

CHIPS AND DIPS

Fill and Smooth 20 to 30 Paint Chips at Home for About \$50 With Langka's Complete Paint Chip Repair Kit

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE AUTHOR

If you're gonna drive it, you're gonna chip it. There is no way to avoid it. We love to drive our Pontiacs but we hate damaging the paint. And while many would rather not have a body shop repaint these areas on a regular basis as it's cost prohibitive, most times our efforts to repair the chips on our own leads to less-than-stellar results.

Larry Johnson, owner of Langka.com, had similar experiences. Back in the early '90s, his \$35,000 late-model luxury cruiser developed some chips, and he visited the dealer for a cure. After being handed a small bottle of touch-up paint and attempting to make the repairs, he thought to himself, *There's gotta be a better way.*

Being a pharmacist, he had the mindset to investigate how paint is formulated and how he could develop a product that would provide better and smoother results when repairing chips and scratches, without having to resort to sanding, repainting, and blending.

With the help of a friend, Larry developed the Blob Eliminator. Simply stated, it's formulated to take advantage of the fact that after touch-up paint is applied, it isn't as cured as the rest of the paint on the car, even though it's technically dry. Additionally, Larry says the car companies generally use lacquer-based touch-up paint,



Langka's Complete Paint Chip Repair Kit includes Prepaint, Blob Eliminator, Paint Sealant, three micro-brushes, a plastic squeegee card, and a microfiber cloth for \$39.95. Instructions are included, and its plastic packaging can be reused for storing the products. The Blob Eliminator can be purchased separately for \$29.95.

and his product works effectively with that. He explains that it can be used with urethane or enamel-based touch-up paint, but the process will require more drying time.

Langka's kit is recommended for use on late-model two-stage (base/clear) paint systems, but Larry says it will also work on vintage cars that have been repainted with a modern paint system, in two-stage or single-stage. It cannot be used on vehicles built before '65 that have original paint.

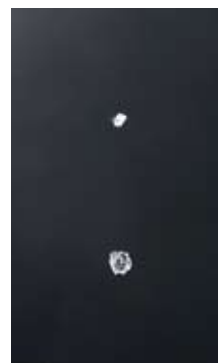
If you're apprehensive regarding its compatibility with your single-stage paint, rub Blob Eliminator onto the paint for 30 seconds in a hidden area, using a soft cloth that is a different color than the paint. If paint color shows up on the cloth, don't use the product. Larry says this is very rare, and any automotive paint applied by the factory or by a professional shop since 1990 should have no issues.

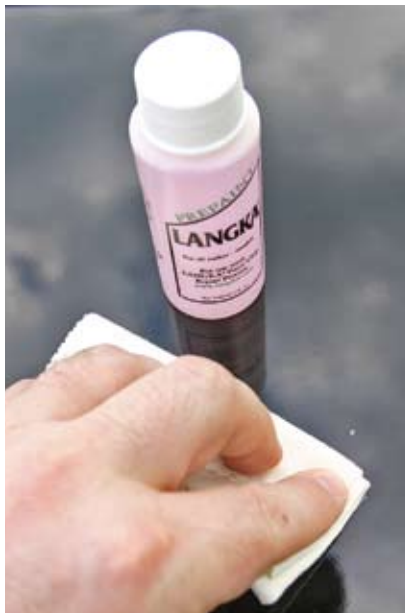
It will work on solid colors and metallics, though metallics can be more challenging. Also, the product can be used on any body part

that is painted, so plastics and urethane parts are okay. The Langka system is for DIYers and is available only online, through www.langka.com and other sites.

We decided to try the product out on—of all things—a black car. Black is like a mirror that shows everything, but we did it anyway. Read on to learn the procedures and see how our repairs came out.

► Here's a pair of typical chips in a single-stage black paint job. We'll fix the lower one and use the upper one as a reference point. The car is put in the shade before work begins, per Langka's recommendation.





The process begins with cleaning the area in and around the chip with Prepaint using the supplied cloth. It will remove wax, dirt, and any other contaminants to ensure proper adhesion of the new paint.



