

FinishFirst's ClearMax™ Process

IMPORTANT ▶ Read through these instructions entirely prior to attempting to use the following ClearMax products and process. If anything is at all unclear, then immediately contact FinishFirst for technical support.

THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU START . . .

- First decide which sections of the vehicle you plan to utilize FinishFirst's wipe-on/wipe-off painting process, which areas to merely apply ScratchMax™, and which areas you plan to clearcoat.
 - As a standard procedure, FinishFirst's painting process will always be used for repairing hoods damaged by road rash.
 - **Do not** use FinishFirst's wipe-on/wipe-off painting process either before or after clearcoating an area.
 - **Clearcoat can be applied over ScratchMax treatments, but do not apply ScratchMax over clearcoat treatments.**
 - If chips or scratches need painting within a clearcoat area, then use either a paint needle or a touch-up brush directly on the chips or scratches, **BUT ONLY AFTER CLEARCOATING** (See Q&A #2).
 - **Never apply clearcoat over paint touch-ups.**
- If clearcoating is being done in direct sunlight, first check the temperature of the metal with your hand. If it seems hot to touch, then get the panel to be sheeted into some shade for a couple of minutes to allow it to cool down; you may also cool it down by pouring or spraying water on area and then wipe dry it with a towel (if the metal is too hot the clearcoat may set up while you are sheeting and cause streaking).
- When first learning how to use this product, we recommend just using it on light metallics. Stay away from dark colors until you are comfortable applying the product.

Products Needed

ClearMax™	Nitrile Gloves
ClearActivate™	3 Ounce Dixie Cups
ClearMax Accelerator™	Paint Needles (25, 27 & 30 gauge)
PrepMax Plus™	Touch-up Brushes
KLN Plus™	Terrycloth Towels
T-Max™	Blue Shop Towels
ColorMax™ Paints	Microfiber Towels

Step 1: Prepping Area

1. Put on a pair of nitrile gloves.
2. If necessary, use a terrycloth towel and PrepMax Plus to remove any 'difficult to remove spots' (e.g. tar, bugs, adhesives, well-based spots, etc.) on the paint surface . **Make sure to remove all PrepMax Plus residue when done, as this will leave a haze if clearcoated.**
3. Use KLN Plus with a terrycloth towel to wipe down and clean the immediate and surrounding area to be clearcoated.
 - a. **NOTE:** If the KLN Plus causes a scratch to temporarily disappear for a few seconds, this assures you that the scratch will be completely covered/hidden by your ClearMax™ application.
4. With a micro fiber towel wipe surface to be clearcoated completely dry, and free of any excess KLN Plus. **Make sure to remove all KLN Plus residue when done, as this too will leave a haze if clearcoated over.**

Step 2: Mixing ClearMax™

Be careful mixing the ClearMax products . . .

1. Determine the temperature of the paint by touching the surface to be clearcoated, as this will determine which T-Max™ reducer to use. The 3 different T-Max™ reducers recommended are:
 - a. T-Max™ *Medium*: 10-55°F use
 - b. T-Max™ *Slow*: 55°-75°F use
 - c. T-Max™ *Super Slow*: 75°F and warmer use
2. **Put on an extra nitrile glove (double-glove)** on hand used for applying the ClearMax products (this reduces the chance of your hand being exposed to these chemicals if one glove would crack or rip).
3. Pour about **“3/16 of an inch”** (3/16”) of ClearActivate into a Dixie Cup. **Do not leave lid off or loose on ClearActivate as it will lose its catalyst capabilities prematurely.**
4. Pour about **“3/4 of an inch”** (3/4”) of ClearMax into the same cup as the ClearActivate (this will be a little less than a half ounce).
 - a. For cooler/winter regions, you may speed up the drying time of the ClearMax mixture by adding 5 drops of ClearMax Accelerator to your mixture.
5. Pour T-Max into the ClearMax/ClearActivate mixture until Dixie cup is full.
6. With a second empty Dixie cup, pour the mixture back and forth between the 2 cups until thoroughly mixed (6 times).
7. Pour the mixture into an 8oz, locking cap, squeeze bottle to dispense from as needed while clearcoating.

With this mixture of ClearMax, ClearActivate, and T-Max you can possibly clearcoat up to 6 cars.

Step 3: Preparing Applicator Cloth

Fold a lint-free blue shop towel (**smooth side out**) in half, 2 1/2 times (with open-ends under), making an applicator cloth about the size of the palm of your hand.

