TECHNICAL BULLETIN 5.04

Application of Vinyl Graphic Products to Automotive Painted Surfaces

This bulletin details specific surface preparation and application instructions of vinyl graphic products onto automotive painted surfaces. Applications will be successful if the instructions are followed completely.

STORAGE of VINYL GRAPHIC PRODUCTS:
- Place vinyl graphic products lying flat in a clean storage area, free from excessive moisture and direct sunlight.
- Maintain ambient temperatures between the ranges of 65° - 100°F (18° - 37°C).

SURFACE PREPARATION FOR VINYL GRAPHIC PRODUCTS:

All surfaces are considered contaminated until properly cleaned. Thus, all surfaces MUST be cleaned prior to any application of vinyl graphic products. See the following steps:

1. Saturate a clean paper towel with a solvent approved by local EPA regulations and wipe the surface to remove any contaminates such as silicone, wax or road grime.
2. Dry the surface with a lint free paper towel before the solvent evaporates.
3. Spray the surface with Isopropyl Alcohol; follow immediately to dry the surface with clean dry towel. This should remove any residue remaining from the cleaning solvent.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICATION:

Tools
- The following tools are recommended for use and available from Sharpline by calling toll-free 1-800-888-4888.
    - Felt Block Application Squeegee P/N 0882-55
    - 3M Gold Squeegee P/N 0881-55
    - Snappy Knife P/N 077-55
    - Heat Gun P/N 9751-55
    - Air Release Tool P/N 0885-55

Temperature
- Apply vinyl graphic products when the air and application surface temperatures are above 50°F and below 100°F.
- Surfaces may be mechanically heated when air and application surface temperatures are below the minimum requirements. This may be accomplished by a portable heater, heat lamps, hot water or steam. If hot water or steam is used, the surface must be dried thoroughly before application.

Key Points
- Before beginning application, insure the surface was properly cleaned as previously outlined
- Check that air and surface temperatures exceed the minimum requirements.
- Use firm pressure with squeegee and/or felt block.
- Use overlapping strokes.
- Remove the application masking at a 180° angle.
- Re-squeegee entire graphic after removal of application masking.
- Make sure hands are clean.

APPLICATION SEQUENCE FOR VINYL GRAPHIC PRODUCTS:

1. **Position Vinyl Graphic**
   Register position by establishing a horizontal reference line using ¾" masking tape to align the graphic in the proper location.

2. **Remove Liner**
   Before application, lay vinyl graphic against the side of unit or on a clean flat surface. Remove all of the liner by sharply flicking the marking edge toward the face of the marking with the ball of the thumb or a fingernail.
   A small bend at a corner or edge will cause the liner to separate from the marking. Pull the liner away in a continuous motion at a 180° angle.
   Note: Always remove the liner from the vinyl graphic rather than the vinyl graphic from the liner.

3. **Tack Vinyl Graphic**
   Align vinyl graphic along ¾" masking tape and tack it to the surface with thumb pressure at upper corners.
   Using a felt squeegee, begin application at the vertical center of the vinyl graphic and apply all the way to one edge.
   Then return to center with overlapping strokes and repeat the procedure applying to the opposite edge.

4. **Remove Application Masking**
   Trim excess vinyl graphic at this time before removal of application masking.
   Spray the application masking with water to release the bond to the vinyl graphic.
   Remove application masking from the face of the vinyl graphic by pulling masking back upon itself always at a 180° angle.

5. **Re-squeegee Vinyl Graphic**
   Using an industrial heat gun, warm the vinyl graphic; avoid overheating the graphic which may cause melting of the vinyl.
   Caution: Hold heat gun several inches from the vinyl graphic to avoid burning or melting. Cotton gloves should be worn to avoid burning of fingers.
   While vinyl graphic is still warm, with short strokes, move the rivet brush back and forth across the surface. Thus, conforming the vinyl to the textured surface and altering the memory of the vinyl graphic.