

Truck Bed Protection Systems: What You Need to Know to Protect Your Truck and Your Cargo

By Michael Scholl

Even though the pickup truck has been around for almost 100 years, its evolution from a spartan, cargo-hauling workhorse into a lifestyle activity vehicle is a fairly recent development. Today's pickups haul everything from gardening and landscaping materials, camping and sports equipment to motorcycles, personal watercraft, hobby items, furniture and family pets.

Many pickup owners like to install bedliners to protect and preserve their truck's bed. Unfortunately, most liners have failed to keep up with the changes in the way people use their trucks. Pickup owners now demand more from bedliners than just protection for the truck bed; they want protection and security for the many kinds of cargo they carry as well.

Pros and Cons of Various Types of Bedliners

A quick review of the types of bedliners currently on the market can reveal which products best meet the needs of today's truck owners.

Drop-in Hard Liners. Molded plastic "drop-ins" were the first bedliners to hit the market. They arrived on the scene when technology made it cost-effective to produce large vacuum-molded liners. Drop-ins caught on quickly because they helped to protect the truck's bed from dents and scratches caused by sharp or heavy objects. That's good, except that the drop-in liner itself can scratch the bed's paint, and moisture can get trapped between the liner and truck bed, allowing rust to form.

Another limitation of the drop-in liner is that it is, by definition, "hard" -- it can't do much to cushion and protect sensitive cargo like furniture or sports equipment. Plus, it has such a smooth, hard finish that items tend to slide around a lot, especially during quick starts, stops and turns -- not the best thing if you're carrying sensitive cargo like furniture, groceries, or pets.

"Spray-on" Bedliners. Another approach that has gained some popularity is the spray-on liner. It has better non-skid attributes and is applied to the bed surface, reducing the potential for rust. But, it does not offer the impact protection of the hard plastic surface. Also, the spray-on material cannot be removed once applied, and in some cases it can void the truck's paint warranty because spray-on liners require the truck's paint to be scuffed or removed prior to application. Most spray-ons must be applied by a professional, therefore, the quality is dependent on the training of the person spraying on the liner.

In addition, it typically requires four hours to complete the application and curing process. Spray-on liners can be very susceptible to wear and weathering, which can cause them to fade, look hazy, or appear used after only a short time.

Bedrug Premium Truck Bed Protection. More recently, a new type of bed protection system made of weatherproof, nearly indestructible, non-skid polypropylene fiber surface, bonded to a molded closed-cell polypropylene foam bottom, was introduced for the pickup truck market. The BedRug® premium truck bed protection system provides complete scratch, dent and rust protection from the truck bed while cushioning and protecting sensitive cargo.

“This is where the bedliner of the past has let truck owners down,” said Ron Wise, president of Wise Industries, developer and manufacturer of the BedRug® premium bed protection system. “They expect their bed protectors to prevent scratches and dents when they’re moving heavy and bulky items like building materials or gravel, but they also need liners that can safeguard and protect sensitive items they carry as part of their home and leisure time activities.”

The BedRug is now available directly to consumers through car dealers and DIY/DIFM stores throughout North America. The BedRug is available for nearly every pickup truck make and model.

Which Bedliner is Right For You?

Bedliners should be evaluated on how they protect the truck bed, how well they manage and protect cargo, and how much value they return to the owner. Although each bedliner type has certain advantages, most also have significant negatives compared to the BedRug system. Some are functional but can adversely affect the condition of the vehicle at the time it is sold or traded in.

The BedRug system’s strong points over drop-in and spray-on liners include:

- **Timeless good looks** for the life of the product, thanks to its fade-resistant materials.
- **Protection for the truck bed** that lasts a lifetime due to its tough, cut- and tear-resistant woven polypropylene structure. The BedRug bed protector won’t chip or crack, either.
- **Gentle** – not hard, like plastic drop-in liners or spray-ons. BedRug offers soft, non-skid protection for furniture, sports and camping gear, coolers, pet cages and other sensitive cargo.
- **No-risk trial for truck owners** with its 30-day money-back guarantee.
- **Replacement protection** with BedRug’s limited lifetime warranty should the BedRug bed protector develop a manufacturing defect.
- **Can be reused** in identical truck models or resold to owners of same-model trucks. It’s easily removable and retains its new looks.

