

Rhino Lining your FSJ

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The floorboards of my FSJ (Project Chief) have now been repaired (see Floorboard Repair 102) so it is decision time. What to cover the resulting repairs with and still retain the utility that I expect my vehicle to provide?

Project Chief is intended to be a do everything vehicle. It's chores are intended to be, but not limited to: Daily driver, grocery hauler, hunting, fishing, hauling the boat, scuba diving platform (spring diving in Florida.), four wheeler, firewood and building supply hauler, emergency response vehicle and general purpose transportation duties. The object from the beginning has been to set the vehicle up with the worst case scenario in mind, so whatever I chose had to encapsulate the character and purpose of the buildup.

In deciding what to do I recapped my requirements for the interior below:

Impervious to Water and Corrosion

Durable and long wearing

Soundproofing

Insulating

Resistant to solvents, chemicals, blood etc.

In addition my side panels have been wet and dried so many times they look like an accordion. They without a doubt would have to be replaced.

After looking at all the options I could think of (paint, undercoatings, carpet, zolatone, lava liner and spray in liners) I went with Rhino Lining which is a polymer spray in liner similar to a drop in truck bed liner.

While more expensive than some of the other options, it afforded me all the qualities that I was looking for and would allow me to do some creative things in the cargo area. In addition it would run from firewall to the end of the tailgate.

First I stripped all of the items such as threshold kick plates, screws, mounting plates and items that had held carpet and weatherstripping in place from the vehicle. All of the seats and belts had already been removed in the floor repair stage. Leave only the drivers side seat in place.

I then fiberglassed and/or bondoed over any holes larger than screw size and sanded any high spots or rough areas (such as ragged screw holes). I suggest that you do this yourself as you know for sure that it will be done properly. I did most of it myself but left some areas on their instructions that they would sand them (they did not!).

I removed the side panels and then using them as a pattern I cut out replacement panels from 3/8" A/C grade exterior plywood. Yes, I know if you measure the recesses in the sidewalls that they were only 1/8" deep at best, but I wanted a sturdy platform to mount tool boxes, gun racks, cup holders, fire extinguisher, flashlights, scuba tanks etc. onto so this was not a mistake. Trust me it will all work out.

Any mounting areas for equipment were pre drilled and the threaded bolts were recessed into the backside of the plywood and secured. They have prongs on the front side so when you tighten them up they dig into the wood from the backside and will not fall out (I forget what they are called). Now is the time to put insulation in your sidewalls if you want to or have not already done so. I then securely mounted the plywood with sheet metal screws to the sidewall areas.

The Rhino Lining place said that they would need two days to do it right so I arranged to leave the vehicle with them.

It is important that when you drop the vehicle off that you spend the time to go over with the person doing the spraying exactly what you are expecting and exactly where you want it sprayed. You can also discuss thickness at this time, usually 1/4" on the floor and 1/8" on the sidewalls. In my case I actually drew with a marker on the areas that I wanted covered and had written instructions. They still did not get it totally right. I wanted the ceiling sprayed, owner said no can do. Tech guy said he almost did it anyway but forgot to call. BUMMER!!!

They will tape over all bolt holes and areas that you do not want sprayed, but expect that some holes may be covered anyway. No problem as you can later drill and then cut the hole out.

Two days later I picked it up. Final verdict?

AWESOME!!!!

Truck now 300% quieter, very little heat comes up from the floorboards, and I have already been dragging steel across the cargo area. Makes a small scuff mark! The cargo area is now sealed below the plywood forming in effect a waterproof tub area.

Remember the plywood side panels? Well I had them spray up the sides about two inches over the top of the plywood so that it would fill in the cracks and create a rolled edge at the top of the plywood under the glass. Very smooth with a slight bulge and I did not have to paint or finish plywood in any way.

Cost \$550. Add \$50 for materials fiberglassing floor panels and this is a total of \$600 for a completely refurbished and sealed floor. Comparable cost of welding in new steel and carpet, padding etc. \$550 to \$600.

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