

Stryker Work Instruction

Applying Vinyl Lettering to a Building Surface

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Revision: A

Purpose: Proper installation of cut vinyl lettering and graphics on building exteriors.

Required Tools

Installation Supplies

- Vinyl graphics with transfer tape applied
- Masking tape (2" blue painter's tape recommended)
- Felt edge squeegee
- Plastic squeegee
- Utility knife
- Tape measure
- Level (4' recommended)
- Laser level (preferred for long graphics)
- Pencil or removable marker
- Cleaning towels (lint free)
- Isopropyl alcohol (70–90%)
- Mild detergent and water
- Spray bottle
- Ladder or lift (if required)

Optional

- Heat gun
 - Rivet brush
 - Pin for bubble removal
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Surface Requirements

The surface must be:

- Clean
- Dry
- Free of wax
- Free of silicone
- Free of dirt
- Free of grease
- Above manufacturer's minimum installation temperature (typically 50–60°F)

Do not install:

- During rain
- On frosted surfaces
- During high winds
- On freshly painted walls until fully cured (typically 30 days minimum)

Step 1 – Inspect Graphics

Before installation verify:

- ✓ Correct customer
- ✓ Correct spelling
- ✓ Correct colors
- ✓ Correct dimensions
- ✓ No shipping damage

Step 2 – Clean the Surface

Wash with mild soap and water.

Dry completely.

Wipe the installation area using isopropyl alcohol.

Allow to flash dry.

Do not touch cleaned areas with bare hands.

Step 3 – Locate the Graphic

Measure the wall.

Determine centerline.

Mark reference points using painter's tape.

For multiple lines of text:

- Mark the baseline
- Verify equal margins
- Verify spacing

Use a level or laser.

Step 4 – Dry Fit

Tape the graphic to the wall.

Use masking tape across the top creating a hinge.

Example:

Masking Tape Hinge

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TRANSFER TAPE

VINYL

BACKING PAPER

Stand back 15–20 feet.

Confirm:

- Level
 - Centered
 - Height
 - Customer approval (if applicable)
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Step 5 – Create the Hinge

Apply one continuous strip of masking tape across the entire top edge.

The graphic should now swing upward like a door.

Step 6 – Remove Backing Paper

Lift the graphic.

Slowly peel away the liner.

Watch carefully for letters remaining on the backing.

If a letter lifts:

Stop.

Lay the backing back down.

Burnish with the squeegee.

Continue peeling.

Step 7 – Apply Vinyl

Hold the graphic away from the wall.

Begin from the center.

Work outward using overlapping strokes.

Use firm pressure.

Pattern:

Center

<-----|----->

Downward

Overlap each pass

Never trap air.

Do not pull or stretch the transfer tape.

Step 8 – Remove Transfer Tape

Wait approximately 5–10 minutes if needed.

Peel at a sharp angle (180°).

Do not pull straight outward.

If lettering lifts:

Stop.

Lay transfer tape back down.

Burnish again.

Continue slowly.

Step 9 – Inspect

Check:

☐ Alignment

☐ Missing letters

☐ Bubbles

☐ Wrinkles

☐ Adhesion

Step 10 – Bubble Removal

Small bubbles:

Leave them.

Most disappear in several days.

Large bubbles:

Use a fine pin.

Puncture near the edge.

Push air toward the hole using the felt squeegee.

Step 11 – Final Burnish

Apply firm pressure over all lettering.

Pay special attention to:

- Small letters
 - Serifs
 - Corners
 - Thin strokes
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Special Considerations

Brick

Recommended:

- Cast vinyl
- Heat gun
- Foam roller

- Rivet brush

Avoid calendared films.

Stucco

Not recommended unless using specialty conformable films.

Aluminum Composite Panels

Excellent surface.

Install normally.

Glass

Clean with alcohol only.

Avoid ammonia-based cleaners immediately before installation.

Painted Metal

Verify paint is fully cured.

Test adhesion if uncertain.

Temperature Guidelines

Temperature Recommendation

Below 45°F Do Not Install

50–60°F Acceptable

60–80°F Ideal

Above 95°F Install in shade

Common Mistakes

- ✗ Dirty surface
 - ✗ Uneven measurements
 - ✗ Stretching transfer tape
 - ✗ Pulling tape too quickly
 - ✗ Installing in direct hot sun
 - ✗ Using too little squeegee pressure
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Quality Checklist

Item	Pass
Correct graphic	☐
Correct location	☐
Level	☐
Surface cleaned	☐
No bubbles	☐
Transfer tape removed cleanly	☐
Customer approval	☐

Safety

- Follow ladder safety procedures.
- Wear fall protection when required.
- Do not install during windy conditions from elevated platforms.
- Use proper PPE, including gloves and eye protection when cleaning.

Recommended Installation Sequence

1. Clean surface.
2. Measure and mark centerlines.
3. Dry-fit and verify placement.
4. Create a top hinge with masking tape.
5. Peel backing and apply from the center outward.
6. Remove transfer tape slowly at a 180° angle.
7. Inspect, remove any bubbles, and perform a final burnish.

This procedure provides a repeatable installation method that produces professional results for storefronts, aluminum panels, windows, and other smooth building surfaces.