Next, comes a rinse with plain water and a wipe down with a soft cloth.



After a couple of false starts with body-shop touch-up paint that refused to dry, this Dupli-Color Scratch Fix in Universal Black was used.



One of the included micro-brushes was employed to apply the touch-up paint. It was simply dabbed into the chip.



Langka recommends that the paint be built up to a blob via multiple coats that not only fill the chip, but also extend slightly beyond the edges of it, and is higher than the surrounding surface. Be aware that the paint has a tendency to shrink into the chip (or scratch) as it dries. If you see a deep divot in the blob of dried paint, apply another coat. It took four coats applied 30 minutes apart to fill our chip.



Dry time may take anywhere from four hours to days depending on the type of touch-up you use and the ambient temperature—65 to 85 degrees is best. Sunlight or a blow dryer can speed the process. Once it's dry, the blob can be smoothed out. The included microfiber cloth is wrapped around the plastic squeegee and twisted tight to provide a flat surface on the bottom.

TIPS ON TIPS *Here are a few helpful tips ... get it? Tips.*



Not all chips are created equal, and neither are paint applicators. Here are three popular choices. The yellow micro-brushes come with the kit and will easily fill small to moderate scratches, as you have already seen. The brush on the right came with touch-up paint and is really only good for larger chips. The toothpick ...



... is still one of the best tools to fill very small chips.



If your chip goes to the bare metal and has rust in it, eliminate it quickly by using this 3M fiberglass pen. We had one, but Langka sells a similar product. The right chip had just as much rust as the left chip before the pen was used.

5-MINUTE FIX

You're just about to head to the cruise-in or the car show when you notice a nasty chip on your Pontiac. You want to fix it, but you don't have hours to wait for the touch-up paint to dry before you apply the Blob Eliminator. Here's a quick way to get the repair done, straight from Langka. Bear in mind, however, the results won't be as smooth as the methods outlined in this article.

- Apply Langka Pre Paint.
- Wipe it off with water and dry with cloth.
- Apply touch-up paint.

- While still wet, "smear" the paint with your finger or the blue card over the chip, and over the surface of the vehicle to other chips in the area if needed, i.e., finger painting. This will put paint in the chip/scratch and speed up its drying time. Likewise, this will leave more touch-up paint on the OEM surface, which will come off quite easily.
- While the paint is still wet, wrap your forefinger with a smooth, clean cloth; apply Langka Blob Eliminator (shake well) to the cloth and rub over the areas painted; you

can see it begin to remove the excess paint; you will also "feel" it rubbing off. Use light pressure when moving over the chip areas; a little bit more pressure where the paint is on the OEM surface. NOTE: If you remove too much paint, just redo this process, being more careful with the pressure you apply with your finger.

- Buff the excess Langka from the surface.
- Seal the repair with Paint Sealer.
- Remove any paint on your finger with Langka and wash your hands immediately.

If you're gonna drive it, you're gonna chip it



The Blob Eliminator is liberally applied to the cloth and spread around. It is formulated to soften the touch-up paint, and the nap of the fabric wears the softened blob down. Light pressure is applied as the squeegee is rubbed in a back-and-forth motion (not circular) over the blob for 15-30 seconds to soften it.



The touched-up area is checked often and rubbed very lightly until it is nearly flat with the surrounding paint. Note all the black paint on the cloth, and the filled and flattened chip. Any excess paint left from the process will be lightly wiped off with a clean cloth.

SOME THINGS WE LEARNED

Larry recommends using only the manufacturer's touch-up paint or the Dupli-Color we ultimately used. It's lacquer-based, so it works better with the Blob Eliminator, and the drying time is generally faster than paints from other sources.

Our paint is modern single-stage urethane, so we attempted to get black touch-up paint from the local GM dealer. We were told that it would have to be ordered and would take several days to come in.

Perpetually on deadline, we sought other sources. The dealer recommended asking the body shop for any extra paint. We lucked out

and got a small touch-up bottle of black urethane that was supposedly ready to apply. So we did. Nearly three days later, it still wasn't dry.

