

application of computer cut/printed vinyl

If you haven't applied vinyl before then we recommend reading this data sheet.

This data sheet describes how to apply vinyl with a term known as 'wet application'. This method of application gives more time and flexibility than 'dry application'. It helps greatly in the elimination of air bubbles, and is very well suited for the novice applier. The application of a liquid to the adhesive forms a barrier, this temporarily neutralises the adhesive and allows the vinyl to be repositioned several times before sticking to the surface.

Please note: This data sheet will often use a term known as 'squeegee', this is a small tool used to apply the vinyl to its surface. You may have one of these, but if not then a flat firm 'credit card' type tool will do the job. Note: We, and most vinyl applicators would choose a squeegee rather than the traditional roller device.

Before you begin it is best to describe the raw vinyl as you see it now. Look at the vinyl you have (this may be lettering, or a solid sheet of plain or printed vinyl). The bottom layer is called the 'backing sheet', which the vinyl is adhered to (much like any normal sticker). The backing sheet is made of paper and the side adhered to the vinyl is siliconised. Then you have the vinyl itself, which is sticky on one side (the side that's adhered to the backing sheet). Then lastly you will have the 'application tape/sheet'. The application tape/sheet is stuck to the outer side of the vinyl, and it's purpose is to temporarily hold the vinyl while you apply it. For instance if you had a number of letters it would prove very difficult to individually apply each letter manually and get them lining up! Also, even if it's just a plain piece of vinyl ie printed vinyl, the application tape will aid as it thickens the vinyl making it less likely to crease or 'buckle' while applying. Note: Most forms of application tape are much like masking tape, (although for some vinyls eg 'etched glass vinyl', which is very difficult to see, there may be a clear application tape/sheet supplied rather than the 'masking tape' type).

TIPS FOR WET APPLICATION

Use a small bottle that has a good 'misting' capability. Now fill it with water and an enzyme free washing up liquid, eg. fairy liquid. Note that you only need approximately one tablespoon of washing up liquid per bucket of water, so with a full misting bottle, then a drop or two is all that's needed. (Better not enough than too much!)

Make sure the surface of which the vinyl is being applied is clean and dust free. Now mark the surface so that you know where to apply the vinyl (masking tape is ideal).

Position the vinyl face down on a flat surface (so all you can see is the backing sheet). Then slowly peel the backing sheet completely off the vinyl. (Don't peel the application tape off yet). Note In certain instances, for example the surface you are applying the vinyl to is difficult to get to, or you may be applying a large piece of vinyl, then only peel some of the backing sheet off to start with, while you squeegee, slowly peel the backing off a bit at a time. Remember: Always remove the backing paper from the vinyl, and never the vinyl from the backing paper.-(Unless you want torn letters and/or dots missing!)

Using your soapy water, lightly spray the surface of which the vinyl is being applied. Note: it is only needed to spray the surface if it is completely smooth, such as glass, metal etc. Walls etc don't need to be sprayed. In any case always spray the back of the vinyl itself. Don't be afraid of using too much water, although consistency is important. You simply need a thin layer over ALL the vinyl. Note your misting bottle probably won't achieve this, so once you've sprayed the vinyl use a sponge or even your palm to spread the water until you have a consistent layer. (Always be sure to avoid hairs and bits on the vinyl OR the substrate).

Place the vinyl onto the prepared surface (in line with your markings). This is where the soapy water helps you to slide the vinyl into position.

Now firmly but carefully squeegee the vinyl, working from the middle outward using a Union Jack type pattern. Water will trickle out around the edges of the vinyl.

Once you are satisfied that ALL the water behind the vinyl has gone, then leave it for a few minutes. Note: Don't be afraid of leaving the vinyl for too long, all vinyls vary, some may take longer to adhere than others, also the surface can come into consideration as well as the amount of soapy water you've sprayed on. The longer you leave it, the better chance you will have of the application tape peeling off without any hiccups.

Now it is time to peel the application tape off the vinyl. Squeegee over the vinyl once again to be sure that it has adhered firmly. Starting from one corner, slowly peel the application tape off of the vinyl. DON'T pull it towards yourself as this could pull the vinyl off as well. Try to lay it flat against itself as your pulling it. (If the vinyl still wants to peel off with the application tape, then you can do two things): 1. Squeegee the vinyl again. or 2. Lightly spray some of your soapy water onto the application tape. Doing this should soften the tape, making it easier to separate from the vinyl. (Note: If you are using the clear application tape then spraying will achieve nothing, as it is a plastic rather than a tape. But if using the 'masking tape' type then spraying it will indeed soften it).

Once the backing tape is off, just to be extra sure, again squeegee the vinyl. Always be careful when squeegeeing vinyl, especially when the application tape is removed as the edges can be caught and possibly torn if care isn't taken. Also pay attention to the 'squeegee', if it has any 'nicks' or 'dents' on it then they can scratch the vinyl. Note: A sleeve to go over the squeegee can be very handy in preventing cases like these. If any bubbles occur that cannot be squeegeed out, then use a pin or a sharp knife ie. scalpel and gently prick the bubble(s) on the edge (not in the centre). Then with your squeegee or your finger, slowly push the air out towards the pin prick (water will most likely trickle out too).

Please note: Depending on the temperature and type of vinyl used, the vinyl may take a long while to adhere fully (24 hours maximum in most cases). So for some cases eg. you have applied your vinyl to a vehicle, then take extra care for the first day. And drive SLOW!

If you experience any problems or would like to ask any questions regarding your vinyl etc then please call us.