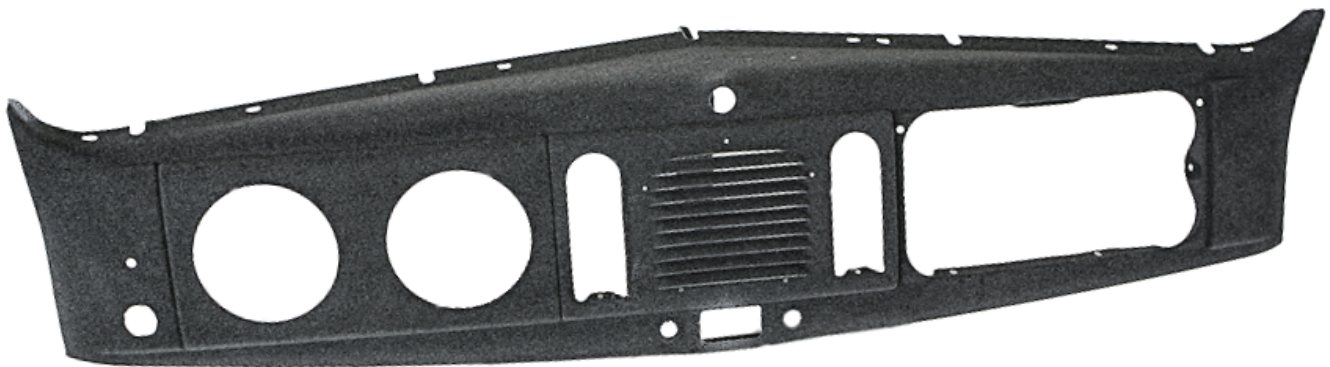
CLEANING UP

Since the fibers applied are nylon they can be cleaned with spot carpet cleaner when necessary. Paint thinner is recommended for cleaning brushes after use with Suede-Text undercoat adhesive.

Recommended Quantity of Fibers and Adhesive

For an average sized dashboard we recommend two (2) 3oz. bags of the nylon fibers and one (1) 8oz. can of undercoat adhesive. This will allow enough fibers for overspray.

Finished Product



Flocked Dashboard