

“Rust proofing” a Citroen CX

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Rust proofing is not something you do once and you're done. It's an ongoing process that never stops for as long as you own your CX. After all, you are just the caretaker of the CX for a short time until another lucky person becomes the owner. I've seen way too many CXs rust out needlessly because the owners did not consider rust to be a problem. Only when their feet were touching the ground from the driver's seat did they realize the extent of the problem and by this time it was too late.

If the car is driven year round then I recommend this procedure in the fall and then in the spring.

Fluid Film

Over the years I've tried various mixtures of engine oil, tar, ATF, WD-40, LHM and kerosene to come up with the best oil based mixture to protect the car from water and salt. In the end a commercial product called Fluid Film turned out to be the best. It has the superior ability to stick to the surface without being washed off from wheel spray, etc. I've also noticed that it creeps into the crimped and spot welded sheet metal joints exceptionally well. Fluid Film is primarily made from woolwax and is considered non-toxic. One CX requires about one gallon of Fluid Film. Their website is www.eurekafluidfilm.com and phone number – 888-387-3523.

Tools Needed

The basic idea is to get the Fluid Film into all cavities and onto all surfaces under the car. My favorite tools are a large oil squirt can with a long flexible spout and a pressure feed spray gun. The squirt can was purchased at an ACE hardware store and the spray gun was the cheapest Sears siphon/pressure feed gun I could buy. I think it goes for about \$25. You'll also need a small air compressor for the spray gun.



Time

It takes about 1-2 hours to do the complete job but if you've never done this before you should set aside about 4-5 hours from start to finish. Cleanup can take an additional hour if you're not too careful with the spray gun! After your done you'll need to wash your clothes and take a long hot shower.

Preparation

First, you need to find a spot that's close enough to the compressed air supply and far enough from everything else that might get coated with over-spray. Make sure that there is nothing down-wind of your operation. There's also going to be some drops and dribbles on the ground so a stone or grass-covered area is best. Safety glasses are a must and gloves and a long sleeve shirt are highly recommended.

The car needs to be dry and free from any water for several days at the least. Put the car in high position and place safety blocks under each of the four jack points. Make sure the park brake is set and place chocks so the car cannot roll forward or backward. At the very least you'll need to remove the rear fender skirts and preferably the rear wheels. Close the windows.

Fluid Film is quite thick and needs to be warm to work with. If you are working on a colder day then bring the Fluid Film inside the night before so it's warm before you start. Don't try and warm it up on the kitchen stove like I did once. I slept in the back of a rusted out DS that night.

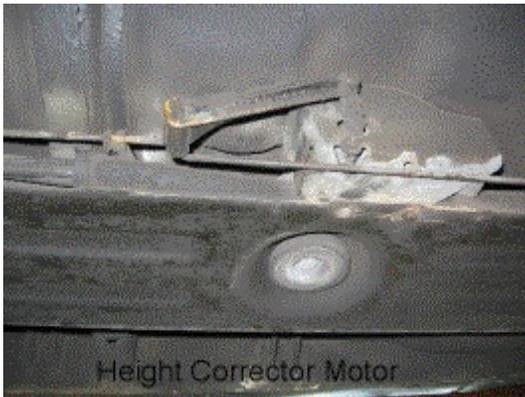
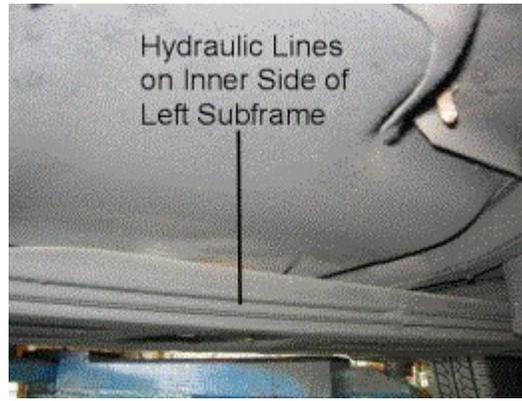
Spraying the Bottom

1. Load up the quart can on your pressure feed sprayer; connect the air supply at no more than about 40psi and you are ready to go. I'm not going to point out every single crack, hole and crevice to spray into; but instead highlight rust prone areas. Spray a reasonable amount into all areas and see where it goes. Avoid spraying the exhaust system. Fluid Film seems to be compatible with the rubber used on a CX so no need to worry if you spray any hoses or rubber components.

2. Start at the rear center of the car just behind the gas tank and work around to the front on one side then repeat on the other side. Spray the underside of the trunk, rear bumper area and rear suspension area. Reach under and in front of the gas tank and spray the rear brake lines, rear height corrector area and all hydraulic lines in the area. If you have a CXA car then be sure to spray the rear bumper reinforcement mounting points. There is one on each side – look under the car and to the rear of the sphere. You will see several large bolt heads. Soak the whole area from there back to the bumper. Avoid spraying the gas tank.



