

Decal Installation

Dry & Wet Methods

Vinyl decals come with backing paper to ease installation. Artwork is cut into the vinyl, and then all the vinyl that doesn't belong is removed by hand. Then the vinyl image is sandwiched between its own backing paper and a layer of transfer tape. The transfer tape holds the vinyl image together while you transfer it onto the destination surface. Once the image is placed as desired and pressed on, the transfer tape is then removed – leaving only the die-cut vinyl image.

Our decals and stickers adhere to non-porous, non-textured, smooth surfaces, such as painted surfaces, metal, smooth sanded or finished wood, lacquered surfaces, glass, painted fiberglass, plastic, other vinyl, and leather. Surfaces like vinyl and leather that have been treated with Armor All or another oily type substance must be thoroughly cleaned before application.

There are two basic methods for applying vinyl decals.... the wet way and the dry way...

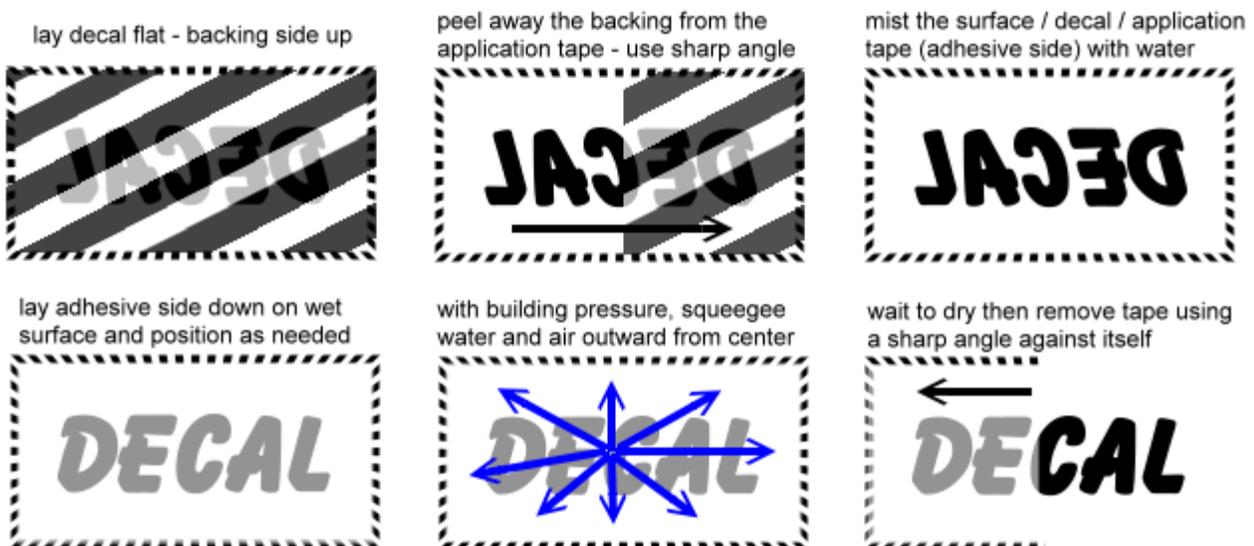
General rule of thumb is that you do what works best for you. All decals can be applied using either method, it really comes down to size and/or personal preference. The dry way is faster, the wet way is safer. Smaller stickers can usually be “dropped” dry onto the surface without having to be taped up and done in sections. Larger decals should be done wet, or must be taped in place and laid down in sections. Either way, be careful and work slow. Dry applied decals tend to stretch out if they stick by accident (and then have to be pulled off and re-stuck), and this can easily distort the decal. The wet method allows you to slide, or remove the decal and re-position it safely during the application.

* Professional Tip:

Always lay out your decals flat and go over them with a squeegee or credit card **after** you remove them from the shipping tube and **before** you start the application process. This is to re-affix the transfer tape to the decal after shipping, should any separation occur. The rolling up of decals for shipping can sometimes cause separation of the transfer tape from the decal in spots, making small air pockets... which is normal and easily fixed. A simple laying flat and giving it a once over with a credit card or other straight edge will make sure your decal's transfer tape is nice and evenly stuck before you begin the application process. The tape only needs to carry the image.

