



WALL PREPARATION

Self-Adhesive Vinyl — Surface, Tools & Troubleshooting

Why surface finish matters

Self-adhesive vinyl bonds straight to the paint film — there's no paste layer to even out texture. A roller that's too coarse leaves peaks and troughs in the paint, and the graphic only grips the peaks. On a heavily textured wall that can cut adhesion to as little as 20–40% of the surface. A smooth, fine-rolled finish gets you close to full contact.

Brand new wall

Paint with a fine roller. A larger roller leaves texture the vinyl can't fully bond to.

Existing wall

Cover the whole wall with paint such as Cabot's Cabothane Clear or Dulux Aquanamel Gloss. Both of these paints seal a wall, overriding the wash and wear properties of the paint beneath — any wash and wear paint will prevent the vinyl and graphics bonding properly. Apply two coats of paint to the whole wall, including corners and edges, and allow 24 hours before installation.

Process

1. Wipe down

Wipe the wall with a damp cloth so you're not painting over dust or grime.

2. First coat

Paint the first coat.

3. Dry

Allow to dry fully.

4. Sand

Lightly sand to remove any small paint heads.

5. Wipe down again

Remove all paint dust before the second coat.

6. Second coat

Paint the second coat.

7. Cure

Leave 48 hours minimum before installation. A shorter cure can outgas into the print and cause bubbles.



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Approved tools

Application: a felt-edge squeegee to lay the vinyl down and work out air from the centre outward, and a sharp blade with light pressure for trimming edges — never drag a blunt blade across the print.

Troubleshooting

Most on-site issues are caught early and fixed in minutes. Use this as a quick reference; call Emily Ziz if a graphic is affected before you cut it.

Bubbles after application

Small air bubbles can usually be worked out to the nearest edge with the squeegee while the vinyl is still repositionable. Once fully bonded, a pinprick with a fine needle lets trapped air escape — press flat immediately after.

Fixable on site.

Edges lifting

Almost always a wall-prep issue — the paint wasn't sealed and cured properly, or wash-and-wear paint was left exposed underneath. Re-press with the squeegee; if it lifts again, the wall prep needs redoing before reinstalling.

Call Emily Ziz if lifting continues after re-pressing.

Poor adhesion overall

Check the paint finish — a coarse roller texture or unsealed wash-and-wear paint under the topcoat are the most common causes (see Why surface finish matters).

Call Emily Ziz — this is a wall-prep issue, not a product fault.

Torn or damaged edge

A blunt blade is the most common cause — use a sharp blade and light pressure. A small nick at a trim edge is rarely visible once installed.

Call Emily Ziz before installing a damaged panel.

NB: Seal the wall with paint such as Cabot's Cabothane Clear or Dulux Aquanamel Gloss, or an equivalent product — wash and wear paint left exposed anywhere on the wall will stop the vinyl bonding.