



Are you ready for upholstery?

Appointments: Call or get in touch with the upholstery shop well ahead of time to "get on the list." Most of the shops (Street Rod Upholstery Shops) will have a back log 6-16 months or more. " I do " ! (Also keep in mind this is when your Street Rod will be ready for the upholstery shop plan well ahead). "The best thing to do is when you think you'll be ready add about 3-4 months to it." Also, stay in-touch with them from time to time. Be sure to make an appointment. It's better to cancel than to not have an appointment at all. If you do cancel, the shop will keep you in mind and work you in much quicker when you are ready.

Pricing: When you call a custom upholstery shop it's best to have in mind the style of interior that your looking for. Tell them the kind of seats you would like to use stock seats, bucket, beach or custom built seats. This way the shop can do it's best to give you a "ball park" price for the job. Full blown custom seats, tricked out consoles, chrome trim and full two tone leather interiors can up the dollar amount easily. Asking a shop to come down on their price is unfair. Ask yourself would you like to make \$1,000.00 less next month at your work? Remember you get what you pay for when it comes to custom hot rod upholstery. Do your homework and study the shops work, fit and finish.

Wiring: Your wiring should be completed when you bring your car to the upholstery shop. Always have your fuse box mounted. If your wiring is a mess most shops will not do the interior until they fix the wiring problems. This could cost you over a \$1,000 to \$2,000 on top of the interior price. Things to keep in mind are door locks, door poppers, power locks, power windows, wipers, A/C, heater, radio, speakers, CD changer, amp, third brake light, Dome light, courtesy lights and any stuff that will be placed in the console. Make sure there is a little bit of play within the wires. The wires should have enough slack under the dash to come over the top of the kick panels and fire wall panel at the very bottom of the dash (You can use a ruler or stick to check this). If you can run the wires overhead it will make your floor alot cleaner and easier to work. If you plan on putting a console in the car you can run your wires down the middle of the car. Make everything neat, and tie up with plastic ties. "Keep Slack & Make Neat". It's a good idea to have a battery cut off and a remote battery post under the car for easy charging. Note: Some fuel injection cars can not have the battery power cut to the computer. If you have shaved door handles have a hidden switch or some other way to get in the car so if something happens.

Heater Hoses: Have all heater hoses installed and checked for leaks. Make sure they have a little slack in them also (Just like the wiring). On some cars the heater hoses run parallel under the dash, run down into the kick panels and come out into the inner fender well. Then they run up the inner fender well and come out into the engine compartment where they are needed. You may have to put a spring in the hose where it makes the turn from the kick panel into the fender well. This will keep it from folding up. This makes your upholstered kick panels and fire wall panel fit up nice and clean. It also makes your exterior fire wall look better. The main thing is to keep your interior kick panels and fire wall as flat and clutter free as possible.

Air Conditioning: You need to have your A/C and heating unit panel in place wired and working. If you plan on putting the A/C panel in the console you can set it in a small box in the floor with foam wrapped around it for the interior guy. All for the duck work should be fastened on the unit and pulled to where the vents / louvers will go. If the vents / louvers are made into the dash all should be in place.

Windows and garnish moldings: All side and quarter windows need to be in and working. Power windows and door locks purchased, installed, wired and working. You could leave the front and back glass out in some projects ask your interior shop. If you use (FISH) aquarium silicon, the glass will not get that old look around their edges. Keep Slack in the wires! If power windows, (have them wired) put the power window switches where they are best for you (where they do not run into your leg on the door) The best window switch places are in the console or in a short drop board under the dash. Make sure that you discuss this with the upholster. All window felting should be in place. Have all the window garnish moldings fitting the windows and painted. (If you plan to paint the moldings the same color of the leather or cloth, have them in primer and make sure that the felting is fitted for the upholster to put onto garnish moldings after he or she has painted them. This will up the cost of the job.

Dash and Garnish Moldings painting, "leather look": You can go to your local auto paint or upholstery supply store and buy cans of SEM vinyl and plastic coat spray paint. You can buy the color you want to do the interior in and paint the dash and garnish moldings. This way the shop can match the leather to the moldings. You can also have this paint custom mixed " It works great". This way the dash and moldings have a look just like the leather clean and neat! Keep in mind not to go to light with your color. Real light interiors look good for about a year. A nice medium color is your best bet!

Dash Pads: Some cars and trucks had Dash Pads from the factory. You can reuse or recover the OEM pad. Sometimes shops can make custom Dash Pads. Another good idea is to fill up the holes in a metal dash where the pad bolted down and paint the dash. The painted Dash gives a very clean look!

Heat Shields And Sound Deadeners: It's always a good idea to use insulation in you car or truck. Floor and firewall should be sealed. Only use the bobble type insulation in you roof, sides panels or trunk. If you use the bobble type in the floor it will bust or pop. It's best to use spray-on insulation in you doors because water can get behind the glue / stick on type insulation and sweat. Dynamat is a very good product but, when placed in the doors it can make them very heavy (very much so on fiberglass cars). I've also found when placing Dynamat in the floor tape off the seams with clear or aluminum tape. This helps keep the black sticky stuff on the back from using out and getting all over you. It is ok you go ahead and put the Dynamat in the floor before you take our car to the upholstery shop. Do not put Dynamat on top of the package tray or on the door where the door panel clips on to the car. It's not best to put any other insulation in the floor because it will just get messed up as they get in and out of the car. You can just bring the roll of insulation you wish to use in the car and let the shop put it in.

