968 Side Cladding Rubber Beading Replacement

A common and simple wear-oriented project for the 968 is the replacement of the rubber seals or beading on the lower side body cladding. These seals become hard and brittle over time and because of the flowing curves of the 968 body cladding, will work their way out from behind the cladding. This results in an unsightly gap. I have done this job before but, with the purchase of my new cab, found the need to do the job a second time so I thought I would document my process. I'm sure there are variations on how to do this and I invite others to contribute their "tricks" to getting this job completed. You can see in the photo below where the beading comes apart from the cladding as it turns up toward the upper body. This is a very common sight once the beading gets old.

What will you need for the job:

I used the following tools: A long thin screw driver, a short thin screw driver, angled Phillips screw driver, a 1/4 inch ratchet wrench with a 10mm socket. I also needed adhesive remover, wax and grease remover, a couple of polishes, and I used my 2000rpm polisher but you don't have to have one of those. You'll also need some polishing towels.

Parts:
The seals are part numbers
944 559 271 00 01C front MSRP on 1/08, $19.47
944 559 272 00 01C front MSRP on 1/08, $19.47
944 559 273 00 01C rear MSRP on 1/08, $34.50
944 559 274 00 01C rear MSRP on 1/08, $34.50

The clips (optional, if you don't break any):
999 591 991 40 push in clip about $2 each
999 591 990 00 bolt on clip about $4 each

Stone guards (optional):
944 559 321 00 3YK – left MSRP on 1/08, $33.60
944 559 322 00 3YK - right MSRP on 1/08, $33.60

Let's start with the rear cladding. Remove the 6 lower bolts using the 10mm socket. Keep note that the bolt farthest to the rear is different the others. You can tell by the bolt head, it doesn't have a raised edge. Remove the nut found in the rear wheelhouse holding the placement bracket. Pull the bracket off and put it aside.

Now move to the front cladding. Remove the single bolt from the bottom of the cladding using the 10mm socket. Then remove the plastic access plate from the front wheelhouse by removing the two Phillips screws. Turning the wheel makes access easier. Once removed, use the 10mm short socket to remove the bolt that is holding the front cladding in place. There is another placement bracket here. Put it aside along with the bolt.

Now the fun part, removing the clips from the body. The secret here is to get behind the clip and turn your screwdriver to push the clip out. The long thin flat head screwdriver works best here. Start at the rear and move forward. Go slow. I still broke one clip. Note that the clips toward the rear have the pin section trimmed off. You need to make sure these clips go back into the same location as there is not enough depth in the hole for the pin. If you try to put a clip with a full pin in there it will break. It needs the trimmed one. Once the cladding is off use the screwdriver to get the clips out of the cladding. This way you won't break them while cleaning the cladding up.

The cladding is filthy. Take some carwash and wash off the cladding, both front and rear, and the body of the car.

I choose to replace my stone guards. These come off with the application of heat. Then you'll need to get the adhesive off. Once everything is clean I used my polishing wheel and clean the side of the body. Then, pull the stone guards off of their backing and cover the sticky part with a soapy-water solution. Then apply to the body and position to the right location. Use a plastic edge to squeeze the soapy water solution out to the sides.

Back to the cladding, after removing the old cladding you'll need to clean out the slots where the new cladding will be installed. Use the adhesive cleaner and some sandpaper to make sure the slots are good and clean.

I used a wax and grease remover to clean all the mess off. Then I polished the cladding with various hand polishers and finally the polishing wheel. There were a number of small cuts in the paint. I purchased a pint of enamel paint for touch and went to work. The nice thing about a solid color is that touch up looks great.

After the cladding is all cleaned and the touchup paint has dried it is time to attach the new beading. I used 3M weatherstrip adhesive. You apply it to both surfaces and let it get tacky, then press together. Do not pull the beading as you place it in the cladding. You want a relaxed fit so that it won't put out again in a year. Just go slow and push it down

I used some clamps for the front cladding. There is a slot so you'll know it has to be installed in just the right location. The extra beading in the front wraps around so you don't need to trim it.

For the rear cladding, start at the back and work forward. You'll have to trim off a small section of beading when you get to the front of the rear cladding. Again, don't stretch it forward. Just push it straight down into the slot. After the weatherstrip adhesive has dried you can clean any excess off using the adhesive remover.

As for the hardware, I cleaned the bolts and a couple of washers with a wire wheel and then painted them with clear paint. I painted the positioning brackets black. A few of my washers came off from the cladding. I reinstalled them using gorilla glue.

After allowing the beading to dry, turn the cladding pieces over and reinstall the clips. Remember to put the trimmed pin clips in the correct location toward the rear. You're ready to install.

Start with the front cladding. Install the piece by pressing in the 1 clip and then follow by attaching the nut to the bolt. Make sure your positioning bracket is in the place you took it off and holding the extra beading piece that is wrapping around the corner down tight. Hold the cladding tight to the body as you tighten down the nut. Not too tight, it's a plastic nut. Now install the one bolt on the bottom.

Move to the rear cladding. Move all the clips into position first making sure the rear cladding fits into the grove of the front cladding. Once everything is in position, start to press the clips into their spots moving from the rear to the front. Install the positioning bracket in the rear wheelhouse and tighten down the plastic nut. Push the cladding toward the body of the car to get as tight a seal as possible. Once you're happy with the way things look install the 6 bolts along the bottom of the cladding. Make sure that special bolt is at the rear.

So, here's the result. Looks a lot better than when I started. The job is pretty straight forward and doesn't cost a lot of money.