

Xtreme Digital Graphix

Application Instructions for Vehicle Vinyl Graphics

Tools required: masking tape, scissors, squeegee, lint-free cloth, ruler.

When You Receive Your Graphics

When your graphic comes to you rolled up, allow it to flatten out in a warm room. Never fold your graphics or let them become crimped or wrinkled. The less you handle your graphics before installing them the better. Never expose the adhesive until you are ready to install your graphics. Install your graphics within a few weeks after receiving them to avoid excess handling or damage prior to installation.

The top sheet is called the **application tape**, which is a low tack tape that lifts your vinyl graphic in one piece away from the backing paper and makes it easier to install large or delicate graphics. Not all graphics come with this application tape. The **backing paper** is what protects the vinyl's adhesive until you are ready to apply your graphic.

Preparing for Installation

Your installation will be much easier if **done in a clean, wind-free environment** (i.e. a recently swept, enclosed garage). If outside installation is your only option, choose a day with little or no wind. Never install the graphics if the surface temperature of your vehicle is less than 50 degrees Fahrenheit or greater than 85 degrees Fahrenheit.

Application temperature should be above 50 F (13 C). If extremely cold, move to an enclosed area and allow the surface temperature to warm. If extremely hot, move to a shaded area.

- 1) Clean the vehicle surface thoroughly using a solution of 1 ounce of liquid dishwashing detergent, such as Joy® or Dawn®, per gallon of lukewarm water. Rinse with fresh, clean water. (All surfaces must be considered contaminated. Avoid soaps or preparations that contain waxes, oils or lotions; some window cleaners contain waxes which prevent proper graphic adhesion. Be aware that the chemicals used in some automated vehicle washing equipment may prevent good film adhesion.)



2) Dry the surface thoroughly with clean towels (preferably lint-free). (Moisture prevents the adhesive from adhering correctly, can cause bubbles, and can freeze in cold environments. Any moisture trapped beneath the graphic may cause the graphic to fail prematurely. Moisture can rapidly accumulate after you dry your vehicle in high humidity environments. Freshly painted surfaces must cure for a min. of 3 days prior to applying graphics.)

3) Wipe the surface again with rubbing alcohol (isopropyl alcohol, available at any drug/grocery store). Note: Car wax will greatly reduce graphic adhesion. Ensure the surface is completely dry before proceeding to install your graphics. Move on to step 4 immediately after completing this step 3 to prevent dust and other contaminants from preventing proper adhesion.

4) Measure and position your graphics on the car without removing the backing paper. **Measure twice, apply once.** DO NOT expose the adhesive at this step in the installation. Apply small pieces of masking tape at the corners of your graphic to temporarily hold the graphic exactly where you want to install it on your vehicle. Avoid installing graphics on extremely curved surfaces, over unpainted plastic, rubber, or Teflon surfaces. The graphic's adhesive does not adhere to these materials. Using a tape measure, make sure the graphic is straight and centered. Step back and look at it. If you are satisfied with the placement of the graphic, move on to the next step.



5) Create a hinge using masking tape (not required for graphics under 6 x 6 inches). Put a piece of masking tape from top to bottom down the center of the graphic (vertically). This

piece of tape should begin 2-3 inches above your graphic attached to the vehicle surface, and should run down vertically over the center of your graphic ending 2-3 inches below your graphic (attached to the vehicle below the graphic). This piece of masking tape is your **center hinge** and will hold your graphic in place while you remove the backing paper from half of your graphic (step 6) and begin to squeegee it in place (step 7). Hinges can be placed across the top of small and medium sized graphics, but center hinges (as described at the beginning of this step) are better for long body graphics.



