

Practical Information: Care and Maintenance of Vehicle Graphics

The Do's and Don'ts of cleaning applied vinyl vehicle graphics

Vehicle graphics that are located in industrialized, heavily polluted or low lying areas are prone to damage from the “fallout” phenomenon. Orafol Americas recommends vehicle graphic owners in these areas frequently rinse the graphics with a mild soap-and-water mixture. For information about “fallout,” check the Support section at www.orafolamericas.com.

The Do's

The following practices will help maintain the life and quality of the vinyl film:

- Wash applied vinyl graphics with a blend of clean water and a mild car wash, detergent (ie: Joy®, or Ivory®).
- Test any cleaning solution on a small section of the vinyl graphic before using.
- Always read the warning labels on car care products for proper safety instructions.
- Once you've washed the vehicle with the soapy water blend, rinse it with clean water.
- Either let the vehicle air dry or use a microfiber cloth.

The Don'ts

Indications of vinyl failure can include loss of gloss level, fading, embrittling, cracking, chipping, or peeling around graphic edges.

The following practices will result in deterioration of the vinyl film:

- Do not allow fuels to stay in contact with the vinyl for extended periods of time. Clean all spills as soon as possible.
- Do not use automated car washes, truck washes using caustic cleaners, or pressure washers to clean your vehicle.
- Do not apply carnauba-based wax over vinyl graphics.
- Do not apply any type of wax or polish to matte or carbon fiber finished vinyls.
- Do not use mechanical brush washing.

Concerns about pressure washing vinyl vehicle graphics

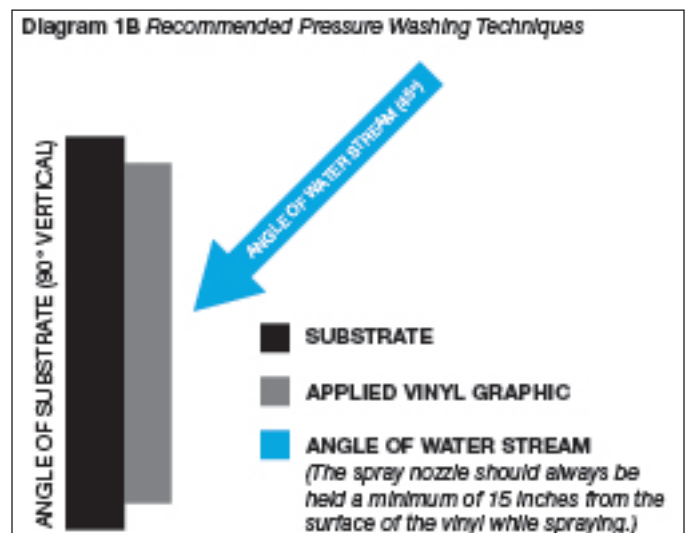
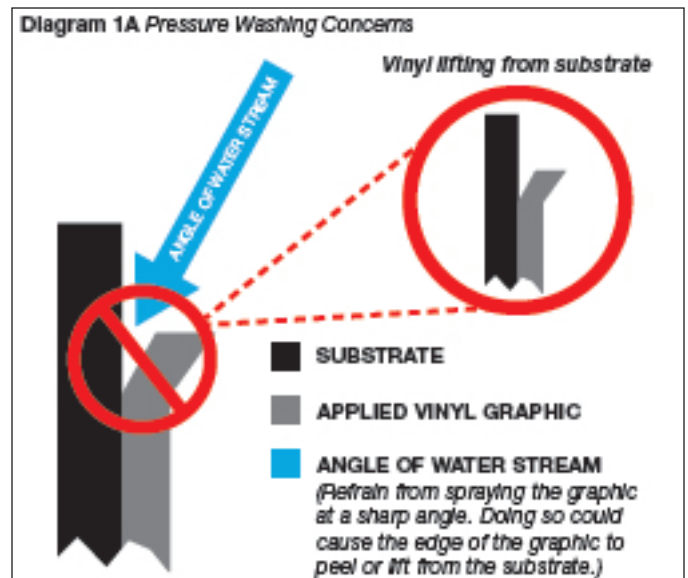
Pressure washing should only be used when no other cleaning methods are available. Keep the following in mind while performing this type of cleaning:

- Repeated pressure washing can cause the vinyl graphics to lift around the edges and peel away from the vehicle, especially if the spray is at a sharp angle to the vinyl edge. (See Diagram 1A)
- Over time, repeated pressure washing can degrade the face film, causing the graphic to lose its luster, fade, crack and even chip away from the substrate.

To prolong the life of the applied vehicle graphic when choosing to pressure wash, consider the following (based on vertical application):

- Water Temperature: 67°F-77°F
- Spray nozzle opening: 40° wide pattern.
- Spray angle: 45°
- Angle of graphic: 90° (vertical)
- Distance from graphic: 15”
- Water pressure: ≤800 PSI
- Length of time: 30 sec.

Aim the spray pattern at a slight angle to the edge of the vinyl graphic. (See Diagram 1B) **Under no circumstances should a turbo pressure nozzle be used when pressure washing applied vehicle graphics.**



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How to remove difficult pollutants or debris from applied vehicle graphics

When normal cleaning procedures don't work to remove difficult debris from your applied vehicle graphics, try the following:

- Spot clean the area with a microfiber cloth and isopropyl alcohol.
- Moisten a rag with a citrus-based cleaner and wipe down the problem areas. Immediately after using the citrus cleaner, rinse the area with a blend of water and soap.

If these cleaning methods do not work on problem areas, please contact ORAFOL Americas Product Technical Support for more helpful tips and information.

How to properly hand wash vinyl vehicle graphics

Supplies Needed:

- Garden hose with standard spray nozzle attachment
- Clean bucket
- Mild car wash detergent
- Soft cotton or microfiber sponge
- Dry microfiber cloths

Procedure:

1. Rinse the graphic with water to wash away any loose sediments, dust, or dirt using your garden hose with spray nozzle attachment.
2. Mix together water and the mild detergent into your bucket. (Make sure the bucket is free of dirt and small rocks as these will scratch your car and or vinyl graphics.)
3. Soak your sponge with the water and soap mixture.
4. Clean the graphic starting from the top and scrubbing to the bottom. This will allow the dirty, contaminated water to drip toward the ground.
5. Rinse the graphic with clean water using the hose with spray nozzle attachment.
6. Once the graphic is rinsed off, allow it to air dry. You may also use a microfiber cloth to dry the graphic.
7. Once dry, for added protection, you may apply a silicone or Teflon-based polish designed for vinyl vehicle graphics. (Read and follow manufacturer's directions and suggestions for frequency.)

For questions not covered in this bulletin, please contact Orafol Americas Product Technical Support at 1-888-672-2251, ext.168 or 176, or email techsupport-americas@orafol.com.

General Information

This information is based on our knowledge and experience. We have not explained all aspects of application. Specialized or occupational knowledge and competence of a professional sign maker are presupposed. Because of the diversity of potential influencing factors during application and use, we recommend customers test our products when the films will be used for special applications. No legally binding warranty of certain qualities can be derived from our information.



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