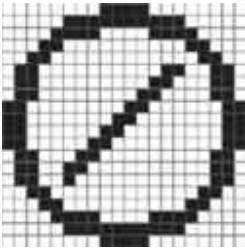


Cut Vinyl Lettering Application Guide

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference in vector and raster artwork?



Raster Files (.jpg, .gif, .tif, .bmp etc):

Raster files are made up of tiny squares, known as pixels, as illustrated in the diagram to the left. The appropriate pixels are filled in to represent a design's lines and arcs.

The quality of a raster file is measured in DPI (dots per inch). In order for us to use a raster file, the file must be at least 300dpi. We cannot enlarge an existing raster file without losing some of its graphical quality.



Vector Files (.cdr, .ai, .eps etc):

A vector file, on the other hand, is a file whereby lines and arcs are stored as vector coordinates. This means that vector files are made up of precisely defined entities, each with its own beginning and end, rather than lumpy groups of pixels as found in raster files.

Vector files can be enlarged and manipulated without losing any graphical quality.

2. Can you create a decal for me using my raster file?

Yes. However there are many variables and circumstances that we will have to discuss on an individual basis. You will need to send the file to us at info@hollographics.com. Once we have determined all pertinent issues involved, we will explain your options.

3. Is there a program that converts raster to vector?

Yes, there are several. However they are very rough and usually require re-building. There is not a simple way to convert raster to vector that does not involve labour in cleaning the image.

4. Can you convert my raster image to a vector file?

Yes. We will be happy to give you a quote for converting your image.

5. Will your letters withstand winter elements?

Yes. The sun is their worst enemy. Over many years the sun will work away at the decals causing them to eventually fade and curl. This usually takes at least 5 years & sometimes as much as 10 or more.

6. Can you create a decal using our Logo?

Yes, we will need to see your logo to determine if it will need work to convert to a decal. You can send your best res. file to info@hollographics.com .

7. How big can you make vinyl letters?

We can create vinyl letters as tall as you require. However on very large letters (over 600mm) there may be several seams throughout the letter. We would have to bid this per the job.

8. Can you drill holes in the signs?

Yes we can do this for you for £1.50 per sign.

9. Can you guarantee colour matches?

No we cannot. We can provide you with a colour sample by post. It is not possible to provide proofs to all of our customers that will look exactly like the actual product. This is for two reasons:-

- Everyone uses different computer monitors and settings.
- A computer screen is illuminated, so the colours will appear different on the screen than they do in real life.

10. Will my sign look exactly like the proof on the screen?

Layout-wise, yes. However the colours may change a bit.

11. The preview is fuzzy. Will the decal I order look this way?

No it will not. This is a result of many things. Primarily we are trying to keep it from taking a long time to open. In doing this we do suffer some quality downsides. However rest assured your actual sign will be very clean and sharp.

12. I don't see the font I want for my letters on your site. Can you create letters using my font?

Yes we can create the letters to your specs if you can email us the True Type Font file.

GENERAL VINYL INFORMATION

Colour Choices

We have a wide selection of colours which can be viewed online. We can also special order unique colours upon your request (additional charges will apply).

Some considerations to remember when viewing colours online

Due to the differences in display technology at each end, it is not possible to get a consistent menu of colours broadcast throughout the World Wide Web. There will be some variation in the colours displayed on your monitor from the way they look on ours. If you require an exact colour match, we can send you a colour sample for your selection. We will be happy to do this for you at no charge.

Vinyl Info

Our vinyls range from 60 microns to 80 microns in thickness and have life expectancies of between 3 to 10 years. *(Note: This is only a rating and should not be mistaken for a warranty.)*

These are the specifications from the manufacturer that the vinyls have been tested and under normal conditions, the material should not peel, crack, delaminate, or fade for the period of time listed. We have found, in most cases, the vinyl will considerably outlast these time periods.

Guarantee

Our Vinyl decals carry a 1-year guarantee. This covers peeling, cracking, delamination, and fading. Since our product is made to order, all sales are final, with the exception of warranty problems, which we will happily replace with a duplicate product within the 1 year warranty period. We do not issue cash refunds.

