

How much punishment can deflectors take?

We've equipped my 88 CRX with bug deflectors for the hood line, and vent visors for the windows now. Each is made from what appears to be thick, hardened plastic molded specifically for this vehicle. We torqued the installation bolts pretty tight on the hood piece, and pressed hard on the mounting tape for the window sections. Now we're ready for battle.

First up: some bugs. Is there a bug that might break a bug deflector? Maybe in Texas or something like that, but we'll test the deflectors against a barrage of small ones instead. That requires a dusk drive through any field near my Central Valley home, where the gnats can block the sun during the spring, until the first 90° day causes their fragile bodies to vaporize. A quick run around the local hay field turns the once smoke-colored deflectors speckled black—the gut bag explosions even have a glitter effect. But, the forces of bug infestations have failed to pierce this armor. We'll use this as the control of our experiment.

Next up: rocks. From about 60 feet away, we fired rocks at the deflectors, varying in size from tiny pebbles to some of my mom's decorative garden stones. The first round of pebbles failed to faze the bug deflector, which fared much better than my paint above and below the hood section. Surprisingly, the medium rocks bounced off the deflector without leaving cracks...in the deflector, anyway. My Honda logo is toast. We finally compromised the deflector's defensive powers with a larger rock, sized 7 pounds. It took the right corner completely off, but the paint ended up unblemished.

Impressive so far, but it's time to really put these shields to the test with something far more likely to actually happen on I-5. We did the only thing we could think of: grab our water balloon launcher and some driving range golf balls. Firing from about 100 feet away, we completely busted the bug shield in half. This was on our fifth fire; the other four skimmed off the hood and pitted my windshield, blasted the side-view, knocked my rearview glue loose, and the last one came flying off the front bumper and right back at us.

Then, it was time for some all-out destruction. So we followed the lead of something else that happens all the time on freeways here, and grabbed all the rotted lumber we could find on the side yard. With my buddy Beetle driving his S-10 in front of us on a county road, Mench laid flat down in the bed, chucking boards and plywood pieces at random intervals about three car lengths ahead of us. I managed to dodge the first two, and the remaining pieces of the deflector bounced the first plywood scrap, but the muddy 2x4 he threw third left only a few circles of plastic and the bolts attached to my hood. The deflector was dead.

The results of our test were pretty clear: destroying stuff for no good reason kicks ass. And, for the most part, a deflector will get ravaged pretty easily, but it's better than having your hood get ravaged instead. Why, you ask, would we wreck a set of perfectly good deflectors and abuse such a hot tuner car? We hate rice rockets, our Grandma gave me the deflectors as though it's what I really wanted for my birthday, and things suck in the Central Valley during Spring Break when you can't afford to go anywhere except Waterworld.

[Bug deflectors](#) are bound to fail you when they get hit, and we still have no clue what a [vent visor](#) is for. - David S. Brooks

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