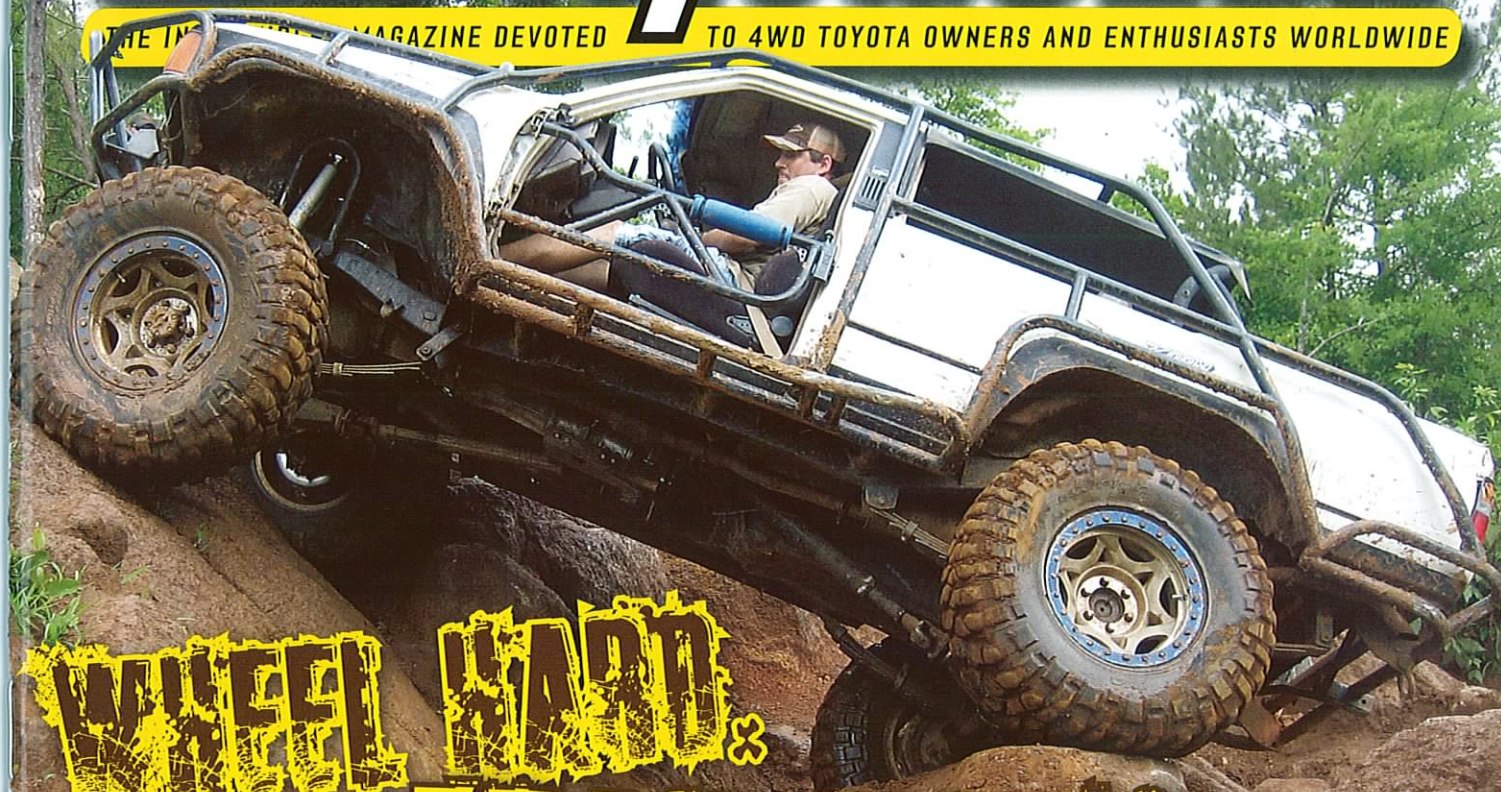


4WD Toyota Owner

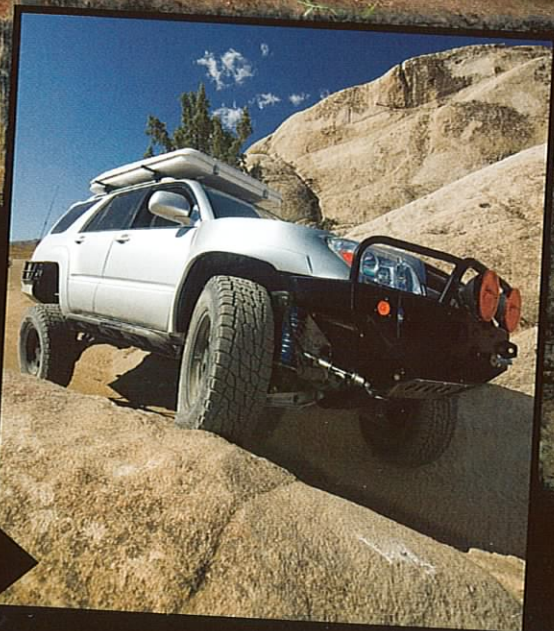
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TOYOTA LAND CRUISER ROUND TWO

