

COVERING WINDOWS

by "Uncle" Carl Fries, co-founder of the NFFS

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I recall that recently I read, in the NFFS Digest, a discussion (or complaint) in reference to the difficult and disgusting task of covering windows and windshields. First of all I agree wholeheartedly; this modeling chore on many of our Old Timer models is hard to do neatly. I have found a way to satisfy the most particular critic. Firstly, forget about using "rigid" clear plastic, meaning that thicker stuff. Go out and buy a box of clear polyethylene Glad sandwich bags. The price is \$1.00 for 150 bags, a lifetime supply. Also buy one bottle of Wilhold RC-56 glue (Ed. Comment RC-56 cement or DAP Weldwood glue also works); I imagine any other contact cement would be OK, but I use RC-56 because it dries clear, no messy residue to spoil your meticulous efforts! Incidentally, I do cover the windows before covering the fuselage with my favorite covering, Micafilm "clear", which is the lightest made. Now, rough-cut-out your window contour with sharp scissors. The side windows will be covered in separate pieces, one piece for each side; cover all windows at once. The RC-56 glue will have already been applied five minutes prior to laying down the polyethylene piece. You have allowed 1/4 inch all around; trim it off neatly later. Now for the difficult one - a windshield, probably double contoured windshield. It will be laid up in one piece. Yes, you will have plenty of wrinkles. Don't fret, we will get them out perfectly, later. Lay this one piece on and press fit with your index finger - you have already cussed loudly at Uncle Carl!

Keep saying to your self that the beautifully finished, tight windows will be my reward for this mess. To prevent "melting overlap" it might be well to now trim off the excess polyethylene with a sharp single edge razor blade. Ah, you read the word "melt", and yes now the magic. Get out your old heat gun (from Monokote days). Note I did not say heat iron: never use an iron on polyethylene as it melts it. We want stretch, not melt! Holding the blower six to eight inches away from the windows, wave the heat blower back and forth several times across surfaces of covered windows. Note that if you get too close you will burn holes through the windows. Be very careful on this last step. Yes, I have had to do the job over again because of burn through, but the task is so fast I didn't mind in the least. Try my way: I have not copied from anyone else. Go ahead and curse me or love me for this tip. Oh, incidentally, I first used this window covering method some 55 years ago, using a colored transparent covering I found on a box of quality chocolates that I had given to my mother. I used Ambroid glue (no RC-56 in those days) and a hand fired large soldering iron for the heat source. The airplane was a flying-scale cabin Fairchild. The judges liked the tight windows but reminded me that the real ship did not have purple windows.

Some of you may like to experiment with a slightly thicker polyethylene bag for a more durable window. But be careful that the thicker stuff does not ruin your window structure. You might build this part of the fuselage extra strong. Trim tape applied around the edges and over structural members completes the job.