Carpet: Make sure that you have the carpet sill plate garnishes moldings. You can buy custom or sock molding. This is where the carpet meets the door-jam. If you are planning for your master cylinder to be under the car. Consider putting a remote fill on the exterior fire wall or hidden behind an interior trunk panel. This way you won't have to cut a cheesy hole in your high dollar carpet for a trap door!

Radio and Speakers: If your radio is in your dash have it wired and working. If you plan on having your radio mounted in the headliner or a center console make sure when you pull the wires there's enough slack wire. Most shops will wire the radio if you would like them. Make sure you have the three wires needed red ACC, yellow HOT all the time and Black GROUND. The speakers can just lay where you would like them to go. Most shops will make them blend in with the upholstery as they build the custom interior (make sure there is enough speaker wire slack). If you do put the speakers in yourself make sure that they are flush. This way the panel or package shelf will fit nicely.

Seats and Seatbelts: It's best to mount your seat(s) lower than you think they should be placed in your car. When new foam and new upholstery are put on the seat it will (90% of the time) raise you up in the car. Make sure that your seats are square in every way and that the seat tracks are also square to each other before installing them. (Check for: side to side, the backs, across, stand in front of the car and look to see if they look straight to each-other and so on ...) Also make sure that they fit the car and that they aren't too tight. If you cannot put your hand with a little play in-between the seat and the door, I think that they will be way too tight (You can check this the best way when the seats are as far up to the dash as they'll go in the car). If you are using the original seat and it's in bad, bad shape and will need to be refoamed, go ahead and take all of the old stuff off (old nails). You may want to paint the frames. If so, stack them on top of one another. This help will save paint. If you plan on using seatbelts or a harness please install securely. Three point harness belts need to be installed when the car is being built.

Custom Dash: If you decide to build a custom dash, keep in mind that if the dash comes straight out into the car (two, three or four inches) make room for a 1/2" piece of windlace. You can fix this by making channels for the 1/2" windlace in the side of the dash with a piece of 5/8" cut in half tubing. Also keep in mind that the door panel has to go in-between the dash and the door. Make a 5/8" to a 3/4" gap for this or just make the dash taper into the middle of the hot rod. It's best to make the dash taper away from the door.

Steering Wheel: If you have not bought a steering wheel consider buying a half wrap steering wheel. This way your upholstery shop can cover it with the same leather you picked out for the interior. It can also be recover years down the road when it may show a little wear. Billet Specialties, Budnik Wheels, Colorado Custom, Carriage Works and Billet Accessories Direct sale these type of steering wheels.

Door Handles and Window Cranks: It's best to have them when you take your car to the interior shop. If not this will add a few hundred dollars to your bill. Street Rod parts suppliers should sale them.

Running Boards: Some older cars have Running Boards. It's best if you have the running boards off your car so they will not get scratched. Shop cover and tape the boards up but stuff happens.

Trunk: Have your trunk working. Make sure you have a way to make the truck stay open. If your trunk uses some kind of electric opener, make sure it does not stick out past where the panel should be flush. Make sure to have all weather striping in place.

Dome and Interior Lights: It's a good idea to have all of the power wires run for your dome and interior lights. You can also go ahead and buy the lights.

Weather Striping: have all weather striping in place in door and trunk jams.

Convertible Tops: Building a car with a convertible top make sure the tacking strips are in good shape. If they are not make sure they are replaced. On some of the 1930's and 1940's cars they are attached around the lip of the body so, it's best to replace the tacking strips before paint. Buy not doing so you take a bigger risk of your paint getting scratched. Also make sure the top is adjusted to the windows and working right. Call your interior shop for more tips.

Chopping Your Rod: If you cut or chop your street rod top, please do not take out the windlace tacking strip channels that are around the doors. If you decide to, don't use thick metal stock.

Gas, Oil, Antifreeze Leaks: Gas tank and filler neck needs to be sealed to prevented from leaking fumes in the shop. Have as little gas in your car as you can. Most of the time a 1/4 tank or less is fine. A full car or truck of gas can smell up a shop. Please try to have all oil leaks, antifreeze leaks and other fluid leaks stopped before you take it to the interior shop. If you can not do so please inform the shop about your leaks. Most shops have "shop dogs" and antifreeze would kill them if them drink it.

Brakes & Wheels: Have you brakes in good working order. A full pedal is best for moving the car around in close places. A bad set of brakes could cause a car to end up running into a wall, table or another car in the shop. Be sure that all lugnuts are tight.

Engine & Running Gear: It's a very good idea to have the car running and everything checked out. Put 20 to 100 miles on the car or truck before you take it to the interior shop. Make sure the transmission is shifting right at all speeds. Pushing a car off and on a trailer is dangerous. Another reason is, the shop could have a steep driveway. I'm sure you would not like to take your brand new interior out to fix a wire or some kind gauge problems. Also make sure you have rear end grease.

Deadlines: It's best to not push a custom interior shop to make a deadline for a car show. By doing this you force the shop to work harder, sloppier, make mistakes and cut corners just to make a three day show. Things turn out better when time is taken with in the design of an interior.

Relax: Don't worry about all the details of upholstery. Experienced upholsterers will be glad to guide you thru the details and styles available for your car. Just remember to contact the shop early in the interior process so there will be plenty of time to plan and prepare. Be patient, All things worth while take time.