

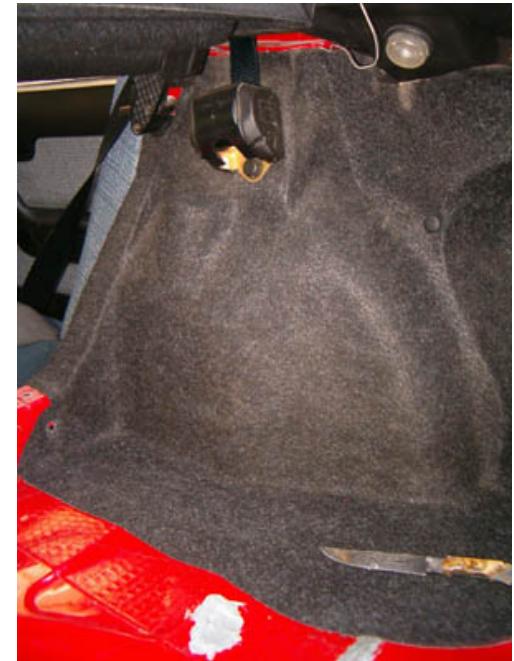
## **Inner Wheelarches & Luggage Compartment Maintenance**

The following guide will help you troubleshoot water leakage in the luggage compartment of your 33. The problem in my case was water leakage from the left wheelarch entering the compartment; water found its way from the very top most area of vertical cylinder where the shock absorber resides.

I found out this leakage as unveiling the carpet showed dust all around. A very simple test of using the garden hose spreading water to the insides of the wheelarch, showed a very small dripping of water inside the compartment.

Luckily water was free to escape and dry, so no rust has been formed.

The following pictures will show you how to take out the carpet, sealing of some rubber taps, cleaning and sealing the wheel arches and finally applying rubberized underseal to the sealed areas.



The three pictures above show you the carpets that must be removed. Several plastic taps keep in place the carpet - it is an easy job to remove them provided you have in hand a very simple tool; a knife like the one in the above picture.



Observe the amount of dust in the hatch. This has accumulated all these years, so it would be wise to clean everything out - use a sponge, some hot water and a small quantity of soap. Strain the sponge thoroughly and apply it several times in order to remove all of the dirt. In case you need to clean a curved area use a toothbrush.



Here you see the left side of the hatch - note the black box here. This is the fuel vapor separator which converts fuel vapor to liquid vapor. Hardly seen in the left part of the filter is the compensation valve in yellow color. This black box is typical in IE catalyst 33s. Again loads of dirt also in the left side. Notice the black color below the vapor filter. It is this magic black material which rust proofs inner panels and it is done at the production line; seems that more than enough quantity was used in my car back in 1991!

For your information the three cans are the materials you will need. Car body sealer, underseal material in aerosol form and finally paint again in aerosol form.

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I have decided to seal the above rubber taps (LHD & RHD) in order to avoid dust accumulation and possible water coming in. Sealer was used and when dry it sticks to the metal - note that if needed it can be peeled off rather easily without ruining the rubber since the quantity applied is small.

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The same taps from the under of the car



Also those rubber taps seal the metal floor side member that keeps in place the spare wheel well. The first photo shows the RHD and the second the LHD taps; note the wiring harness that passes above the tap and reaches the rear lights and fuel pump. It should be noted that by unveiling the taps, one can see through the member towards the ground; this is done on purpose from the design of the body as possible water entering crucial body parts can easily escape and dry, not resulting in corrosion.



It is now time to clean both wheel arches. It is a job that needs to be done with patience since every bit of dirt must be removed. Again use sponge, brush, toothbrush for the difficult spots and plenty of soap. The middle photo shows the area of problems ... water is coming in from the topmost part of the vertical cylinder and finds its way to the luggage compartment. Note two pieces of rubber material coming out of the upper cylinder part; the left sits much lower compared to the right one. This is the reason of troubles; misaligned factory sealing. This material in excess will be removed and sealed on top.

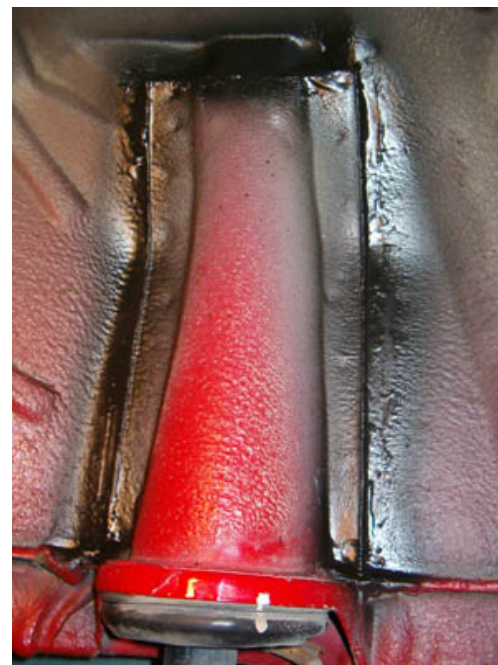
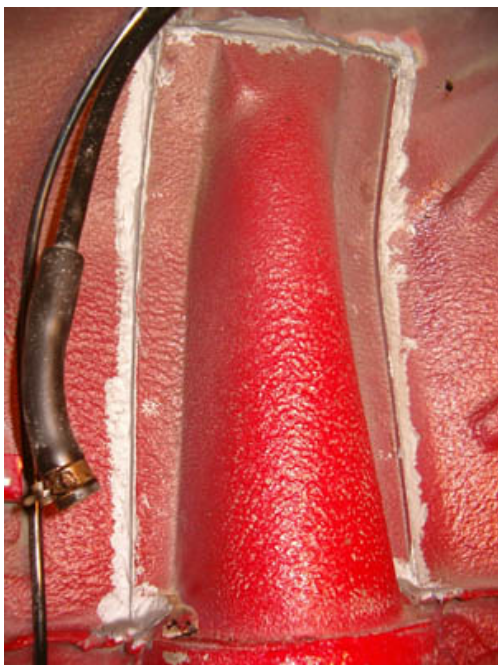