6) Remove the small corner pieces of masking tape on the left-hand side of the graphic, lift away the graphic from the vehicle on the left-hand side, and **peel off the backing paper until you reach the center of the graphic** (which is being held in place on the vehicle by the tape hinge you created in step 5). The graphic should stay stuck to the application tape at this time, but the adhesive on the left-hand side of the graphic should be exposed as a result of this step. Cut the backing paper as close to the center as you can (be careful when cutting not to scratch your vehicle surface). Be sure to hold the application tape (and thus, the graphic) away from the car as you begin step 7. Note: Before you squeegee as described in the next step, make sure there are no wrinkles in the decal or application tape.

7) With the application tape still intact and the adhesive exposed, **squeegee the decal to the surface** by applying pressure with firm, smooth even strokes, holding the squeegee at a 45 degree angle to the vehicle surface. Start at the middle of the decal and work your way out to the left using overlapping squeegee strokes to be sure you don't miss any areas (all areas of the adhesive must have firm pressure applied to activate the adhesive). Once the left-hand side of the graphic has been squeegee'd in place, you may remove the



tape hinge that you created in step 5.

8) Repeat steps 6 and 7 for the right-hand side of your graphic.

9) Leaving the application tape in place, and squeegeeing the graphic through the

application tape (which should still be on top of your graphic) **squeegee the entire decal a second time**, beginning in the middle and working your way out (working out any bubbles or wrinkles as you go).



10) Slowly and carefully **peel the application tape off** of your graphic beginning with the top right-hand corner and peeling it diagonally down and toward the left (at a 45 degree angle). If any portion of your graphic begins to peel up with the application tape during this step, stop removing the application tape, stick the vinyl that has begun to come up down to the vehicle with your thumb, and squeegee it down using even pressure. Once you have removed the application tape, back up and admire your new graphic. It is common to see some small bubbles throughout the graphic at this phase.

Removal of Air Bubbles

ORAJET® Series 3551RA features an advanced air-release liner specially designed to facilitate smooth application of the material. In the event that you do need to remove air bubbles from your installed graphic, this can easily be done by applying pressure with your thumb to the center of the bubble and rubbing out toward the edge of the material. The air will then disperse along the air egress channels. There is no need to make air release holes unless the bubble is larger than 1" in diameter, in which case you should use an air release tool to remove the air using conventional techniques..



11) If your graphic spans a seam in the vehicle, **carefully cut the graphic at all seams** in vehicle body panels, being sure not to scratch the paint. Using the squeegee, tuck and wrap the cut vinyl into the seams of the vehicle so that all vinyl surfaces are adhered and pressed down to the surface of the vehicle. Seams on vehicles flex as the vehicle moves. If they are not cut, the graphics will pull away from the seam, resulting in premature failure.

12) Final smoothing. Using the squeegee sleeve, re-squeegee all edges and overlaps to ensure good adhesion.

Caring for Your Graphics

1. Hand washing is recommended. High pressure washers and harsh chemicals should be avoided. Many of our customers have used automated car washes and have reported no problems, but we do not recommend it. Avoid using solvents, ammonia, and or bleach based cleansers (Windex, Fantastic, 409, etc.).
2. Keep high pressure nozzles at least 18 inches away from the edge of the graphic. High pressure spray may cause the edge of the graphic to peel away from the vehicle.
3. Test cleaning solutions on a small section of the graphic before using on the entire surface.
4. Do not use aromatic solvents such as acetone, M.E.K., toluene, paint thinner or lacquer thinner on the graphics. Solvents may soften or smear colors.
5. Do not overcoat the graphics with clear plastic. The graphics are already laminated.
6. Do not allow gasoline or other fuels to drip or remain on graphics for any length of time. If a spill occurs, wipe off and rinse with water immediately.
7. Do not paint over graphics.
8. Do not apply wax over graphics, especially if the wax contains a petroleum distillate. Wax that has dried between stripes can be removed by softening it with rubbing alcohol and cotton swabs. Make sure the area is rinsed after cleaning.
9. Use covered or garage parking when available. Vinyl graphics will have a shorter life expectancy when exposed to severe heat and sunlight.