1. Carefully apply T-Max (from a 16oz cone-tipped squeeze bottle) onto the flat side of the cloth until it is completely saturated. Very slightly squeeze any extra T-Max from your blue applicator cloth into an overflow cup/tray.
2. Starting at the bottom edge of the applicator cloth, begin squeezing the ClearMax mixture directly and evenly, back and forth, until the applicator cloth is saturated, **but**



only up to about halfway on the cloth (as a result the upper half of the cloth will have been saturated only with T-Max, while the lower half will have been saturated first with T-Max and then with the ClearMax mixture).



Step 4: Applying ClearMax Mixture To Entire Panels

NOTE▶ There are two basic major types of repairs, and each needs to be treated differently. They are:

- 1) **Panels that have existing clearcoat on them:** Such panels should never receive more than 3 coats.
- 2) **Panels that have no existing clearcoat** (e.g. bumpers, sun damaged areas, etc.): Such panels may receive up to 5 coats if needed.

A. Systematically apply the ClearMax mixture to vehicle:

1. Begin at the upper edges of the defined area being clearcoated, then work across and down the section(s).
2. Apply the ClearMax mixture with the cloth, always using one directional strokes with the cloth (having the upper half of the cloth, which has only been saturated with T-Max, as the leading-edge).
 - a. Use even, smooth, flat strokes as you apply the clearcoat. Do not press hard (*See Q&A #5*) as you are applying the clearcoat. If it runs, then just wipe over it again.



TIP1▶ When applying the clearcoat mix, take your time and carefully watch what you are doing; do not go too fast, and do not stop

until you reach the other side of the panel you are sheeting.

TIP2▶ If your cloth begins to turn whitish, it is an indication that it is drying and you will need to apply additional T-Max along with the ClearMax mixture as instructed above.

TIP3▶ When applying the ClearMax mixture to a surface, **if it streaks**, you have too much mixture on the rag and you need to apply more T-Max reducer to the rag and go over the surface again; **but if it rainbows**, it is an indication you don't have enough of the mixture on the rag, so you need to apply more.

1. If after applying a complete initial coating of clearcoat you feel it needs another coat (if the scratches came back), then prepare a second new cloth (*See Q&A #6*) with the T-Max and ClearMax mixture, and go over the whole area with an additional coat to make sure everything has been coated properly.
 - a. It is okay to put on an additional coat while the previous one is still drying; you do not have to wait.
 - b. If the finish still dulls, or if an area remains faded a little bit, this is an indication to apply another coat.
 - c. As you recoat, the wet look finish will come right back, and eventually it will stay and you won't have to put on any further coats.

REMINDER▶ (1) Panels that have existing clearcoat on them **should never** receive more than 3 coats. (2) Panels that have no existing clearcoat **may** receive up to 5 coats if needed. (*See Q&A #7*)

- A. Make sure you haven't missed an area... Watch it for a little while to see if any fading or dulling returns.
 1. If you discover a drip, just redo that area only and it will blend in with the rest (*See Q&A #3*).
 2. It is dry when it feels dry to the touch. Though, to totally cure, it can range from a few hours to a day, depending upon the weather. Know that the clearcoat dries from the outside in.
- B. When finished, this process will stay; it will not go away.

TIP3▶ If the ClearMax mixture accidentally gets rubbed onto black body molding or plastic trim, then remove it by lightly wiping over it with PrepMax on a terrycloth towel.



Treating Chips & Scratches After Clearcoating

ClearMax treatments will help cover unpainted road rash areas. Any chips or scratches that do not go away with the clearcoating process should then be filled with a paint needle directly on the remaining visible chips or scratches. **(Do not use FinishFirst's wipe-on/wipe-off painting process either before or after clearcoating on clearcoat areas.)**

PAINT NEEDLE INSTRUCTIONS:

This application works great to fill chips, repair door edges and certain scratches *even after you clearcoat*.

Paint Needle Components: 1/2 oz Squeeze bottle, blue cap, screw on needle with plastic shield protector (25gm, 27gm or 30gm) the larger the gm number the smaller the flow of paint.



STEPS:

1. Select needle size (25 gm, 27 gm or 30 gm) then screw needle onto blue cap.
2. Mix paint in a cup and thin by adding T-Max (thin paint works better w/needle).
3. Hold blue cap w/needle facing downward.
4. Pour paint into cap no more than 1/2 full (**do not put paint into squeeze bottle**).
5. Pickup squeeze bottle and squeeze it while screwing it on to cap then release.
6. Make sure bottle comes back to original shape.
7. Test paint flow by squeezing paint onto back of the other glove hand.
8. You need to have control of the flow of paint from the needle (if it drips on its own you will need to remove the bottle and repeat number 5).