We will only warranty items that have been determined to be defective. All other installation related problems are assumed to be the fault of improper conditions or installation error.

Returns will not be accepted without a written authorisation from HolloGraphics Ltd. Custom work is not returnable. A 30% re-stocking fee will apply to all returns.

SUITABLE SURFACES FOR APPLICATION

When installing vinyl, it is important that you apply the product to an adequate surface, one to which it will readily adhere. The following lists contain a brief summary of acceptable surfaces along with some surfaces that are not.

The good news is: Vinyl will stick to many surfaces. In determining whether your intended surface is adequate, keep in mind that, as a general rule of thumb, vinyl will stick to almost any surface that is clean and either smooth or nonporous. To demonstrate the necessary surface qualities, we use glass versus brick as a quick example. Vinyl will stick very well to glass because of its smooth surface. On the other hand, due to its rough exterior, vinyl will not stick well to brick.

Acceptable surfaces

- Glass
- Metals (Must be painted with a smooth, glossy enamel.)
- Vehicles (Must be painted with a smooth, glossy enamel.)
- Vinyl (Such as banners, canopies, flags, etc.)
- Plastic
- Fibreglass (Must be painted with a smooth, glossy enamel.)
- Wood (Must be painted with a smooth, glossy enamel.)
- Other painted Surfaces (Paint must be smooth and glossy, vinyl will not stick to oxidized, faded, or peeling paint)

Not recommended surfaces

- Cement
- Raw timber
- Oxidized or faded paint
- Peeling paint
- Rubber
- Raw metals
- Oily surfaces

These lists are not comprehensive and there are other acceptable and unacceptable substrates than those listed above. Again, when in doubt, apply the rule that states vinyl will generally adhere well to smooth, glossy and clean surfaces. Rough, dull, peeling, porous or dirty surfaces, on the other hand, will likely not produce an acceptable vinyl application.

If you have any questions feel free to contact us at support@hollographics.com or you may call us on 01962 882345.

Cleaning the application surface

Even if they appear clean, all surfaces should be cleaned using the procedure below:

- Clean with soapy water, then rinse with clean water (do not leave any traces of soap on the surface).
- Clean away any grease using isopropyl alcohol or denatured petrol.
- Dry the surface using a dry cloth or a clean paper towel which will not leave any small pieces behind, before the isopropyl alcohol or denatured petrol has had a chance to evaporate.

Marking Films Application Method

A **wet** method or **dry** method application technique may be used. The method chosen should suit the size of the decorative feature to be applied and the complexity of the surface to be decorated. Dry application is the most reliable method.

Wet Method:

This method of application produces very little initial adhesion. This allows the applicator to position the vinyl where required, avoiding air bubbles and folds.

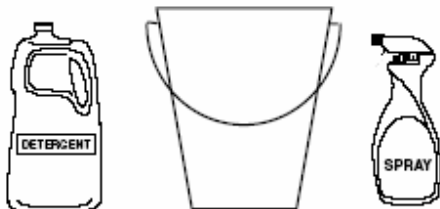
The adhesion will gradually increase after several hours as the water evaporates. The final adhesion will be reached after 24 – 48 hours.

It is not advisable to apply a marking film using the wet method in temperatures lower than 15°C.

Advantages of the wet method:

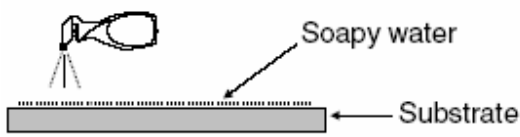
- Allows the vinyl to be applied to surfaces in high ambient temperatures (25-30°C).
- It makes it easier to apply large sections of vinyl on flat or slightly curved surfaces.

1.