TO FLARE OR NOT TO FLARE

Words & photos: Ben Crockett

If you are an 80-series Land Cruiser owner, you have probably been trying to decide on the fender flares for a good while. Removing the fender flares on an 80 is a lot like making the commitment to trim out the fender wells on a stock 40-series, so the decision to remove ours didn't come without some heavy consideration. We navigated all of the pros and cons, rumors and myths before taking action. Then we went with the best post-removal solution money can buy.

WHY GO FLARELESS

The functional reasons for removing flares are much more to the point. The most popular reason? You are going to rip them off on a tree or rock someday, so why

not beat them to the punch? Removing them yourself is far less damaging to the vehicle, though it will leave you with a few holes to fill. With stock wheels and 315 tires, like our Nitto Terra Grapplers, you will

find the tire, not the fender flare, becomes the widest point of contact by about one and half inches. Not too dramatic, but just enough to allow for pivoting or sidewall climbing, without the body damage.

Weight savings is another reason some will claim and while the savings aren't jaw dropping, an extra 22 or so pounds less never hurt, when you factor the fender flares and mud flaps. Another great reason are the mounting benefits of the alternatives, such as Line X, which is a much more durable material capable of taking a heavy beating and pulling through without incident, unlike the thin body panels and expensive-to-repair rocker panels.

Did we mention looks? Some drivers simply love the streamlined look more and there is no shame in that. My wife has kept me around for years on this very same principal, so whoever

said looks aren't everything, probably isn't happy driving the car they drive.

REMOVING YOUR FENDERS

It is actually simple. The front flares are bolted at the front and rear, with easy exterior access, and via two 10mm bolts on the interior fender wall, requiring you, or your kid's skinny arms, to reach through the access holes on the engine bay side to be removed. A light tug will pull the plastic snaps free and the fronts are done. The rears are actually two pieces, but just as simple. The short door portion is removed via two bolts, one on the inside of the door jam, and one exterior bolt under the base. Once pulled free, the remaining brackets can be easily removed by drilling out the two rivets in each. The rear portions are removed by a single exterior bolt at the rear base and two interior bolts, accessed in the jack/

tool compartment on the driver's side, by pulling back the passenger siding.

IS YOUR SIDING BULLET PROOF?

We did a lot of research before we settled on a body coat that would best suit our needs. Since there are many holes created by the removing of the fenders, we wanted something that would require minimal body prep, but wouldn't crack over the openings under direct pressure. Since the idea is to protect the body, durability was a must, so a softer, non-skid material would do us little good. Finally, a little color would be a nice touch, to help set our project apart and breathe a little more life into our frequent desert backdrops. These factors left us with one acceptable choice: Line-X. Along with hundreds of color options, the material sprays on hot at a very high pressure, meaning it dries instantly and won't bunch up or sag on the vertical surfaces of our siding. The resulting even coat looks nice and tight to

the body, even at only about 1/8" thick.

It is also quite literally bulletproof, if you choose to go with Line-X XTRA with DuPont Kevlar Technology, as we did. Rated five times stronger than steel, Line-X says it will stop a .38 caliber bullet dead in its tracks, even over the holes left from your flares. Since the coating dries "semi-hard", it maintains a flexibility and bond that ensure, even upon impact, it will not peel or crack, even if the rest of the fender or door panel has seen better days. XTRA is also infused with a UV coating to ensure your color lasts as long as your new body coat does.

END RESULTS

In our opinion, if you choose to remove your fender flares, Line-X is the only solution (bulletproof XTRA is optional). No added bodywork or fear of cracking, with an end result that will leave your project, like ours, looking factory fresh all over again. Since Line-X applications can take as little as a few hours and with hundreds

of locations from Papua New Guinea to Algeria, we doubt you will have any trouble having your rig bulletproofed before your next outing. For more info on Line-X, see www.linex.com. ✓



1. When you remove the rear flares you'll come across riveted braces. Drill them out to remove.

2. Accumulated grime is ugly where the front flares once were. Should you remove yours? It's totally up to you. We like the 80-series with them, but we've also had ours torn off on the trail. Do it yourself and the end result is prettier.

3. Line-X XTRA joins the TJM rear bumper, 35" Nitto Terra Grapper tires, and TJM snorkel. Soon this rig will have Redline Motorsports front bumper and sliders, and a Warn Endurance winch.

4. Fresh out of the Line-X shop, our FZJ80 is looking good. Line-X offers plenty of colors, and with the legendary toughness of Line-X it's a great idea for any 4WD Toyota owner. We know of plenty of FJ40 owners who have Line-X'd the entire interior of their rigs!



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