CLEANING BOTTLE AND NEEDLE:

1. Unscrew squeeze bottle from blue cap w/needle and empty contents.
2. Fill squeeze bottle 1/2 full with T-Max.
3. Screw blue cap w/needle back on then shake, shake (w/needle facing down).
4. Squeeze bottle until needle blows clean with T-Max.
5. Then loosen blue cap (do not remove) and continue to squeeze to clean threads.
6. Then remove blue cap and wipe dry with cloth.
7. Replace blue cap on bottle, replace plastic needle shield protector on needle.

TIP▶ If needle clogs up while using; just continue to cut back the end of the needle with scissors until paint flows from it.

NOTE▶ When using a paint needle on chips or scratches in freshly clearcoated areas, you will find that paint will typically meld in with the clearcoat and not leave paint blobs.

Other ClearMax Applications

SMALL AREA SCRATCHES:

1. Apply clearcoat mix with your blue towel, smearing it over and around the scratch(es).
2. Let it dry and set-up for a couple of minutes.
 - In hot temperatures, it may dry in as little as 30 seconds.
3. When dry, apply KLN with a terry cloth towel to wipe off the excess ClearMax mixture (leaving the new clearcoat only in the scratch(es)).
 - As you apply the KLN you will feel the clearcoat mix coming off where it's a little sticky. The longer you wait, the harder it is to take off.
4. Follow up by hand buffing it out with a micro fiber towel.
 - The scratches will still be there underneath but you won't see them in the same way at all. We want something the customers will not be able to see.



RANDOM SPOTS AROUND THE VEHICLE

- Put a little Clearcoat on a rag, apply to the area, and walk away. It's done!!!
 - Sometimes you can put a little paint in the clearcoat to go over bad spots (bugs, egg stains, etc). Wipe it on, take off the excess with KLN on the terrycloth towel, then hand buff with a micro fiber towel.

DOOR HANDLE SCRATCHES

- Put a little clearcoat mix on a rag, apply to area and walk away from it, you don't have to touch it again.

Clearcoating Q&A

Q #1 What causes a "clearcoat scratch" in the first place?

- A. Anything from a simple brushing up against the paint the wrong way with something like the zipper on a jacket—to a person's attempt to remove tree pitch from the paint and scratching the clear—to an entry key habitually placed near, but not into the keyhole—to the infamous parking lot adjacent car door or shopping basket.

Q #2 Can I use the ClearMax mixture over my paint touch-ups?

- A. No. **You may not do paint chip touch-up prior to clearcoating an area.** You must apply the mixture to surface clearcoat scratches first, and **then if needed, paint touch-up specific chips or scratches only with a paint needle or a touch-up brush.** (ClearMax applied after paint touch-up will disturb the metallic in your touch-up paints.)

Q #3 Can I "adjust" my clearcoat job if I'm not satisfied with it the first go around?

- A. Yes. However, **all adjustments must be made before the clearcoat dries because it does not come off once dried.** You may use T-Max on a paper towel to remove your clearcoat, but only if you do it right away. This is especially true after adding the accelerator to your

ClearMax mixture because it reduces the drying time to approximately 1 or 2 hours versus 3 to 4 hours. It is essential that any adjusting of your clearcoat application be accomplished within a few minutes of application.

Q #4 Can I clearcoat directly in the sun?

A. Yes, but check the temperature of the metal with your hand. If it seems hot to touch then get the panel to be sheeted into some shade for a couple of minutes to allow it to cool down. If the metal is too hot then the clearcoat may set up while you are sheeting the panel and streak.

Q #5 How hard do I press my blue applicator clearcoat-saturated cloth against the vehicle's surface in order to make a "just right" pass of not too hard or too soft pressure, so I won't have to do a repeat performance?

A. That's a hard answer to put in writing, but we suggest you either practice on your own car or a vehicle that you have some freedom to practice on. Apply with a "light touch," but not too light. Nothing replaces practice in order to develop just the right touch, and once you have it, you have it.

Q #6 About how many blue applicator cloths will I use to renew several clearcoat scratches on a vehicle?

A. As many as three, but one may be sufficient in many cases if only sheeting one or two panels.

Q #7 How many times can I safely clearcoat a panel?

A. It is not recommend anymore than 3 times unless it is an extreme case of a sun damaged dull finish that does not have the factory clearcoat on it.

Q #8 How can I needle paint chips on a panel without touching the clearcoat and leaving a smudge on it?

A. If you have any clearcoat residue on the glove you are using to apply the paint with the needle, then you need to change your glove. If you do happen to leave a small smudge you can correct it by applying some clearcoat mix over the smudge with a dapper and it will disappear.