

SHADOWLINE

APPLYING YOUR ROOF VINYL OVERLAY

While most professionals and manufacturers prefer to install vinyl dry, there are occasions when wet is the way to go. The wet application method applies the vinyl to a substrate by using a fluid to assist with positioning. The dry method, as the name indicates, does not use fluid but rather depends on the skill of the installer to correctly position the vinyl film. For beginners or those who have never applied a roof vinyl overlay before, we highly recommend wet application.

ADVANTAGES OF WET APPLICATION

Perhaps the most compelling advantage of wet application is the ability to reposition the vinyl with ease. In dry applications, if the vinyl touches the substrate before you have it in the desired position, then you have to snap it back up to reposition it. Without wetting, the vinyl is a little more difficult to handle because the adhesive side is sticky.

When you spray the fluid on the adhesive side of the vinyl it deadens the adhesive for a period of time and allows you to position the vinyl in place on the roof. Also, the wetting solution helps reduce air bubbles and wrinkles during application.

CLEAN & PREP THE ROOF

A clean surface is the most important step in applying a roof vinyl overlay. Thoroughly clean the roof with a commercial detergent and water solution. Be sure to clean and rid the roof off all dirt, grease, oil, wax, highway grit, tar, and silicone residue that may be present. After the roof is clean and dry use isopropyl alcohol to clean the roof surface and ensure no residue remains from the detergent solution, then wipe it down with a clean, lint-free cloth. Isopropyl alcohol ensures a contaminant-free surface. It is strong enough to clean away any left over impurities that could hinder the adhesive, but not so strong that it will damage the paint. *DO NOT use an ammonia-based cleaner as it will leave a residue that will reduce the adhesive strength of the vinyl film. It will also cause bubbles due to the outgassing of the ammonia.*

HOW TO APPLY WET

Temperature requirements: Air and application surface temps must be above 40 degrees F.

First, you want to precisely measure your roof and then cut the vinyl sheet to where it is approximately 1" wider on ALL sides. Just add 2 inches to both the width and length measurements of the roof area you plan to apply the overlay to and trim the vinyl sheet to this spec. This extra "bleed" will give you some positioning wiggle room and also allow you to trim and tuck the vinyl sheet's edges into the underside of the roof during the application process.

Begin by spraying the roof surface with the wetting solution. We recommend a spray bottle filled with water and 2-3 drops of Joy liquid soap. Avoid liquid soaps with added lotions or perfumes. Next, remove the vinyl from the white backing paper by peeling it back from one corner. Backing paper is also known as a release liner or carrier and is the portion of the pressure-sensitive construction that protects the film's adhesive before it is applied. Once the backing paper is completely removed, also spray the adhesive of the vinyl sheet with the wetting solution.

Next, place the vinyl sheet on the wet roof surface and position it. The wetting solution allows the vinyl to "float" on the roof, giving you time to position it into place. Once you are satisfied with the position, take the supplied squeegee applicator and begin at the center and pull towards the edge using moderately firm, overlapping strokes, making sure the squeegee is flat with the substrate along the entire length of the stroke. This will help remove the fluid underneath. Hold the squeegee at a 50-70 degree angle to the surface. The flatter the squeegee the better. Overlap all strokes by about 50 percent. Do this for the entire surface.

Press the vinyl film surface using sweeping, overlapping motions with the squeegee to get all the water out from between the roof surface and the adhesive. Smooth out any bubbles that may form. As you work towards the edges, use the squeegee to round the vinyl over the edge and tuck it into the roof joints. If your car has a rubber molding that covers the joint between the windshield and roof, simply use the squeegee to tuck the overlay underneath it. For those with sunroofs, the same principle applies to the edges. If you find that you've allowed for too much "bleed", CAREFULLY trim the excess vinyl with a sharp razor blade.

Finally, inspect the edges and corners and re-squeegee if necessary. After you've worked out all the wetting solution and bubbles and the vinyl overlay is completely flat on the roof, you should squeegee over the entire surface again after a few hours to further improve the adhesive bond.