

Airstream Service Tips
HOW TO CLEAN YOUR AIRSTREAM

All aluminum will oxidize, the rate of oxidation depending chiefly on the atmospheric conditions where the trailer is kept. This oxidation appears either visibly, as a white powder in very small granules, or by feel, as a roughness on the surface. This bulletin is designed to explain the procedures for cleaning your Airstream trailer after oxidation has taken place.

We have used and tested a great number of commercial cleaners and special preparations designed for cleaning aluminum and have reached the following conclusions:

Under no circumstances would we suggest or recommend that a customer attempt to use any acid etch cleaner that is available on the market as a trailer cleaner. This is very dangerous for an amateur to use and, unless carefully handled, can be harmful to both the user and the trailer.

There are several ready-made preparations designed for aluminum in the Aircraft Industry. These are Klad Polish, Never Dull and Met-All.

We have found to be most successful Met-All used with the following procedure:

- 1 First, wash your trailer well with a good detergent in moderately hot water. This is to remove all dirt, mud and as much of the road asphalt as possible. If asphalt remains on the trailer after washing, use a small amount of kerosene or coal oil on a rag and wipe the spots individually, being careful not to scratch the aluminum.
- 2 Following this, using a fairly large, soft cloth, spread some Met-All on the rag and rub lengthwise of the trailer or parallel with the grain of the sheet, which is evident if you look closely at the sheet. Do one complete sheet or section at a time.
- 3 Continue to rub the Met-All paste on the sheet after it has picked up a black color, which indicates that the oxidation is being removed. Do not allow the rag to be caked or hard. Either use a clean rag or keep turning the rag as long as it is usable. When a cake of oxidized aluminum and paste develops it is possible, with continued rubbing, to scratch the metal surface.
- 4 After completing the instructions under Paragraph 3, take a completely clean rag and buff off by hand the excess material that was left on the sheet. (For extremely tough jobs, it may be necessary to do the complete job twice, except on the second time around it is not necessary to wash the trailer with detergent.)
- 5 We DO NOT recommend the use of a buffer except in the hands of a thoroughly experienced person (if not expertly used the buffer will leave a pattern on the aluminum surface).

We have found Glass Wax (made by Johnson) very useful to remove the last marks made in rubbing off the oxidation. Also, it is well worthwhile to apply a good coat of wax and wash the trailer every few months. Especially if you have traveled over salty roads or have been in a highly industrialized area, it is wise to wash the trailer frequently and keep well coated with wax.