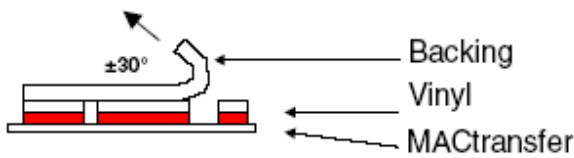
Prepare a solution of soapy water (one capful of detergent to 10 litres of water) and pour it into a spray bottle.

2.



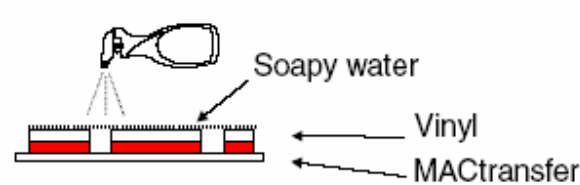
Use the spray bottle to wet the entire substrate surface (do not use a sponge or cloth as these can leave dust, fluff etc.).

3.



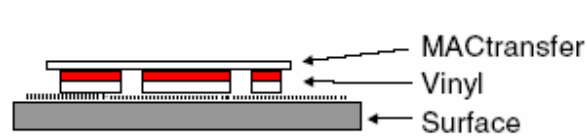
Make sure the adhesive film is flat on the table. Pull the backing off it (and not the reverse) at an angle of 30°.

4.



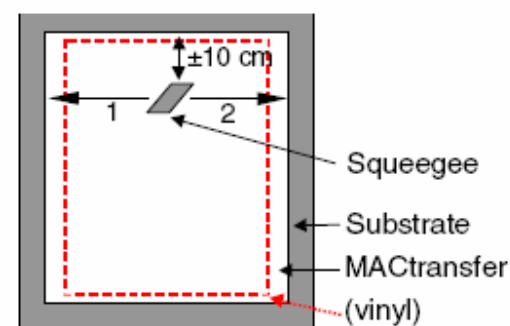
Wet the adhesive all over using a spray bottle.

5.



Place the marking film on the wet substrate surface. If the vinyl does not have any application tape on it, wet the entire surface of the film. This will make it easier to slide the plastic squeegee without scratching the vinyl.

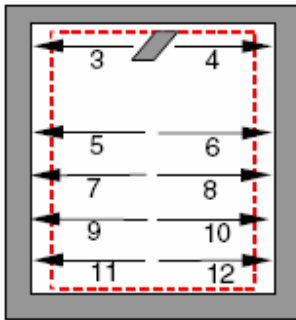
6.



Squeegee horizontally, working from the centre outwards to the left and then the right, stopping ±10cm from the top edge of the vinyl.

Apply enough pressure to squeeze out any water trapped between the adhesive and the substrate surface.

7.

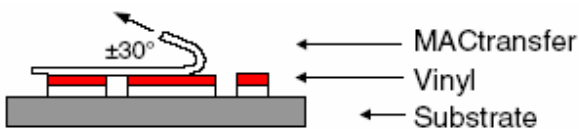


Squeegee the last 10cm of the top edge working from the centre outwards, to the left and then the right.

Continue to squeegee horizontally, moving from the centre outwards with overlapping movements.

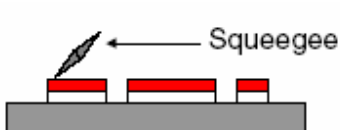
Check that no pockets of water have been trapped. If this is the case, squeegee from the centre to the edge in order to squeeze it out. Wipe the vinyl and the edges.

8.



If the marking film is covered with application tape, pull it off at a steady speed, at a cleaving angle of 0 to 30°. It is advisable to wait between 30 and 90 minutes (depending on the ambient temperature) before removing the application tape. It should not be left in contact with the vinyl for more than 24 hours.

9.



After these 30-90 minutes, squeegee the film again, paying particular attention to the edges.

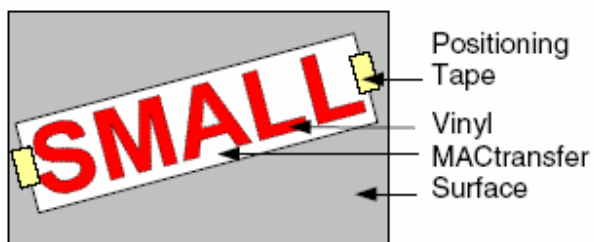
Dry Method

Dry application is a safer application method because the marking film reaches its final adhesion quicker than using the wet application method.

