



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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VINYL GRAPHICS REMOVAL

Most vinyl graphic challenges center on application and adhesion. However, there comes a time when your vinyl graphic has outlived its purpose and must be removed.

For short term graphics (1 to 2 years) use **MACal 8900PRO** for cut vinyl applications or use **JT5828R, JT5829R or JT1858R** for digitally printed graphics. These products have a removable adhesive that is cleanly removable for up to two years.

MACtac's IMAGin JT5629P and JT5628P is uniquely designed to cleanly remove for up to five with a heat assist.

Other longer term decals made with permanent adhesive, including 9800Pro, 8300Pro, , JT5929P, JT5829P where the adhesives are designed to tightly adhere for three to eight years, require significantly more work to remove **and** re-clean the surface in preparation for the new graphics. The following steps will lead you through the removal process:

STEP 1) removing the film: This means removing the top vinyl layer. Options available include:

1) CHEMICALS: There are many products on the market available for just this purpose. Keep in mind they need to penetrate to the adhesive to work so the film must be scored first or you can use a remover designed specifically for vinyl film.

Caution: Some of the chemicals may be harmful to the surface on which the graphic is attached therefore we recommend you test first. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines for personal protection, ventilation, use and disposal.

2) HEAT: The use of a heat gun to soften both the vinyl film and the adhesive underneath is frequently used to peel the graphics off.

Caution: Too much heat will damage the surface under the graphic and leave the vinyl brittle, making it even more difficult to remove.

a) Ideally, you need to find a good intermediate temperature and work slowly. Start with low heat and slowly increase until the vinyl is peeling relatively easily.

b) Whenever possible, pull the vinyl from the direction you're removing it. This reduces the angle and increases the amount of adhesive that comes off with the vinyl face.

c) You probably will require a scraper during this step. Scrapers are available that only allow the blade to penetrate to a pre-set depth to help minimize the danger of damaging the surface.

Caution: Use care with glass surfaces, especially if they are cold. The heat may cause them to crack or shatter.

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3) OTHER OPTIONS: Some new products on the market include ‘Vinyl Erasers’. These are wheels that attach to electric drills and ‘rub’ the vinyl off without harming the surface underneath. These are usually very good tools for small jobs like stripes. Because the ‘Erasers’ wear down fairly rapidly, larger jobs could get expensive.

Unfortunately, no matter which method you employ, this is a time consuming job.

B) Removal of the remaining adhesive. Regardless of what method you used in Step A above, there is always some residual adhesive left on the surface that needs to be removed. This is a relatively easy step with a couple of options:

1) Solvents: There are many products on the market that are made for just this purpose. It’s a good idea to saturate any remaining adhesive with the cleaning solution, allow it to soften and then scrape it off with a squeegee or plastic scraper. If you want to use something else, kerosene or other oily solvents (like WD-40) will remove most adhesives. However, extra cleaning will be needed to remove these solvents. **Caution:** Be sure to read and follow the manufacturer’s guidelines for personal protection, ventilation, use and disposal. Some solvents may cause damage to certain surfaces! If unsure contact the manufacturer or test on a small spot first.

2) Powerwash: For smaller jobs or those where most of the adhesive has come off with the vinyl, powerwashing is a simple solution.

Once the entire adhesive residue is gone, be sure to wash the area again to remove any traces of cleaner or adhesive residue prior to applying your next graphic (refer to MACTac’s ‘Surface Preparation’ bulletin for additional information). If you’re not sure if it’s clean enough, wash it one more time. A little extra care here will save problems in the future.

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