

Guide to applying your vinyl graphics

Applying your custom vinyl graphic is easy enough to do by yourself. The following tools are recommended when applying vinyl decals or lettering.

Masking tape
Level
Squeegee
Application spray
Pin or knife

Cleaning Procedures:

All surfaces are contaminated to some degree. To ensure good adhesion to any surface it is critical that you follow these recommended procedures in decontaminating and preparing the surface prior to any vinyl product installation.

1. Wash and rinse the area with liquid dish detergent and warm water. Then dry the surface with a clean, lint-free towel or cloth.

2. Finish up the cleaning process by wiping down the entire area with Isopropyl Alcohol (rubbing alcohol). To avoid recontamination during the final cleaning step, wipe the surface in just one direction, using a clean, lint-free towel or cloth. You are now ready to apply the vinyl.

Temperature Recommendations:

Surface temperatures should be between 10 - 30 degrees Celsius before attempting the installation. As a general rule, if the surface is hot to the touch it's over 30 degrees Celsius. Adhesive becomes brittle when it gets too cold and gummy when it gets too hot. Applications outside the recommended range of 10-30 degrees Celsius reduce the adhesives' ability to perform.

Application Procedures:

You can choose to apply vinyl in one of two ways; dry or wet. Applying vinyl graphics dry does not allow for any mistakes. Once the vinyl touches the surface, there is no removal without damage.

However, applying vinyl graphics with application spray allows you the opportunity to remove and reposition vinyl as needed for up to several minutes. For obvious reasons, this method is recommended for both beginners and experts. To apply using the application spray, spray the surface thoroughly. Then lay the vinyl on a flat surface and spray the adhesive side as you remove the backing. An extra set of hands is a good idea. Then simply apply the vinyl to the surface.

Do not excessively stretch vinyl during the application. This is the main cause of end lift. Pull the vinyl only as taut as necessary to keep a straight line. Because vinyl is a pressure-sensitive product, a squeegee should be used for all installations. The purpose of using a squeegee is to remove the excess fluid and or air from behind the vinyl. You should always start the squeegee from the middle and either use a straight up or down motion. Allow the vinyl to set for 5 to 15 minutes.

(Pinstriping can be laid down initially using your thumb. However, after the application tape is removed, a squeegee must be used on all cut ends including door breaks as well as the ends of the stripe.)

When removing the application tape, always pull it slowly, back onto itself, at a 180-degree angle. Bubbles should be punctured using a pin. Do not slit the vinyl to release the air. If the vinyl is slit it will spread or gap. The cutting or trimming of any stripe or graphic should be done using a very sharp knife and very little pressure.