Automotive Answers

Consumers Learning Hard Way About Spray-On Bedliners

(NAPSA)—The mere mention of the words "horror story" and "spray-on bedliner" in the same sentence should be ample warning for light-truck owners considering ways to protect their vehicles from the effects of everyday use and abuse.

Yet "horror story" seems to be a growing theme among consumers who have chosen to pay more for the "custom" look of a spray-on liner. From lack of protection against scratches and dents, to potential delamination of the lining material, to documented damage to the truck bed caused by the spray-on lining's installation, truck owners are finding that a premium price doesn't guarantee satisfactory performance.

"There are many truck accessories retailers who won't consider selling spray-on liners because of the potential damage to their reputation," said Kristin Uttech, director of marketing for accessories manufacturer Penda Corporation. "They've built their businesses by helping consumers enhance the value of their vehicles; spray-on linings can have the opposite result."

Spray-on bedliners are a comparatively new phenomenon in the truck accessories market. These products are delivered to franchised dealers and other retailers in huge drums, then applied—much like paint—to the truck bed surface. Once cured, the spray-on finish can indeed be attractive, but studies show that these liners fall far short of molded drop-in bedliners when it comes to protecting the vehicle. What's more, even the appealing, "custom" look of some spray-on liners can be only temporary due to sun-induced fading.

Research has shown that spray-on liners provide just one-tenth the abrasion protection and one-half the dent protection of today's best drop-in liners. And Penda's Uttech and others remind consumers that when you dent or penetrate a spray-on liner, you're damaging the truck itself. Drop-in liners, by comparison, provide precision-molded crush zones that absorb the energy of many impacts, thereby preserving the truck's sheet metal.

Ugly Facts About Installation

Another key fact consumers deserve to know about spray-on liners is that their installation can cause severe damage to the truck's factory finish. To properly install a spray-on liner, a technician must scuff or grind the truck bed's original finish. This may have severe vehicle-warranty implications: GMAC, for example, already has classified the installation of a spray-on liner as "excess wear."

"Any product that claims to protect the truck bed by destroying the factory finish isn't a good deal," said Tom Anderson, director of engineering for Penda. "We urge consumers to avoid spray-on products because they simply don't provide the level of protection the truck owner is paying for and, in fact, could void warranty coverage on the vehicle's original finish."

Leading drop-in bedliners today can be installed without drilling holes in the truck body. To further protect the truck bed, today's best drop-ins are manufactured from model-specific molds, ensuring a "custom" fit and minimal liner vibration and movement under a full range of operating conditions.

Manufacturers of drop-in liners also have all but eliminated the perceived gap in liner aesthetics. Penda, for example, now offers an exclusive high-gloss liner that dramatically enhances the appearance of even a new truck. The new Pendaliner® Skid Resistor™ bedliner also features a non-abrasive skid-resistant texture that won't wear off, unlike spray-on products.

"Why pay twice as much or more for a product that can create extra headaches and actually cause vehicle damage?" asks Uttech. "That's a question thousands of truck owners need to ask themselves before considering a spray-on bedliner."

Bedliner manufacturers urge consumers to visit www.bedlinerfacts.com for more information on how to select the best bedliner for any light truck.