BedRug Functional Benefits

The BedRug system offers a number of appealing benefits:

Maintains truck bed's condition	Your truck bed will look as good the day you sell it as the day you bought it.
Paint protection	Will not abrade the truck bed's paint because it has a non-abrasive foam bottom.
Cargo protection	Keeps cargo secure, so that it looks as good at its destination as it did when loaded. This is great for protecting expensive golf clubs, valuable antiques, groceries, etc.
Non-skid, non-slip surface	Keeps cargo in place, even during sudden starts and stops.
Easy on the knees	Can be used for camping, tailgating, drive-in movies, etc., because its comfortable surface is people-friendly.
Residual value from lenders	Has a \$250 residual value from GMAC and Ford Credit when purchased as a factory option – like money back to you at trade-in time!
Dealer-installed option	Approved and available for Chevrolet, GMC, Ford ("Sport Liner") and Toyota.

The True Cost of Bedliners

Pickup owners invest in bedliners to protect their beds, but the hidden costs of owning some types can affect the condition and value of the trade-in vehicle and ultimately increase the true cost of owning a bedliner.

A key point to remember at trade-in time is that the dealer will give you the value of your trade-in as listed in the NADA Blue Book, minus any expenses that will be required to refurbish the vehicle to sellable condition.

Here is a point-by-point analysis of how the major bedliner products perform at trade-in time.

Drop-in Plastic Liners. The average cost of a drop-in plastic bedliner through a dealer at the time of a new vehicle purchase is \$300. During the life of the truck, hard liners often abrade the paint on the bed and this can result in rust. If the hard plastic liner looks used and scuffed-up, dealers must make the vehicle salable either through their dealership or by wholesaling it out, and will need to replace the used bedliner with an aftermarket liner that costs them \$100 or more.

In addition, they may need to repair the rusted truck bed. This will raise the net cost of owning the plastic drop-in liner over the original cost of \$300.

Spray-on Liners. Spray-on liners seem like a great value initially, since they seem to eliminate the rust problems caused by hard liners. But when it comes to value, they are the least effective of the three types. They have no residualization, no positive value at trade-in, and they usually need some corrective action to make a trade-in marketable.

“Spray-on liners can’t be removed from the truck bed, so they have to be covered up by a drop-in liner. Otherwise the dealer must lower the value of the traded vehicle based on the condition of the spray-on liner,” said Wise. “If the spray-on faded from ultraviolet rays or became chipped and gouged from hard use, the dealer has to spend money to repair it or put a hard liner over it.”

Wise noted most trucks that come in for trade-in with spray-on liners usually are wholesaled or auctioned, which further reduces the value of the trade-in. So a \$350 spray-on bedliner could cost the truck owner significantly more than the \$350 initial cost of the liner.

Bedrug Premium Truck Bed Protection. The cost of the BedRug premium truck bed protector at the time of a new truck purchase is approximately \$500. Because GMAC and Ford Credit recognize the BedRug bed protector as a premium product, it is residualized at \$250, making its net cost \$250 over the term of ownership. Because it fully protects the truck bed, no corrective action or expense is needed at trade-in time.

“This is where the true value of the BedRug protector shines, beyond the unmatched performance features and benefits it provides to vehicle owners,” said Wise. “Because the BedRug system resists damage and fading, the dealer can resell it along with the vehicle without any need for replacement.”

“If the customer chooses to take out the BedRug bed protector, it can be removed in just a few minutes without tools, revealing a truck bed in like-new condition, a trade-in value to the seller of at least \$100,” said Wise. “Of course, if the vehicle owner buys a truck of the same model, he or she has the option to move the BedRug bed protector from the used truck to the new one simply by ordering an inexpensive installation kit.”

For truck owners who want unexcelled protection both for their truck bed and their cargo, combined with a liner that looks great year after year, there is only one choice – BedRug from Wise Industries.

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