

Dealing with Dust



When we go 4WDiving we inevitably end up in clouds of dust, especially when traveling in convoy or on tracks with bull dust (Cape York had the worst dust I have seen). Apart from being unpleasant it can also cause damage to our vehicles unless we take precautions.

In preparation for the dry summer, here are some tips on dealing with dust... mostly learnt through bitter experience.

CABIN

- In dusty conditions, put your air conditioner on *re-circulation* to prevent dust from entering the cabin.
- When stopping, to open a gate for example, let the dust settle or blow past before opening the cabin door.
- Periodically replace the cabin air filter (also called a pollen filter) which is usually located behind the glovebox.
- After traveling in dust, clean the cabin air filter gently with an air compressor.
- If door seals are letting dust in, cleaning and spraying the seals with silicone may help to restore them.

CANOPY

- Seal all air vents in the ute tub and around the tailgate (use a commercial sealing kit or DIY with pinchweld rubber seals).
- An air vent/air scoop in the canopy roof may help to pressurise the canopy interior. Some people install an air filter and intake fan to draw clean air in.
- Pack food, clothing, bedding etc in well sealed plastic boxes (or similar) and cover with a tarp.

AIR FILTRATION

- Fitting a raised air intake (snorkel) will help reduce the amount of dust and water entering the engine air filter and engine (air intakes on standard vehicles are usually located behind the radiator or mudguard).
- If you have a snorkel fitted, cover the inlet with an oiled foam cover (available commercially). They stop a significant amount of dust but require regular cleaning and re-oiling.
- Clean the engine air filter if there is an excessive buildup of dust. Be very careful not to damage the air filter (for example, if using an air compressor).
- Check to ensure water has not entered the filter box if traveling through heavy rain or deep water.
- Replace the air filter each time the vehicle is serviced, and carry a spare on outback trips.

CONVOY

- Traveling at the back edge of the dust cloud improves your visibility and makes it easier for oncoming vehicles to see you.
- Be mindful that vehicles will be spread over a long distance in large convoys.

