

*The following article, a follow-up to the series by Eric Haartz on Top Materials, is reprinted from a Fisher Body Service Bulletin from the period.*

## REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF ROOF COVERINGS

No part of an automobile body is subjected to more wear or hard usage from the elements than roof coverings. Therefore, they must be selected from materials that will withstand the strains of road shock and weave, of wind and rain, as well as the expansion and contraction caused by quick changes in temperature. Moreover, with ordinary care these materials must remain waterproof over a satisfactory period.

The roof coverings used on Fisher bodies are of two different types: the coated, known as imitation leather, and the uncoated, called Burbank or Khaki material.

The uncoated type of roof covering is used chiefly on landaulets, cabriolets, sport sedans, roadsters, and touring cars.

### COATED FABRIC

The coated fabric for Fisher body roof coverings is made up of two layers of cloth which are cemented together into one piece by means of a rubberized solution. The outside surface of this fabric is coated with a composition which is rolled and grained with a glazed finish. This treatment renders the texture unusually tough, elastic, and durable and of even greater tensile strength than leather. It is water-repellent and will not absorb the moisture, even at the edges of the fabric.

Coated fabrics used for roof coverings are furnished only in black for bodies of present production, although colored fabrics may be procured from service stock for older models.

Other colors or color tones are obtained by applying Duco of the desired shade. These roof coverings may be obtained in varying widths. In the standard sedans of present pro-

duction, the average width of the roof covering is approximately 46 inches.

This bulletin deals with the removal, replacement, and care of coated fabric roof coverings for standard sedans of current production which have side roof rail cover panels and roof crown mouldings.

## REMOVAL AND INSTALLATION OF ROOF COVERINGS

### Removal

The first step is to remove the front roof crown moulding and then remove the adjoining side sections, working towards the rear. This operation is usually accomplished by prying off the moulding with a body spoon or chisel that is slightly turned up at the end. (See Fig. 1.) In this operation care should be taken to avoid damaging the side roof cover panel. Next, remove the tacks from the edges of the roof covering and inspect the exposed edge of the steel roof panels for tightness, insulation, protruding nails, etc. Remove all the tacks.



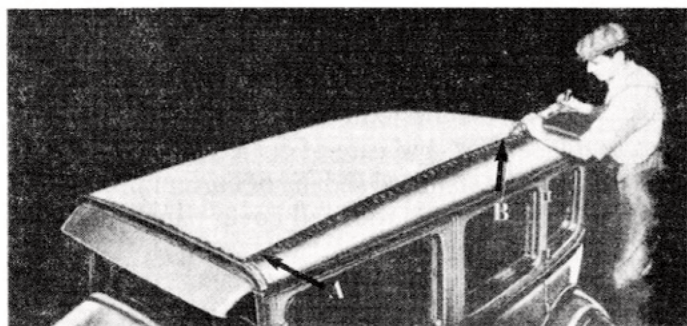
Fig. 1 - body spoon or body chisel

Scrape off surplus cement and clean off thoroughly. Now that the roof covering is removed, see that the padding over the roof slats is smooth and in good condition.

As a part of additional service one should now drive the car, if possible, for a short distance to locate any roof noises, squeaks, or rattles. After the roof covering has been removed, annoyances such as these can be very easily eliminated at a slight extra cost to the owner.

At the edges of the roof panels, where the covering was attached, it will be noted that oblong-shaped slots have been punched lengthwise through the panels at regular intervals in order that the tacks which hold the roof cover-





**Fig. 2 - Application of Repstick sealing compound over slots in roof panel before installing cover.**

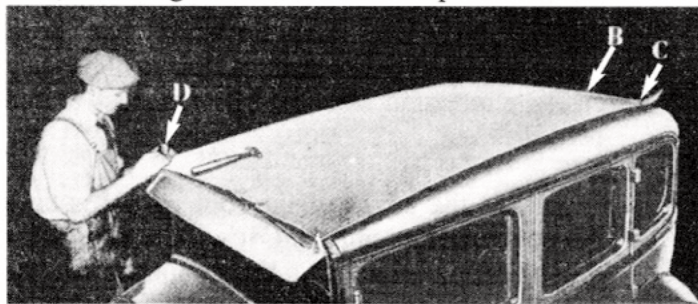
ing and the nails in the crown moulding may be easily driven into the wood roof rail. Therefore, as a preliminary step to installation, it is advisable to mark the center of each of these slots with a piece of chalk (see A in Fig. 2) as a guide for tacking and nailing later.

The next step is to apply Repstick\* sealing compound across the front and along the side and rear edges of the roof. This compound is applied either with a Repstick gun (see B in Fig. 2) or an ordinary oil can with the spout enlarged to allow the compound to flow freely.