Wet Method

1. Clean your destination surface. **The cleaner the better.**
2. Lay the decal flat, backing side up. Using a sharp angle – peel the vinyl-backing away from the transfer-tape (that is holding the vinyl image). Be careful that all elements of the decal stay stuck to the transfer tape, and not the backing.
3. Mist the decal and transfer tape (sticky side) and the destination surface. Clean water slides less but sticks better. You can add a drop or two of dish soap to the water for easier positioning of larger decals. Too much soap can cause problems with adhesion, so just a drop or two.
4. Place the transfer tape holding the decal onto the destination surface as desired. You can slide it around a little. Be careful of small lines and details.
****When centering, NEVER MEASURE using THE TRANSFER TAPE! Always measure from the actual decal image, which you can see through the transfer tape.
5. Once aligned – Starting from the image-center and moving outward, squeegee out all the water and air bubbles. **Start with light pressure, and slowly build** with each pass over the graphic.
6. Let the image stay on the surface **with the transfer tape on** for as long as it takes to dry. Direct sunlight on hot, dry days will speed this up. On cold, humid and rainy days can take up to 24 hours or even longer to fully adhere. Rule of thumb, if you are not sure whether or not it's dry, and you did a really nice job putting it on, then don't be in a rush taking off the transfer tape (and risk messing it all up)... Be patient!
7. Once fully dry, begin peeling the transfer tape off **using a sharp angle against itself**. This helps to keep your vinyl decal from pulling off the surface if it's not fully adhered in all places. If the vinyl is not sticking, it's not dry yet, or the surface was not clean. If the image comes off the surface (still sticking to the application tape), simply lay back down, taking care not to create any air bubbles, and squeegee as before, and give it more time to dry and fully adhere. Wet method applied decals should not take more than 48 hours to fully adhere. See the illustration below:



Dry Method

1. Clean your destination surface. **The cleaner the better.**
2. With your decal as-is (still taped up), lay your decal (backing-side down, transfer-tape-side up) and align as you like it. It should be adhesive side down, looking like it will look after applied. Once you get it lined up how you like it...
3. Place a strip of masking-tape (vertically) down the center of the image to hold in place, over-lapping the edge onto the destination surface. Make sure the image won't move. Once fixed...
4. Pull one side of the decal (the entire decal – transfer tape, backing and all) back flat against itself, folding over the masking-tape center-line that you just placed to hold it down. **Don't crease it, just "bend" it or "fold" it.**
5. Using a *sharp angle*, start in a corner and peel away the decals backing (away from the transfer tape that is holding the vinyl image) until you get to the masking-tape-center-line you laid to hold it in place. Keeping the vinyl (on the application-tape) pinned back with your finger, cut away the removed backing along the center-placement-tape line. Careful not to scratch your surface or cut your vinyl image. Do not try and tear the paper, this will create fuzz and dust that may create bumps under the decal.
6. Using any squeegee like item (a credit card works well), begin to lay your graphic down onto your prepared surface from the masking-tape center line outward. **DO NOT LAY DOWN ALL AT ONCE!** Hold the image at an angle above the destination-surface, and slowly, starting at the center-placement-tape-line, press down the image from the center out using the squeegee. Squeegee from the center-tape-line outward as you lay it down, taking care to no allow air bubbles to form between the vinyl and the surface.
7. Once one side is laid down, remove the center-tape-line, then remove the other half of the vinyl backing the same way as before, and repeat the process for the other side.
8. Squeegee the entire image a few times, from the center outward, each time with greater pressure, making sure that **all of it** is good and pressed onto the surface.
9. Once you feel it is pressed on as good as can be, begin peeling the transfer tape off using a sharp angle against itself. If the image comes off the surface (sticking to the transfer tape), simply lay back down, and squeegee as before, then try again – remember, a **sharp angle** works best when separating vinyl from either the backing or the tape. If the decal does not stick, the surface was not fully cleaned, and may have oils or dust. See the illustration below for additional help.

