

Tools of the Trade



Clipper Blades

By Jeff Andrews

Clipper blades are one of the most important tools on which groomers rely. The following tips require only a few minutes to perform and can considerably lengthen the life of your blades.

At the end of a business day, most clipper blades look similar to those pictured. That is, they are covered with hair, pet dander, and coolants. The heat created when using a dirty blade is enough to melt the hair, which combines with the oil and dander to create a slimy mess that creeps under the cutter of the blade.

Once the 'slime' dries on the underside of the cutter, the points of the cutter will be raised, causing the blade to drag through the coat. If the blade is not cleaned immediately, it will begin to dull.



To clean the blade, slide the cutter to one side. Then, use a small brush (or toothbrush) to clean the cutter, comb, and spring of all hair, oil, and dander. Once the first side is clean, slide the cutter to the opposite side and repeat. Do not take the blades apart to clean them.

Use a rag to wipe any excess debris from the blade once the cutter is returned to its proper place. Next, the blade should be washed with H-42. Although some prefer to hand wash the blade with H-42 and use a dryer to dry it, others will attach the blade to a pair of clippers and run the clippers through a pan of H-42, carefully submerging only the blade. The latter technique is recommended as it cleans and lubricates the blade thoroughly. Wipe the excess liquid from the blade.

Lastly, apply a very light coat of clipper oil. Slide the cutter back and forth, applying oil to both sides. Be sure to include the top of the cutter, where the spring makes contact with it.

Blades that are left dirty and hairy will begin to acquire a noticeable reddish brown film burnt across the cutting edges. Once this film becomes burnt onto the edges, sharpening is the only means of removing it.

Alternatively, blades that are cleaned at the end of each workday are able to effectively remain in service much longer than those that are neglected. Although normal wear and tear will still occur, the time between sharpening can be extended by taking a few moments to clean.