*\* Editor's note: Repstick, a product no longer available, was a heavy liquid sealing compound. Today special tape which is heated with a special iron, is used to fuse two pieces of top material. Other sealing products may be available through professional upholstery supply sources.*

## Installation

After the roof has been thus prepared, cut a new piece of roof material of the proper width and about 3 inches longer than the one removed. Then carefully lay it in place over the roof, allowing 1-1/2 inches of surplus material



**Fig 3 - Trimmer in the act of diagonally stretching and stay tacking right front corner of roof covering.**

at both ends. Stay tack the new roof covering at the center of the front roof rail (see A in Fig. 3) and at the upper back panel (see B in Fig. 3) with six or seven tacks about 1/2 inch apart, using 2-1/2 oz. trimmer's tacks. Next stretch and stay tack one of the rear corners (see C in Fig. 3) and its diagonal opposite front corner (see D in Fig. 3). In a similar manner, stretch and tack the other two corners. Now finish tacking the roof covering completely across at the rear.

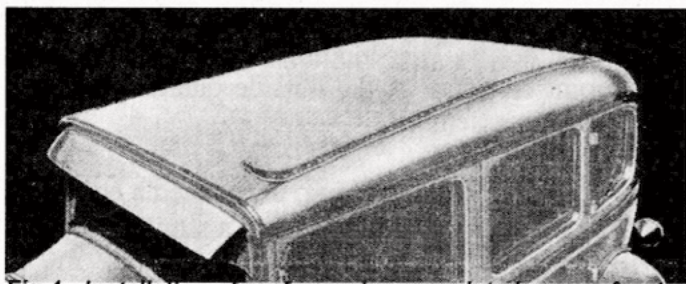
Then stay tack the sides for their full length at intervals of about 10 inches to facilitate the later stretching and tacking. After this is accomplished, complete tacking across the front roof rail and then finish tacking the sides, lifting the covering as the work proceeds to locate the slots in the panels. Drive a tack at each end of every slot.

For shipping convenience, roof crown mouldings are furnished from service in four sections, front, back, and the two sides that extend around the curve at the rear, instead of the three sections that are used in production.

To install the roof crown moulding, first nail the front section of the moulding to place through its holes with 1-1/4 inch No. 14 moulding nails, starting at the center and working toward the sides until the roof drip moulding is reached. Now saw off the surplus ends of the moulding with a hack saw so that its edges will fit evenly with the top edge of the roof drip moulding. Then drive all nails with a nail set, but not too deep or it may show a "ripple" effect after the tacking is finished. Now swage the cap over the heads of the nails with a wooden mallet, using for this purpose a U-grooved moulding block cut to fit the crown cap of the moulding.

Next, either one of the side sections of the moulding is installed, starting at the rear curve of the roof, working toward the front. Make sure that the moulding covers all tack heads. Use the center marking at the slots in the panels as a guide for driving the nails through the moulding. After each side is finished, saw off enough moulding at the front end to form a perfect fit at the edge of the front roof crown





**Fig 4 - Installation of roof covering completed across front of roof and left side moulding nailed but not swaged.**

moulding. Then measure and cut the back crown moulding section to make an even juncture with the curved ends of the sides and nail it to place. Now swage the caps of these sections in the manner described previously.

Finally, trim off, close-to the outside of the moulding with a sharp knife, all surplus covering material and apply roof drip moulding cement to the inner edges of the moulding. Cement is not applied on the outside edges.

#### INSPECTION OF ROOF COVERING AND MOULDING

Whenever a car is brought in for service or replacement of any kind, inspect the roof covering and the crown and drip mouldings. Examine the roof carefully for checks, cracks or holes in the fabric, remembering that even a small leak may not only ruin the covering itself but may also allow water to seep through and rust the panels, rot the wood, and damage the upholstery in the body. Also inspect the crown mouldings for looseness, improper sealing, or faulty installation. See that the cement around the edges of roof covering and mouldings is not cracked. In many cases small openings may be remedied by applying roof drip moulding cement at the juncture of the roof moulding and covering.

Thus far there is no method of permanently repairing a crack or hole in the roof covering and the only way to insure a satisfactory result is to install a new roof covering.

#### CARE OF COATED FABRIC ROOF COVERINGS

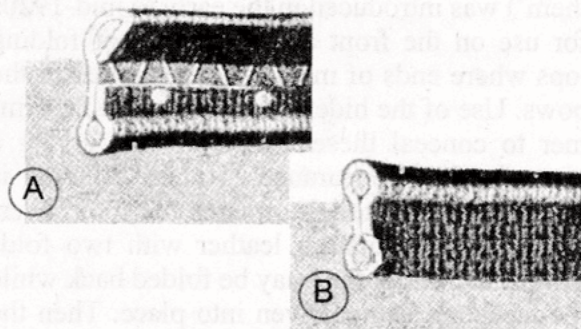
Important factors to be considered in the care and cleaning of coated fabrics are the

chemical actions of oils, greases, or other solvents on the composition of the fabric. For this reason, water only is recommended for cleaning coated fabrics as the oil, grease, solvents, etc. contained in soap, cleaning compounds, or dressings may have a deteriorating effect on the fabric and its rubberizing compounds.

