

INTRODUCTION

This document will provide guidelines for installing vinyl graphics onto your vehicle. It is important to review these guidelines to ensure a quality, consistent and professional image for your vehicle and fleet applications. Following these procedures will help ensure proper vinyl installation and get the maximum durability of the applied graphics.

SURFACE PREPARATION

The vehicle should be washed with soap and water, but not waxed the night before installation. The vehicle should be allowed to dry in above 55 F (12.8 C) overnight to enable all moisture to evaporate from seams. Indoor installation is advised to ensure that the surface is clean and climate conditions do not affect the install. Remove any easily removable hardware such as emblems, mirrors, rear windshield wipers, etc. Prepare surfaces by cleaning first with glass cleaner to remove all dirt. Next saturate paper towel with 70% denatured alcohol and wipe down all areas where graphics will be installed. The surface should be then wiped down with a dry paper towel to remove the wax and grease that is dissolved by the denatured alcohol. Concentrate on areas around door edges, handles and other potential problem areas for adhesion of the graphics. Surfaces should be clean and dry for installation.

GRAPHICS PLACEMENT - Vinyl graphics should be installed at a temperature over 55 F (12.8 C).

Graphics should be lined up on the vehicle and checked accurately for proper placement according to reference pictures and layouts. If there is Window Perf Film to be installed it should be taped to the graphics and checked to ensure proper placement. After placement has been achieved, remove the Window Perf Film for later installation. Make sure when overlapping graphics that the back panels are installed first. Likewise, make sure that bottom panels are installed first. This will keep weather conditions from adversely affecting the overlap.

INSTALLATION

Remove backing paper from the vinyl and install with the proper squeegee. Using a torch or heat gun will help to permanently conform the vinyl to the vehicle. Avoid stretching vinyl more than 20% of its original size. This will keep the graphics from shrinking back. Make sure there are no wrinkles or bubbles, especially at all edges. Any wrinkles will allow moisture and debris to get under the graphics and cause the vinyl to separate away from the vehicle. If a wrinkle occurs pull up the graphic and apply slight heat and reapply. Wherever vinyl overlaps vinyl, the lower, previously applied panel needs to be re-cleared with denatured alcohol to ensure adhesion at the overlap. Avoid overlaps less than 3/16". This will keep the seam from popping up. Be sure to run the edge of your Teflon squeegee along the overlap edge (after applied) to keep moisture and debris from entering at the overlap edge. Do not wrap the vinyl around the door, hood or tailgate edges, rather trim the vinyl flush or slightly back from edges.

Once the vinyl is installed, trim any areas needed at seams and door handles, etc. For panel trimming drag your blade along the panel edges using the edge as the guide. On any free hand cutting of the vinyl around door handles, etc. careful attention should be paid to avoid cutting too deep and damaging the vehicles finish. Cuts on etched paint will be liable to lift away from the primer during removal of graphic. For bubbles, carefully poke small pinholes and squeegee the air out. It is important not to have air bubbles under the graphics. The trapped air will expand over time and cause the graphic to remove from the surface. For air egress vinyl, no pinholes are needed - just push air out with fingers.

Realign the Window Perf Film with the graphics after the windows have been finish trimmed. All Window Perf Film should only be applied with a felt or Teflon squeegee. Any edges of the window film should be trimmed in minimum 1/16" from the window edge to protect the graphics from lifting.

After all graphics are installed and trimmed, all areas and edges should be post heated with a torch or heat gun. During post heating look for poorly adhered graphics, they will swell when heated. Reapply any areas that swell and firmly push down all edges. Remember all edges that aren't firmly adhered will lift later. For phone numbers or website graphics that are applied over the wrap, re-clean the area of the first layer with denatured alcohol to ensure the adhesion of the following decal.

FINISH

All edges and any area that is trimmed with a knife should be sealed with a "seal-it pen". This is a pen that applies a small amount of sealer at the edge of the graphic and protects the edge from lifting. Reinstall any hardware that was removed.

MATERIALS

For vinyl graphic installation, you will need the following:

- Vinyl Graphics*
- Glass Cleaner
- 70% Denatured Alcohol
- Paper Towels
- Xacto Blades
- 3" Felt Squeegee*
- 3" Teflon Squeegee*
- Masking Tape
- Heat Gun or Propane Torch
- Placement Magnets (optional)*
- Sealer Pens
- Measuring Tape
- Tools for Removing Hardware

**Installation materials can be ordered through Pilat Graphic Design Inc.*

