

RETROFIT OFFROAD

SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTIONS: SEMI-HARD SHELL

When installing the Slider Window Retrofit Kit windows, it is possible to insert a stiff backing behind the canvas to stiffen the canvas into a hard shell and prevent any bulges in the canvas that may occur.

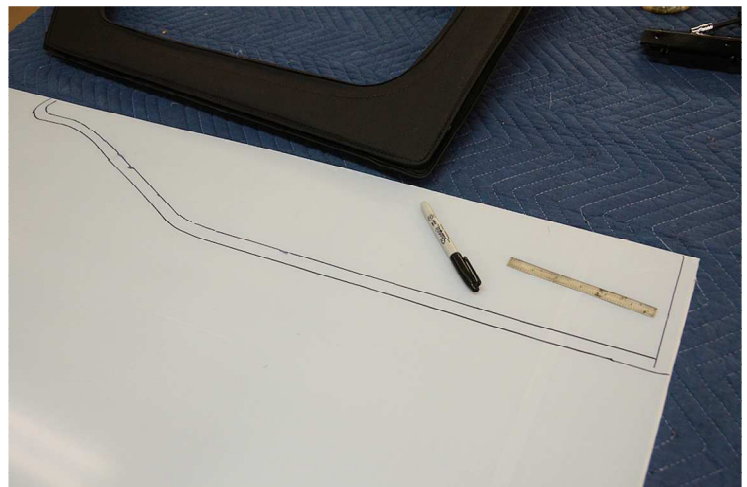
A suitable material is 0.080"-thick acrylic sheet - it's easily cut with ordinary tools, thin enough the slip inside the upper, and strong enough to provide a strong, stiff backing to the canvas. Lowes is one source for 0.080 acrylic sheets; they're under the brand name Duraplex in that store, and come in a variety of sheet sizes for less than \$30 a sheet.



Step 1: Align a straight edge of the acrylic sheet with the bottom of the window opening and trace around the outside of the canvas.



Step 2: Mark a cut line approximately 1/2" in from the line you traced.



Step 3: Cut along the cut line you made in the last step. A handheld jigsaw with a fine-toothed blade cuts the acrylic well. The acrylic is somewhat brittle and may crack if bent too much, so be careful that it's well supported when cutting.



Step 4: Test-fit the acrylic by slipping it in between the back of the canvas and the plastic upper shell. If necessary, trim the acrylic to fit. The top of the acrylic should be even with the bottom edge of the window opening so the slider window clamps it in place. In this example, the narrow front of the acrylic piece as been cut off; it may not be necessary to have the acrylic extend all the way into the front corner of the upper.



Step 5: Remove the plastic protective backing from the acrylic. There are two ways to stick the canvas to the acrylic – in this photo double-sided tape is being used. Once the acrylic is positioned properly inside the upper, the backing is removed from the tape and the canvas stretched tight and pushed down onto the tape.



The double-sided tape method is very quick and easy, but it's still possible for the canvas to have slight distortions where it isn't taped to the acrylic, so another method is to use spray adhesive to bond the canvas to the acrylic. Spray the acrylic with adhesive before inserting it into the upper; then push the canvas into the adhesive, stretching it smooth as you go.

The upper shown below has acrylic below the window; using the same techniques acrylic can be placed behind the canvas on the top and sides of the slider as well, although since there's less tendency for the canvas to bulge there, you may not find it necessary. The only difference in putting acrylic in the top or sides is that the acrylic should be cut so that it does not overlap the zipper teeth that remain sewed to the canvas – it should be cut just short of the zipper teeth so the clamp ring of the window can properly clamp against the zipper teeth and the acrylic.

