



# The Ultimate Guide to WRAPPING PREP

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## Customer consultation tips

Prior to agreeing a cost and accepting a job, carryout a full customer consultation to assess the vehicle and manage customer expectations.

### During the consultation establish:

- **The original colour of the vehicle** – remember a red car will always take longer to wrap than a black one!
- **Check for damage / re-sprays** - vinyl will only be warranted on original paintwork.
- **The level of wrap required by the customer** – do they require door shuts etc? (definitely not for beginners to tackle, advanced wrappers only). Wrappers are not mechanics; do not remove anything you're not confident in replacing. If you need to get a mechanic in build this into the cost and timing. Customers will appreciate you are taking safety seriously.



## Tips to achieve the perfect wrapping environment

A good wrapping bay is essential to a successful wrap.

### Ensure your wrapping environment is:

- ✓ **Well-lit** – good lighting is a must. LED daylight units are great!
- ✓ **Warm and dry** – ensure an ambient temperature of around 18°C - 23°C with no drafts or damp areas.
- ✓ **Clean and dust-free**. Choose a flooring type that can be kept clean and dust free easily i.e. tiled or lino – not concrete or carpet as these hold dust.
- ✓ **Adequate power supply**. An easily accessible power supply will make life a lot easier – retractable ceiling extension sockets are ideal.

### Don'ts:

- ✗ **Ensure the wrap bay is neither too cold nor too hot**. Too cold and the vinyl can become brittle and could snap, alternatively if the wrap environment is too hot it could make the vinyl stretchy and reduces the benefits of adhesive features.
- ✗ **Avoid drafts**. Drafts affect the room temperature and can also blow in dust and dirt.
- ✗ **Do not wrap outside** – it is not temperature controlled and could be damp.
- ✗ **Don't struggle in poor lighting** – you may get a nasty surprise when you pull the vehicle out into the daylight.



## Vehicle preparation tips

### A well-prepared vehicle is crucial to the wrapping process.

- Ensure the vehicle is thoroughly washed but not waxed. Make sure you get in all the nooks and crannies!
- Whilst cleaning the vehicle take photos of any paintwork/bodywork defects you find and refer back to the customer, in writing, so can be referenced at a later date if needed.
- Pull the vehicle inside overnight so it's not coming in to be wrapped cold. This will also give areas behind rubber seals etc chance to fully dry.
- Leave the vehicle's windows down and doors unlocked or disconnect the battery.
- Covering the vehicle's wheels with application tape can be a good idea to protect the wrap and reduce dust.

### Cleaning Systems

- Use matched cleaning systems (i.e. use an Avery Dennison cleaning system for an Avery Dennison wrap) - this is really important!
- Solvent cleaners reduce the effectiveness of 3M's Controltac if not left to dry fully – use the night before so any solvent residue can fully evaporate. Prior to wrapping each panel, the following day remove any dust with a tack rag.
- If using 3M surface cleaner remember to clean with one cloth and dry off with a second cloth – you can even use a heat gun to fully dry off solvent cleaners (over 18°C).

