

QuipCal

EQUIPMENT DECALS

Installing Decals on Old Paint

READ THIS FIRST IF YOU ARE INSTALLING DECALS ON OLD PAINT

Reading this could mean the difference between a successful installation or buying more decals. We don't want that for you and neither do you!

If you are installing your new decals over a surface which HAS NOT been repainted, PLEASE read through this simple set of instructions. Doing so will help you to avoid mistakes which are commonly made and result in poor installation or damaged decals.

At the bottom of the box in which these decals were shipped you will find an installation instruction sheet along with a squeegee. That sheet contains instructions to help you install your decals correctly and successfully. This sheet is specifically intended to guide you when you choose to remove old decals from a machine and then install new ones, but when you are not going to re-paint the surface.

1. Removing Old Decal Material

Old decals can be removed in a variety of ways depending on the tools available to you and the condition of the material.

If you regularly recondition machines, you may find it helpful to purchase a commercially available vinyl stripper such as the MBX vinyl stripper. This is a great tool for those who do this type of work regularly.

If you don't have access to such a tool, you'll want to try to remove the decals manually. Apply moderate heat to warm the material as needed to soften the adhesive and then starting at a corner attempt to slowly lift and pull the material.

NOTE: Not all material is identical, so these procedures are guides to help you. If material is very degraded by years of U.V. exposure or chemical degradation, it may tear frequently or be extremely brittle. Experiment to determine the correct amount of heat to apply and the best angle at which to pull off material.

Try using a razor blade at corners to lift a small section of the material. Use sharp razor blades held as close to parallel with the surface as possible. Use a blade sparingly as the risk of nicking the old paint is high.

There are commercially available squeegee/scrapers made from plastic but with a chisel type edge which can sometimes help with the process.

2. Preparing the Surface

This is an extremely important part of the process. If these steps are not followed carefully decal adhesion will be compromised, or good decals will be damaged beyond use.

Once old decal material has been removed, there will be residual adhesive which remains on the surface. (When using a mechanical vinyl remover such as the MBX, much of the adhesive will be removed but there will still be some residue.)

Commercially manufactured adhesive removers are available for purchase. Generally, these products soften the solid adhesive into a sticky gel which must then be scraped off the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions. You'll not want to do this work in direct sunlight on a hot day. Machine surface temperatures more than 85 degrees will tend to dry out the remover before it has had adequate time to work. Spray on the remover, allow it to dwell for at least 3 – 5 minutes and then using a plastic squeegee such as the one provided with the decals you purchased, "scrape" the material. It will glob onto the squeegee and can then be wiped off with a paper towel. Do not apply remover to more surface than can be worked in about 10 minutes. All times will vary depending on the vinyl, which was removed, the surface temperature and the age of the old decals. Experiment to find the ideal combination of time and application area. The advantage of these commercial removers is that they are intended to remove old adhesive WITHOUT damage to the paint surface.

NOTE: Do not bypass the step of removing old adhesive. Your new decals may not align perfectly with the area occupied by the old decal. Old adhesive – while it may appear clear immediately after removal – will attract dirt. An ugly gray shadow of dirt in the shape of the visible portion of the old decal will soon appear as the machine sits outside.

NOTE: Do not install new decals immediately after use of adhesive remover. You must read the next steps below before installing new decals.

Adhesive remover WILL leave behind a film which WILL prevent new decal material from adhering properly.

The surface which has just been cleaned of adhesive IS NOW CONTAMINATED. A good glass cleaner or a commercially available application fluid will be helpful in removing this contamination. If it is available to you, a good grade of MEK or Lacquer Thinner will also work well for this. Wear rubber gloves when handling MEK or Lacquer thinner. Use clean paper towels for the final cleaning. Shop rags are fine for first cleaning, but recycled shop rags often contain residual oils or contaminants from previous uses and which haven't been completely removed during the cleaning process. So always use clean white lint-free towels to finish- clean the surface. You'll also be able to see any remaining dirt or contamination on a clean white towel.

NOTE: These solvents MAY SOFTEN AND MAR THE PAINT FINISH IF APPLIED TOO HEAVILY OR FOR TOO LONG. Test the surface with a small amount of solvent before applying to the whole area. If the surface begins to discolor or melt, or wrinkle cease immediately. Air-Cure paints are often not resistant to solvents.

Factory baked-on finishes and powder coatings are generally very durable and chemical-resistant. You may find that Lacquer thinner or MEK can be useful solvents for actual removal of adhesive. They can work extremely well for light adhesive residue on factory finishes. The advantage in using these is that there will be no adhesive-remover residue left to remove. In any case, you'll want to clean the surface several times carefully and thoroughly after the last of the adhesive is removed. This cleaning is to remove any contaminants which may be sitting on the surface, or which may have been embedded into softer paints. Any contamination will prevent good adhesion of the new decals.

If there is a substantial shadowing on the old paint, you may wish to buff out the panel or area. Shadowing is the result of the variation in the paint degradation. The paint beneath the decal was protected from sun and weather and solvents and is thus in "new" condition compared with the surrounding area. A good, mild buffing compound used in combination with an electric buffer will often help to "erase" the evidence of the old decal's placement. This can also be helpful when removing company decals which were added by the machine's previous owner or by a dealer who sold or serviced the machine last. Those decals will not be replaced, so buffing out those areas will remove most evidence of their past presence.

If you choose to compound the surface, you'll certainly want to clean those surfaces again using a good glass cleaner or commercially available application fluid.

If you have the time, if you have the facility, and if you are working in suitable temperature washing the machine with a good grade detergent and a power washer will always be the best way to finish cleaning the surface before installing the decals. We'll assume that you've already washed the machine before beginning the reconditioning process, so this step isn't to remove grease or oil but to final clean the surface before the new decals are installed.

NOTE: We often recommend a good commercial cleaner such as "STONE SOAP" Kemade B. This a very strong powdered cleaner intended for use in car washes to clean white-wall tires. We find this product to be exceptional for removing old paint oxidation and preparing surfaces for touch up painting and decal application.

3. Checking the Surface

One final step is essential to ensure that your new decals can be installed successfully. Once all traces of adhesive have been removed, and all contaminants – both old and new –have been removed from the surface you are ready to follow the instructions on the Decal Installation Sheet which you'll find beneath the decals in the box they were shipped in. Before moving to that sheet. move the machine to a warm but not hot environment and allow the surface to warm to a temperature of not less than 50 degrees and not more than 100 degrees. The surface must be dry, warm and clean for proper adhesion of the new decals. Once this is done, you'll want to check the surface for adhesion quality.

Using a roll of 3/4" or 1" masking tape, tear off strips of tape several inches in length and apply them to the cleaned and prepared surface at various spots. They should adhere normally and remove with some effort. If you are uncertain about the adhesion, compare the tape's adhesion on your cleaned surface with another clean surface. If the tape doesn't "grip" the surface solidly, there is likely some contamination remaining or embedded in the surface. Repeat the cleaning process. If MEK or Lacquer thinner were used on Air-Dry paint they may have penetrated the surface and may require some time to escape / evaporate.

Once you've checked several areas at random and found all those areas to have good grip with the tape, you are ready to install your new decals. Proceed to the Installation Sheet mentioned previously in these instructions.

All Instructions are Recommendations Only. We do not guarantee that these are the only steps needed to ensure good adhesion.

For more information, or to talk to a member of our team feel free to call us at 215-536-5339!