#### THE ONE-PIECE ROOF CROWN AND DRIP MOULDINGS

In replacements, it is not advisable to try to reinstall either a roof crown or a drip moulding that has been removed. In fact, considering the low cost of the one-piece mouldings and the more satisfactory results obtained, it is much more economical to install new mouldings.

The one-piece roof crown moulding is an assembly of base and cap stamped in an integral unit instead of two separate pieces as were formerly used. The illustration shows nails in the base exposed with the cap open at A and with cap closed at B. The roof drip moulding has the base, cap, and drip channel in one piece. The method of swaging the cap over the nails in the base in one-piece moulding not only makes a better seal for the moulding but also simplifies the installation.



#### TRIM BINDINGS

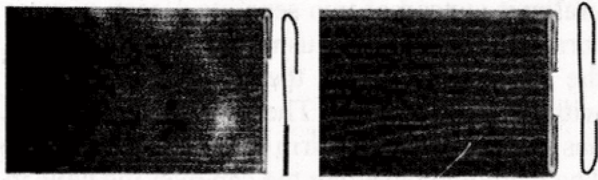
*The following section is not from the previous Fisher Body Service Bulletin. Unfortunately, the illustrations from the original article were not clear enough to reprint, and the names used at the time were dated. There is no reference to the trade names used at the time. We have substituted contemporary trim and moulding information. We are again grateful to Eric Haartz, of The Haartz Corporation, Acton, MA for the illustrations and text which follows.*



## BINDING

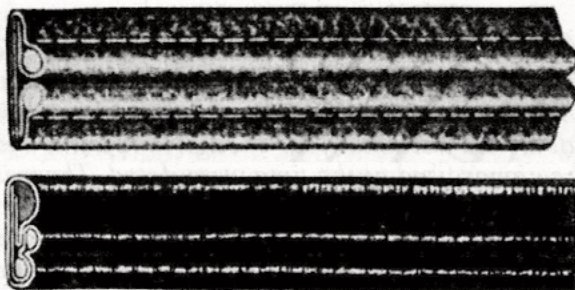
Various forms of strip material are used to trim out tops at the header bow, rear bow and in other forms of soft-trim edge work. Usually made from lightweight coated fabrics to complement or correspond with the top material. The various forms of these binding have different names and serve varied functions in soft-trim work on vintage cars. The binding or trims generally covered the seams and edges of the roof material, giving the job a clean, finished appearance.

Single and double edge-fold bindings were used for trimming exposed edges of tops or other soft-trim parts. Double edge-fold binding was also used for trim work on front and rear bows of folding tops until supplanted by 'hidem' and 'locktite' weltings from the mid-1920s onward.



*Left: Single fold binding    Right: double fold binding*

Hidem welting (a contraction of 'hide them') was introduced in the early to mid-1920s for use on the front and rear bows of folding tops where ends of material were tacked to the bows. Use of the hidem welting enabled a trimmer to conceal these lines of tacks, giving a nicer finished appearance. 'Hidem' Binding is made up of a material to match the roof covering or of an imitation leather with two folds toward the center that may be folded back while the tacks are being driven into place. Then the

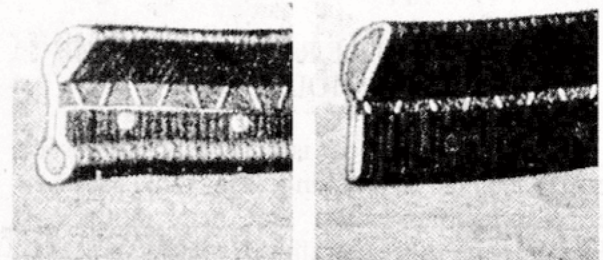


*Top: Hidem ('hide them') binding  
Bottom: Locktite welting*

fold automatically closes over and hides the tack heads. This binding is used to cover the joint on some of the outside quarter and back curtain assemblies.

Locktite welting, introduced a couple of years after the hidem, served a similar purpose.

Another common kind of edge trim material is wireon, made in several configurations. These have reinforced beaded profiles for use in vehicle soft trim work. All of these have a semi-round flap that folds down to conceal tack heads and present a decorative or functional look to edge work. The wire-on trims were most often constructed of a semi-rigid material which would conform to the slight bends or compound curves of a roof. The material was covered with a leather-like vinyl, or, in some cases, real leather.



*Left: Plain moulding    Right: Cordless moulding*

Often, the same or similar bindings and trims were used in the interior of the car to serve essentially the same purpose: to conceal seams and edges and present a clean appearance. The interior trim was most often covered with a fabric that matched the interior fabric.

*S.K*



*Completed roof decking projected.*

*All of the photographs used in the Binding segment of this article are courtesy of the Haartz Corporation.*