The lowest application temperature for marking films on flat or slightly curved surfaces is 10°C.

Small surface areas (< 0.5 m²)

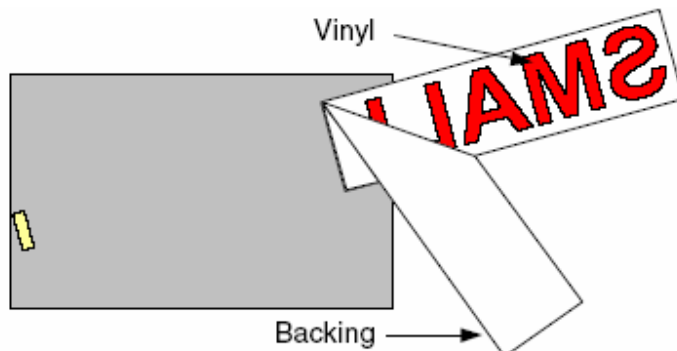
1.



Place the application tape on top of the lettering or logo.

Position the lettering or the logo WITHOUT REMOVING THE BACKING, using positioning tape at each end.

2.



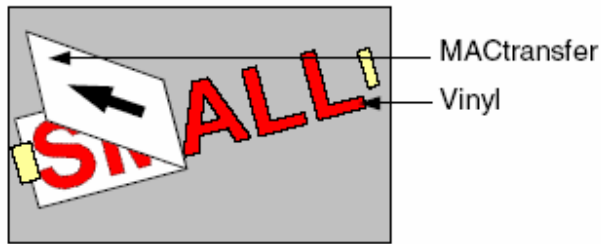
Cut one edge of the positioning tape. Peel the backing off.

3.



Position the lettering or the logo once again on the spot marked by the piece of positioning tape. Squeegee quickly and firmly from the centre outwards in overlapping movements.

4.



Pull the application tape off at a steady speed, at a cleaving angle of 0 to 30°. Prick any air bubbles (*) trapped between the vinyl and the substrate.

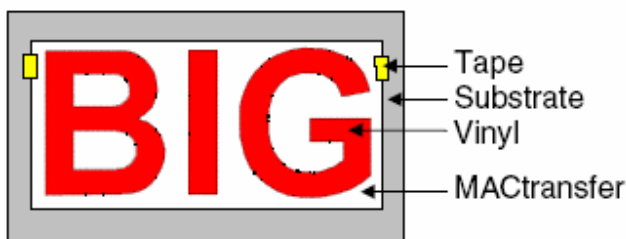
(*) In the event that "tiny bubbles" of air get trapped between the marking film and the substrate surface (bubbles have a diameter < 2mm), there is no need to do anything as they will disappear after a few days due to the porosity of the vinyl.

If the bubbles are over 2mm in diameter, use the following procedure:

1. Try to collect the bubbles together without putting the vinyl out of shape.
2. Prick the bubble at one end.
3. Pushing from the side opposite the opening, squeeze the air out through the opening.

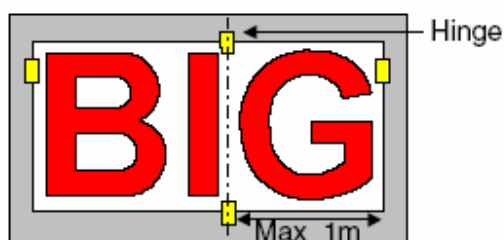
Large flat surfaces (> 1 m²) : hinge method

1.