Undeterred, we hit another dealer body shop in the area. We explained what we were trying to accomplish, and said we needed touch-up paint that dried quickly. Nearly three days later, same problem—the paint was still gummy.

With the magazine on the cusp of shipping to the printer with a five-page hole, we were running out of options. Driving a few towns away, we picked up some Dupli-Color black touch-up paint. Its instructions said the paint was fast drying—and it was.

The moral? Use the manufacturer's paint or Dupli-Color if at all possible; avoid body-shop paint unless you have time to wait for it to dry or the shop can verify the paint was mixed with the proper ingredients to dry quickly—hours instead of days. Or Langka can provide touch-up paint (www.langka.com/touchup-paint-c-30.html).

Larry cautions, "GM paint codes alone don't provide the exact information we need to create the paint color. We need the WA#, which is the specific identifier for the color. The customer's local dealership will have this information."



Here is the result. (Yes, those are cloud reflections in the photo.) The repair is flat, but the paint surface has multiple pinholes in it. Larry says it's from air trapped in the paint (most touch-up paints recommend you shake them before use), and that air has to be released by poking the blob just after applying the paint. Larry says he has seen this before and using the "squeegee method" instead will get the air out of the paint, so we tried it.



After the touch-up paint is applied, the included squeegee is held at a 45-degree angle and drawn across the paint, with a very light touch, to force it into the chip and wipe off the excess, making it even with the surrounding surface. Note that the squeegee is held longways, as it's more easily flexed and makes the process easier.



Here's what it looks like after a few coats and the latest pass with the squeegee. This method also works better with metallic paints, according to Larry, because it spreads out the metallic particles and dries more quickly, thereby reducing the chance of the metallic falling out of suspension and puddling in the blob.



◀ Since the squeegee will also cause the paint to spread wider than is needed, use the cloth wrapped around a finger to meticulously apply the Blob Eliminator—along the edges of the chip but not over it—while the paint is still wet to clean up the area. (Notice the paint has sunk into the chip and will require another coat.)



▲ Following another coat and more careful removal of the excess paint, Sealant is applied to the chip area to seal the new paint.



◀ Here is the result of the lower chip repair. While it's not invisible, it still looks much better than before. If the paint in the chip is very dull and you are working with a base/clear two-stage paint, clear may need to be added over the filled chip to bring up the shine. Larry says it's rarely required, however, even on two-stage. If desired, the clear can be applied in a thin coat (no blob) after the repair and smoothed with the Blob Eliminator if needed, or it can be mixed with the touchup paint in equal parts prior to the repair and then applied.



This scratch is down to the primer, so it can't be wet-sanded out. When using the squeegee method to fill a scratch, a dab of touch-up paint is applied at the leading edge. Then the squeegee is dragged across it lengthwise, as was shown on the chip repair, to fill in the scratch.



Here's how it looks when the paint is drawn into the scratch on the first application.



After multiple coats to fill the scratch, Blob Eliminator was used carefully around the scratch to remove the excess paint. Following a very light touch rubbing the scratch with Blob Eliminator on the cloth (wrapped around a finger this time instead of the squeegee, so that we could feel the paint ridge), sealant was then applied. This is the result. The scratch is not invisible, nor will it ever be without professional sanding and refinishing, but it is much improved and barely noticeable from a few feet away. More practice will most likely make it even better, but this story has to go to print, so that's as much as we can do for now.

CONCLUSION

Paint chips look terrible, and though typical touchup repair is an improvement, it still leaves an unsightly lump on each chip. Short of having to wet-sand to flatten the area, Langka's Complete Paint Chip Repair Kit offers the next logical step in making the repair smoother and less noticeable.

The quality of each repair varies with time, technique, and practice. Applying more of each will make it less noticeable. At \$39.95 for a kit that can fix 20 to 30 chips (plus \$7 worth of touch-up paint), Langka's Complete Paint Chip Repair Kit certainly can improve the appearance of your Pontiac for a fair price. 🐾

SOURCE

Langka
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