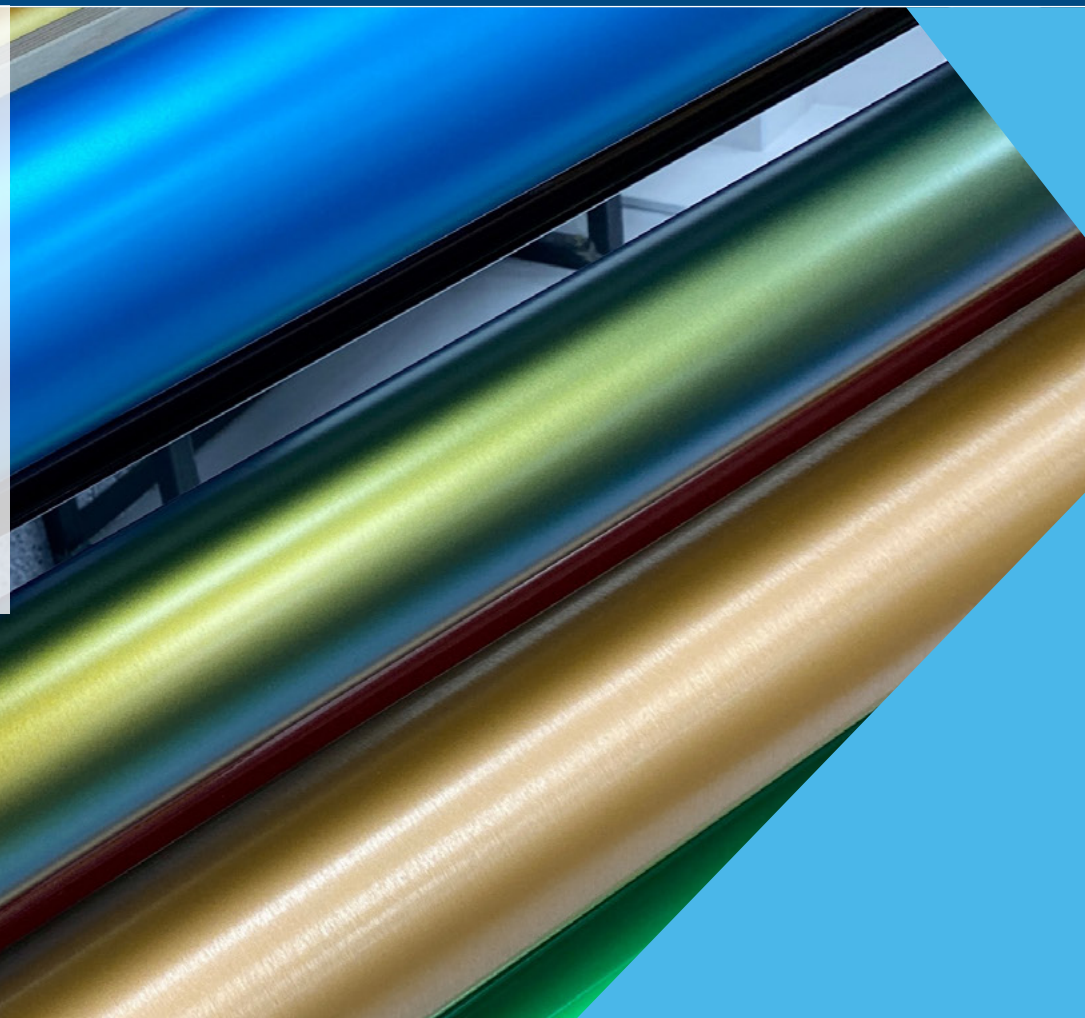




## Tips for vinyl storage

Whether preparing for a colour change or digital print wrap, it is important you don't overlook preparation of the vinyl.

- Acclimatise vinyl, ideally for 3 hours, at 18°C - 23°C before printing, to allow optimum print quality.
- Dry warm conditions are a must for vinyl storage. Damp areas can create problems with paper liners, that can absorb moisture and cause cockling and print head strikes whilst printing.
- Vinyl straight from a delivery van will be very cold and create slight condensation making the material damp which will affect printing.

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## Tips for graphic production

Outgassing is critical to remove any solvents before laminating.

### Why?

- Trapped solvent will migrate & cause the film to feel tacky.
- Once the graphic is applied, the solvent will continue to soften and weaken the adhesive - beware on panel edges and recesses, where the adhesive is weakened and no longer able to adhere, this can cause the film to 'pop' from the recess and shrink along the edges.

### How?

- The ideal temperature for outgassing is 23°C. If loosely winding the roll, it is important to circulate air, using a fan to blow away from the graphic as it is difficult for solvent to escape from the centre of the roll.
- If possible, hang the graphic like washing! Or with magnets on the side of the vehicle – air flow is vital.
- It is not recommended to lay the graphic out flat, however if this is the only option, be cautious of dust and ensure constant, good ventilation to move the solvent away. Solvent is heavier than air so you run the risk of it resettling back on the graphic.
- The time needed to outgas will vary depending on the print e.g. black ink or darker solid colour print will have a greater ink density on the film, which will require a longer outgassing time.
- You may find that it can take up to 72 hours to fully outgas dense colour prints. Some dark blues and black colours can reach 400% ink coverage, compared to a light grey which could be as low as 60%. More ink = more solvent!

### Laminating

Apply an overlaminate to protect the print and increase durability.

- Laminate cold or with minimal heat
- After lamination allow a minimum of 24 hours at 23°C prior to application, alternatively once laminated re-run the print back through the laminator with the heated rollers on.





## Essential tools for your wrapping kit



Essential tools to achieve the perfect wrap include:



Squeegee



Heat gun



Glove



Digital infrared  
thermometer +  
spare batteries



Small application  
roller



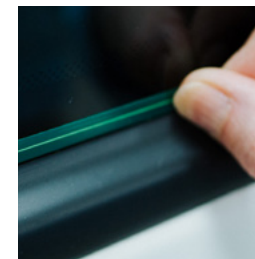
Tape measure



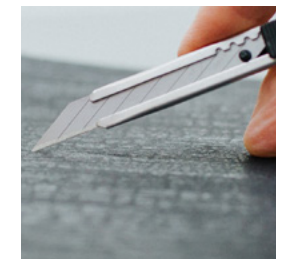
Magnets



Snitty



Knifeless tapes



30° knives –  
(replace/snap scalpel  
blades frequently)

### CAUTION!

- Stanley knives or similar are not suitable
- DO NOT CUT ON PAINTWORK!

## Tips for post heating

### Post-heating is critical in any areas that have been stretched.

- Post heat after applying every panel – not at the end of the complete wrap.
- First give a “good blast of heat” to all areas. This will expand any trapped air so you can deal with it.
- Heat inch by inch, always removing the heat gun before reading the temperature of the vinyl. Use an infrared digital thermometer to ensure the film is post-heated to the correct temperature.
- Finally, all risk areas must be post heated. Recess areas, overlaps, edges to speed up the arch of adhesion (achieve full bond).





## Wrap aftercare tips

### A little post wrap TLC can make the difference.

- Moving a vehicle from 20 degrees to -4 degrees will be a massive shock to the vinyl and adhesive, which could lead to shrinking. Ensuring the wrap is post heated correctly and kept in overnight avoids any potential issues and give the adhesive time to bond.
- Recommend customers use matching cleaners and sealers to protect the wrap and have them available to buy.

### Post wrap check-up

- Offer a post wrap check-up so you get the chance to correct any issues and the customer doesn't go straight to your competition – protect your reputation.

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