3. Now move around to the rear suspension area by the wheel. Look up and spray the inside of the fender and trunk wall. Heavily spray the areas to the front and rear of the rear wheel. These are primary rust areas. Spray the brake and suspension lines and rear sub frame area under the suspension boot. Pull out the plastic tab that holds on the rear of the fender skirt. Spray inside. Replace tab. If the tab breaks then you can use a wood dowel until a replacement arrives. Spray up at the top of where the fender skirt meets the fender. On the wagon there are seat belt mounting nuts at the top of the rear wheel arch. Spray these heavily. Note that if seat belts are not installed that the bolt hole is open to the inside of the car. If you are concerned then remove the inner hardboard/carpeted fender lining using a Phillips screwdriver and 10mm socket and place duct tape over the bolt hole openings.
4. Move to just forward of the rear wheel, reach under and spray the hydraulic lines as they run across the rear suspension cross member/tube from side-to-side. Now reach over to the other side and spray the inside edge of the sub-frame. Spray the hydraulic lines that run down the inner edge of the left sub-frame. Also, a light spray on the height corrector motor and linkages is helpful. These are located on the inside of the right sub-frame. Look for the rectangular “weep” holes in the bottom of the “kick panel” box section area. This seam is the area where several layers of sheet metal come together at the bottom of the box section along the length of the car. Spray up into the weep holes. This seam points down and is where many people put floor jacks causing the seam to be damaged and more prone to rust. We’ll also get this box section from above, later.



5. The front floor on each side has a box section that is especially vulnerable to rust. Look for a round hole just behind the front wheel arch. Spray inside.

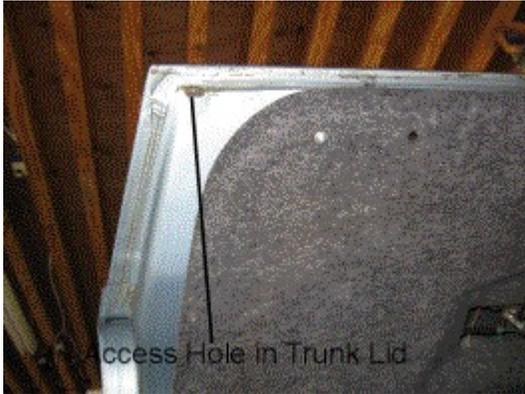


6. Spray the inside of the front wheels arches and front sub-frame areas as needed.
7. Repeat the above steps for the other side of the car.

The Body

Use the oil squirt can for the body. Since I'm concerned that the thick Fluid Film could clog body panel drain holes, I dilute it with up to 50% ATF or used LHM.

1. Open the trunk or tailgate on a wagon. Squirt into the drain holes in the bottom of the trunk lid or tailgate. Make sure you get enough to run down along the sides next to the glass. Leave it open till you are done. Oil the hinges.



2. Remove the rear taillights on the wagon. Squirt inside. Replace lights.

3. Open the hood. Squirt into any opening in the front edge of the hood. Oil the hinges. Allow oil to run down the interior sections of the hood. Oil the hood prop and hood latch mechanisms.



4. Oil any areas of the sub-frame in the engine compartment that look rusty. The battery area, probably due to acid, is usually needed.
5. Now oil the insides of the fenders by finding the access holes toward the rear of the inner fender – near the windshield squirter on the right side and the LHM canister on the left side. You will see the oil run out the bottom, behind the front wheel arch. Any other holes that allow oil to be squirted onto

the top of the wheel arch are good to get.

6. Now the doors. Make sure the windows are closed. Open each door and remove a small plastic plug at the rear of each door. They are a few inches from the bottom of the door and pop out easily with a small screwdriver or even your fingers. Shine a bright flashlight into the hole so you can see what is in there. You want to avoid spraying the inside of the door in case the plastic dust covers are loose or missing. Squirt oil into the hole so that the bottom of the door is covered with oil. If possible try to squirt up to the front and rear of the door where the door beams are bolted in. Oil each door hinge and latch mechanism.



7. On each doorsill there are a series of small Phillips head screws that hold on a plastic trim piece. Take one screw out at a time and carefully squirt into the screw hole. Make sure the tip of the squirt can is centered in the hole and that all the oil goes into the hole and not under the trim.
8. On the body, above each door latch there is a small plastic plug into the pillar. Take the plug out and squirt some oil into the hole. The oil will come out rather rapidly at the bottom as it is open to allow for drainage. If there is no plastic plug then remove one of the two door latch screws with a hex key and use that hole for the oil.

Your CX will be oozing Fluid Film for months to come. You will see it at the bottoms of the doors, trunk lid and hood with an occasional drip here and there. But that's a small price to pay for saving your CX from rust.