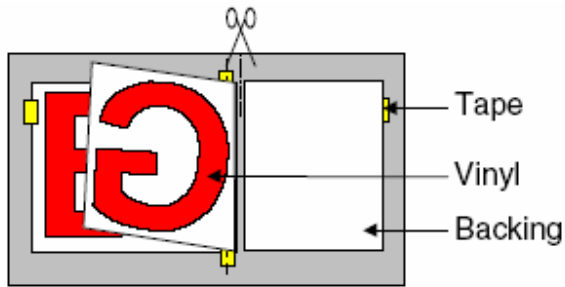
For surfaces of this kind, it is absolutely essential to apply application tape to the lettering or logo. Position the lettering or logo WITHOUT REMOVING THE BACKING using a piece of positioning tape at each end.

2.



Make a hinge perpendicular to the largest dimension of the letters or logo, no more than 1m away from any one of the edges.

3.

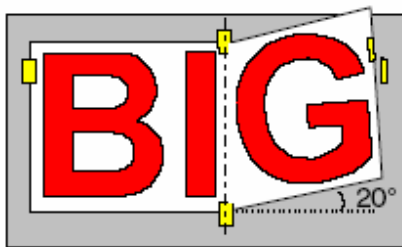


Cut the positioning tape.

Fold one half on top of the other.

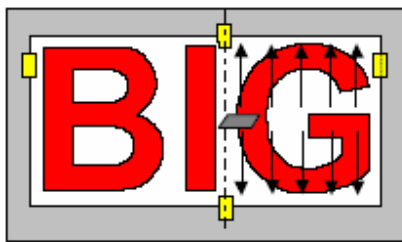
Remove and cut the backing as far as the hinge.

4.



Fold the hinge back making sure that you leave a space between the vinyl and the substrate surface (angle of $\pm 20^\circ$) in order to avoid it sticking too soon.

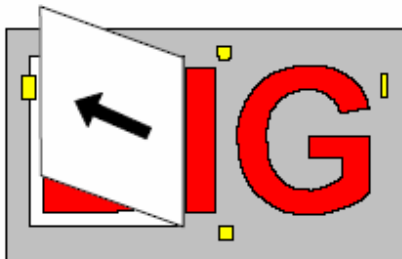
5.



Squeegee firmly from the centre outwards in overlapping movements.

Repeat the same set of actions for the other section of the lettering or logo.

6.



Remove the application tape at a steady speed, at a cleaving angle of between 0 and 30° .

Prick any air bubbles trapped between the vinyl and the substrate and squeegee once more.

VINYL REMOVAL INSTRUCTIONS

In most instances, it is possible to remove vinyl lettering with no residual damage to the applied surface. While this is typically the case, different substrate materials can react in different ways, so if you're unsure of the resulting reaction, it's important to test an inconspicuous area of your surface before applying the following techniques to the entire area. The up-side is that most surfaces, including vehicles, respond well to the vinyl removal technique outlined below, with no resulting damage to the surface.

(Note: When working with decals that have been in place for a significant length of time, there is the slight possibility that the paint around the decal will appear discoloured or faded upon removal. Usually this only occurs in cases where the decal has been exposed to the sun for extreme periods of time. This significant sun exposure will result in a tan line effect on the surface, whereby the unexposed area under the decals will appear nice and shiny next to the faded, exposed surface.)

In the case of an old wooden sign, where the paint is already chipped and peeling, it is important to keep in mind that the paint will most likely peel off with the vinyl letters when you remove them.

The following step-by-step instructions provide a good basic plan for removing old vinyl decals, stripes and letters.



1. Heat the surface of the decal with a heat gun. Then scrape the vinyl from the surface. See Fig. 1 *(Note: if the vinyl is old and brittle, it will most likely come off in small pieces. If the vinyl is not that old you may be able to pull it off in bigger chunks.)*



2. Once you have peeled all of the vinyl off, you will have to clean the adhesive off the surface with a product designed to remove adhesive without damaging the paint.



3. Clean the surface with soap and water then check to make sure there are no remaining pieces of vinyl or adhesive stuck to it.

At this point, you are done. If you intend to apply new vinyl to the surface, be sure to clean it thoroughly, then wipe it down with alcohol to ensure that none of the adhesive remover is left on the surface

If you have any questions feel free to contact us at support@hollographics.com or you may call us on 01962 882345.