

Auto Detailing Steps: Wash to Protect Sequence

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Vehicle, date, and package	
DATE	VEHICLE (YEAR, MAKE, MODEL)
LICENSE PLATE OR UNIT	PAINT COLOR AND FINISH
DETAILER NAME	PACKAGE
PROTECTANT THIS VISIT	WASH-WATER PLAN
WORK AREA	JOB NOTES

Wash

Item	Done	Skip	N/A	Notes
Shade and cool paint	☐	☐	☐	
Wash water kept out of the storm drain	☐	☐	☐	
Automotive wash soap, not dish detergent	☐	☐	☐	
Pre-rinse roof to lower panels	☐	☐	☐	
Two-bucket contact wash, straight strokes, top down	☐	☐	☐	
Dedicated paint mitt, never used on wheels	☐	☐	☐	
Bug, tar, or sap spots treated if present	☐	☐	☐	
Door gaps, fuel door, and lower edges	☐	☐	☐	
Final rinse, no soap left in gaps	☐	☐	☐	
Dry with clean microfiber, do not air-dry	☐	☐	☐	

Wheels and tires

Item	Done	Skip	N/A	Notes
Wheels cool before cleaner	☐	☐	☐	
Cleaner matched to the wheel finish	☐	☐	☐	
Dedicated wheel and tire brushes	☐	☐	☐	
Faces, barrels, and inner lips	☐	☐	☐	
Tire sidewalls cleaned	☐	☐	☐	
Wheels and tires rinsed before paint work continues	☐	☐	☐	

No wire brushes or harsh solvents on alloy wheels

☐☐☐

Decontamination and clay

Item	Done	Skip	N/A	Notes
Hand or plastic-bag feel after the wash	☐	☐	☐	
Clay only the panels that feel contaminated	☐	☐	☐	
Dedicated clay lubricant, surface kept wet	☐	☐	☐	
Small sections, light pressure, straight passes	☐	☐	☐	
Fold or knead to a clean face	☐	☐	☐	
Dropped clay discarded	☐	☐	☐	
Glass or headlights if they feel gritty	☐	☐	☐	
Wipe residue and confirm the paint feels smooth	☐	☐	☐	

Compound and polish

Item	Done	Skip	N/A	Notes
Inspect for swirls, oxidation, stains, or water spots	☐	☐	☐	
Skip cutting if the finish is already clean	☐	☐	☐	
Compound only for below-surface defects	☐	☐	☐	
Polish after compound, or alone for gloss	☐	☐	☐	
Compound and polish residue removed	☐	☐	☐	
Matte or satin OEM finish left unglossed	☐	☐	☐	
Panel wipe if ceramic coating is next	☐	☐	☐	

Protectant (wax, sealant, or ceramic)

Item	Done	Skip	N/A	Notes
One protectant system, per the header	☐	☐	☐	
Ceramic only on fully prepped paint	☐	☐	☐	
Thin, even coat, one panel at a time	☐	☐	☐	
Haze, level, or cure only as the label says	☐	☐	☐	
Ceramic applied in a clean area, roof down	☐	☐	☐	
Exterior plastic and rubber trim	☐	☐	☐	
Tire dressing on sidewalls only	☐	☐	☐	
No conflicting layer on fresh ceramic	☐	☐	☐	

Interior vacuum and extract

Item	Done	Skip	N/A	Notes
Trash and loose items out	☐	☐	☐	
Floor mats removed	☐	☐	☐	
Vacuum seats, tracks, carpets, and cargo	☐	☐	☐	
Extract or shampoo fabric if the package includes it	☐	☐	☐	
Dash, console, and doors wiped	☐	☐	☐	
Leather or vinyl cleaned, then conditioned if equipped	☐	☐	☐	
Vents and crevices brushed	☐	☐	☐	

Glass

Item	Done	Skip	N/A	Notes
Glass after exterior and interior product work	☐	☐	☐	
Automotive glass cleaner, ammonia-free on tint	☐	☐	☐	
Interior glass: product on the towel, not sprayed on the glass	☐	☐	☐	
Exterior glass and mirrors	☐	☐	☐	
Clean pass, then a dry buff	☐	☐	☐	
Streak check in raking light	☐	☐	☐	

Final inspection

Item	Done	Skip	N/A	Notes
Walk-around in more than one light	☐	☐	☐	
Paint: high spots, missed panels, towel marks	☐	☐	☐	
Wheels, tires, and wheel wells	☐	☐	☐	
Glass inside and out, including mirrors	☐	☐	☐	
Interior leftovers and wet carpet	☐	☐	☐	
Door jambs, fuel door, and trunk sill	☐	☐	☐	
Skips, defects, and next visit written down	☐	☐	☐	

Issues and sign-off

SKIPPED STEPS, LEFTOVER ISSUES, OR OEM CAUTIONS

JOB RESULT

DETAILER SIGNATURE

TIME SIGNED

NEXT WASH OR PROTECTION DATE

OWNER OR CUSTOMER SIGNATURE

Reference only. Verify against the vehicle OEM procedure and applicable regulations.