Getting Started

The Layers of Vinyl Lettering and Vinyl Decals

- Application Tape / Premask
- Vinyl Lettering or Decal
- Sticky Side of Vinyl
- Paper Backing
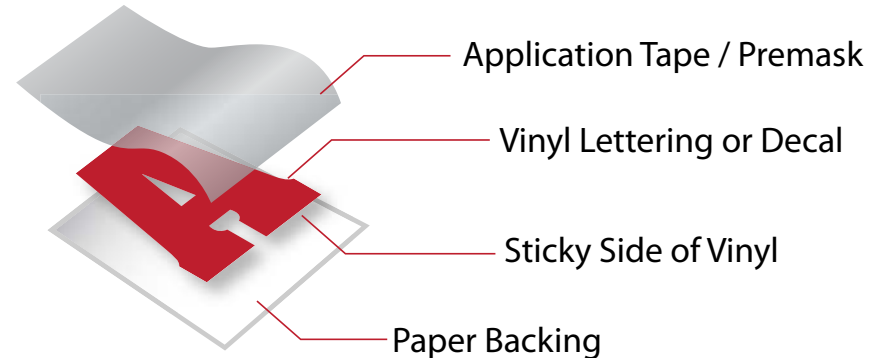
Gather These Tools For Proper Application:

- ✓ Deep Cleaner
- ✓ Application Spray
  If you run out of the supplied application spray you can make your own. Mix 2 drops of Original Joy Lemon Fresh Dishwashing detergent in the supplied spray bottle, fill with water and shake well.
- ✓ Squeegee
- ✓ Bounty paper towels (best brand)
- ✓ Masking tape
- ✓ Scissors
- ✓ Needle or Xacto knife
- ✓ And ruler or tape measure

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

Installation

Step 1 – Clean the Surface (not once), *TWICE!*

FIRST, to remove the surface impurities and invisible contaminants like car wax or oily films, spray the surface with the **DEEP CLEANER** and let it **sit for 45 seconds**. After 45 seconds, wipe the surface clean. (If Deep Cleaner is not available, clean well with grease cutting Dawn dishwashing soap.)

SECOND, *clean off the Deep Cleaner by rinsing off the surface with lots of water!* As a final cleaning step, spray on the Application Fluid and dry off thoroughly.

Step 2 - Center Your Vinyl Graphics

To center your vinyl graphics, place a small piece of masking tape on the center of the surface, just above where the graphics will be applied. Mark that masking tape with a vertical line that measures dead center. Next, mark the center of the vinyl graphics, at the top. Now you can visually align the center mark of the vinyl with the center mark on the masking tape by taping the top two corners in place.

Step 3 – Straighten Your Graphics

Hold one end of the vinyl in place while you unstick the opposite corner to raise or lower the graphics. Use a tape measure or ruler to level one end of the vinyl graphic. Re-measure to make sure both ends are still level. Adjust as needed.

Step 4 – Hinge your Graphics

Once the vinyl graphics are in place, apply two strips of masking tape along the top edge of the sheet in order to create a secure, double-wide "hinge". Be sure half of the masking tape is on the Application tape and the other half is on the surface. This will hold the entire section of vinyl securely in place for the next step.

Step 5 – Cut your Graphics into Sections

To make the application process easier, cut the graphic into smaller sections BETWEEN THE LETTERS. The masking tape hinge at the top keeps the vinyl lettering and graphics correctly spaced and aligned.

Handling small sections at a time can be extremely helpful during windy conditions. In fact, while laying down small sections of vinyl, you can temporarily tape the rest of the graphic down along the bottom edge so it's not flying around while applying individual sections.

Step 6 – Remove the Backing

Now you are ready to start applying your vinyl graphics. Carefully start removing the backing (wax paper) from behind the vinyl on your first section.

If for any reason the vinyl is not sticking to the Application Tape, lay the wax paper back down, lay the vinyl down onto the surface and firmly squeegee the front of the graphic again, which will force the Application Tape to make a better bond with the vinyl.

Step 7 - Apply your Graphics

Next, with a section of the vinyl letters hinged up and wax backing removed, spray some of the Application Fluid directly onto the surface exactly where the text will fall. Be EXTRA careful NOT to get any application fluid on the graphics not being applied yet.

Hinge down the lettering and while holding the bottom of the graphic AWAY from the surface, begin to systematically squeegee the letters down onto the surface with FIRM PRESSURE. Let the force of the squeegee itself attach the letters to the surface. USE SYSTEMATIC, EVEN, FIRM PRESSURE as you squeegee. Don't let the letters touch prior to the squeegee forcing the vinyl against the surface. The more pressure you apply, the more moisture will be eliminated and the better the bond. The adhesive is literally "activated" by using firm pressure.

Step 8 – Wait At Least 30 Minutes Before Removing The Application (Transfer) Tape

Once you are finished applying the letters, WAIT AT LEAST 30 MINUTES for the adhesive to set. If you do not wait, you will increase the risk of the graphics peeling up and weakening the adhesive bond.

Now that you've waited, spray the front of the Application Tape with application fluid, saturating it completely. This makes the transfer tape release easier from the vinyl graphics. Then, immediately begin peeling the Application Tape off. As you peel, DO NOT pull directly toward yourself or this may cause the vinyl graphic to lift off from the surface. Instead, moving very slowly from one side, peel from a sharp (180 degree) angle, essentially peeling the tape straight back on itself.

If the graphics begin to peel up from the surface, carefully lay the vinyl and Application Tape back down, re-squeegee and wait for it to set, perhaps even as long as an hour or two depending on temperature and humidity.

Step 9 – Finishing

If after removing the application tape, any air bubbles are apparent, you can puncture one end of the bubble with a pin, needle or Xacto knife blade and gently squeegee out the air towards the puncture hole. Tiny and sometimes not-so-tiny bubbles take care of themselves when the vinyl heats up and cools back down a few times. In time, air pockets automatically dissipate making your vinyl application look smooth and professional.

Additional Help

For instructional videos on how to install your vinyl lettering and graphics, please go to:

http://www.TheSignChef.com/vinyl-application