



Why Rust Proof in the Spring

Published on January 22, 2020



Greg Lawrie

President at Pro Fleet Care Franchising

Having been in the rust control industry since 1983 I often get asked by clients, "When is the best time of year to spray my vehicles?" Truth be told, product and application are far more important to the success of an effective rust control program than the time of the year you choose to spray your vehicles. Having said that, there are some real advantages to a Spring spray, below are just a few.

So why do some many people believe it is best to spray their vehicles during the fall? Prior to the 1980's, rust control products which were commonly tars and wax, had a few problems that lead to their demise. One of the biggest problems was the lack of penetration, and another was the fact that the products would trap moisture and salts into vehicles which would accelerate the corrosion process. As long as the industry was spraying these types of products, it was not wise to spray during the spring. After a long winter, salts migrated into the doors, fenders and seams of the vehicle. And then there was the issue of the spring being so damp. It just was not a wise time to spray.

So why spray during the spring? Vehicles which are on a proper yearly application, using the correct products, will benefit from being sprayed during the spring. More rust damage occurs during the spring and summer months than the winter, as moisture is more prevalent due to the dampness of the spring time, as well as temperature spikes, along with freeze and thaw cycles,

which create moisture and humidity. This moisture and humidity find their way into every area of a vehicle. Further, leftover salt attracts and holds the moisture, causing a chemical reaction which corrode the metal in your vehicle. Products that are designed to penetrate into the body cavities, lift moisture, neutralize salt, and leave a coating of protection behind are important to a successful program. The warmer weather of spring helps as products creep better and penetrate deeper into the vehicle.

Another reason to spray in the spring is the result of harsh winter conditions. Winter conditions tend to be more taxing on the undercarriage of vehicles, as they are exposed to rock salt, sand and salt brine. By spraying vehicles in the spring, owners can be assured that these elements are not working against them. The underside of their vehicle will be well-protected during the spring and summer when rust is most prevalent. As well, the coatings will have more time to set up for the winter months, which makes them more effective.

When it comes to application, spring and summer are the best time of year to spray. The industry overall is less busy during the spring and summer. Applicators have more availability, so they are more likely to work around your schedule. As well, they will be more inclined to take their time spraying vehicles, which is a good thing as they can pay more attention to details.

In the case of salt and snow equipment/trucks, the best results are found by spraying twice a year, both spring and fall. At the very least, they need to be sprayed in the spring after the equipment has been washed up in order to remove the salts. The reason for this is the rust control coatings are compromised by the harsh elements, rock salt, sand, brine and snow, rubbing the coatings off as well as the continual washing of the equipment after every event. By washing their vehicles and equipment, greasing the bearings, and applying a rust control product, you are assured of the best protection. In addition, it is important that the storage of equipment/vehicles are in dry locations, instead of salt domes or grassy fields to minimize corrosion and rust.

Just as you want to spray salt equipment in spring, farmers should also wash and spray their fertilizer equipment before it goes into storage for the year. It should be noted that equipment/vehicles that sit will experience issues with seizing of parts and accelerated corrosion if not treated before storage.

Availability of one's fleet is also another good reason to look at the spring or summer months. With winter coming on fast last year, many clients did not get a chance to spray their fleets in the fall. Not all is lost, however, as the spring is as good as anytime to get your vehicles sprayed. The damage has not yet been done, but over the spring and summer it will be. For the snow removal contractors, their fleets will be sitting for the next 6 to 8 months which makes them good candidates for spring/summer application. During the summer months, school bus fleets will be just sitting there, while plant shutdowns and employees working reduced hours during the summer, leaves many fleets available.

Although a successful rust control program is not dependent on the time of year you spray, but rather the products and process used, spring is a great time of year to spray one's fleet. If you were caught off guard by winter showing up early this year, then I would recommend you spray your vehicles and equipment before the salts become activated during the spring months.