After sealing the taps and cleaning the wheel arches, it is time to bring the carpet in place again since no repairs will be made from the inside. For installation just reverse the order of removal.





Here you can see the cleaned area of interest sealed. In order to be safe than sorry I have sealed all relevant areas; use sealer with no hesitation as it sticks to the metal and forms an impermeable water shield. When finished, let more than 24 hours to dry.



Overview of the sealed area prior rubberized underseal coating ... and undeseal material in black color after spraying on top of sealer





Close-ups of the sealed areas after rubberized coating has been applied (LH & RH); again let it dry for at least 24 hours.

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It is now time to mask the areas of the suspension that I don't want them painted red - use newspapers and masking tape for convenience. Everything is now began to look like new again; red color applied for first layer.

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Now a second layer has been applied after some hours ... this is the RHD wheel arch; I have left half of it unpainted in order to see the difference...

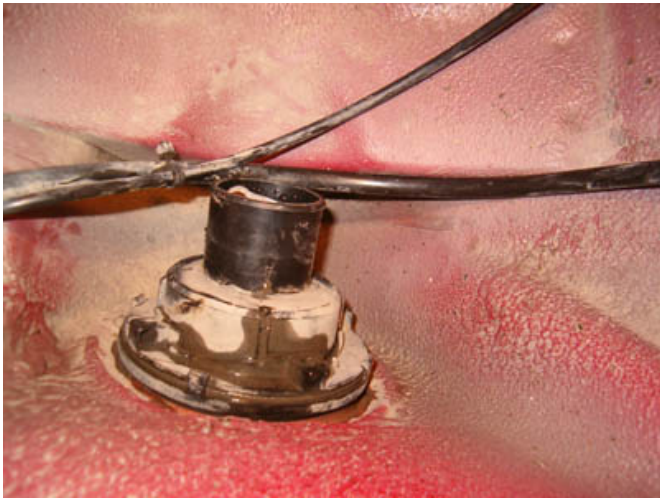
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... and finally the second layer is also applied.

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It is now time to remove the notorious filler neck. Use a long screwdriver and if available a rubber hammer. Place the tip of the screwdriver in the notch indicated and punch once or twice with CCW direction; it should rotate and release at once.



Wow! had never seen the filler neck like that ...



Luckily no signs of corrosion!



... but loads of residual dirt



... dirt again



... and rusted inlet. Note that the inlet assembly (spring & door) are NLA items (No Longer Available); so it would be wise to clean out rust and preserve it as much as possible.



After cleaning out the filler neck and ring, a small demonstration of the way it attached to the body.



Ring slips inside filler neck ...



... by rotating the ring CW, four notches around the neck fasten to the respective notches of the ring.



This is the rubber boot connecting the filler neck to the plastic tube of the fuel tank. If yours is worn out replace it with a new one; gas and vapors escape from worn out boots and it's not that good!



Nice and clean fuel tank tube



and nearly attached boot





Place the tube to its relative position ...



... then the lower part of the plastic tube to the fuel tank pipe



... and finally install the fuel cap boot in its final position.



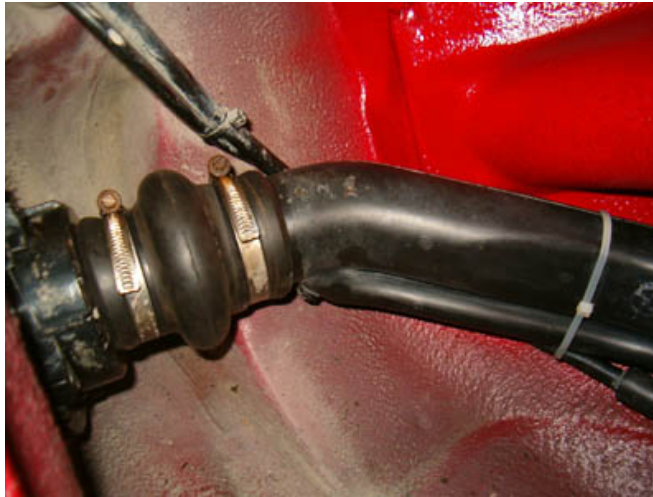
and begin fastening all relative clamps; start from the lower.



Don't forget the fuel vapor hose (upper and lower).



What remains is to keep the tube firm at its lower part. A long cable tie will do the job as shown in the picture; this is the way the factory had done; I have not deviated from any step.



... and finally the two clamps of the fuel cap boot. Also a cable tie at this specific position keeps the plastic hoses in place; again this was done the same way the production line used to.

You are now ready to place the wheels on car and hit the road for one more time. Well done!

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1991 Alfa 33 1.4 IE

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