



# How To: Install Wall Graphics

From identifying your company to highlighting your newest service, wall graphics are a great way to get your message across. Transform your walls into works of art with these helpful installation guidelines.

## Recommended Films

Oracal recommends the following media for use in wall graphic applications:

- **ORAJET® Series 3621** – a 3-mil, 4-year film featuring removable adhesive. For use with solvent-based inks.
- **ORAJET® Series 3640** – a 3-mil, 4-year film featuring permanent adhesive. For use with solvent-based inks.
- **ORAJET® Series 3164** – a 3.75-mil, 4-year film featuring permanent adhesive. For use with solvent-based inks.
- **ORAJET® Series 3165** – a 3.75-mil, 5-year film featuring permanent adhesive. For use with solvent-based inks.
- **ORAJET® Series 3651** – a 2.5-mil, 5-year film featuring permanent adhesive. For use with solvent-based inks.

Wall graphics must be applied to a smooth, non-porous surface. If the wall is painted, use an oil-based paint and primer.

## Surface Preparation

When preparing a wall for a graphic, it is important to understand that not all surfaces are suitable for vinyl film application. Wall graphics can only successfully be applied to smooth, non-porous surfaces. Each of the following items can cause either poor adhesion or damage during film removal:

- Highly textured paint.
- Poor initial paint bond.
- Poorly painted edges.
- Patched areas that have not been primed.
- Moisture behind the drywall, which can cause the drywall paper to release. Watch for walls that back up to cooling systems, water pipes, overhead windows or windows that have been boarded up. These areas are prone to condensation that may not be obvious at the time of installation.
- Dust, dirt or other contaminants on the wall.
- Wallpaper that is not securely bonded to the wall in all areas.
- Cuts made to the graphic during the installation process that penetrate both film and substrate.

If your wall is painted, Oracal recommends using a primer and paint from the same manufacturer, since the products are designed to work together. The goal is to achieve a good bond between the substrate and the primer/paint. When applying the primer, it is important to use a high-quality, oil-based primer such as Kilz. Use two coats when covering a latex paint to ensure proper coverage. Avoid tinted primers because they may bleed through certain films. When selecting paint, use a solvent-based product with a semi-gloss or high-gloss finish. Avoid latex paints and paints that use anti-graffiti agents.

When applying primer and paint, use a short-nap roller or high-pressure spray system. Always allow at least 5 days for the final coat of paint to dry before applying graphics to the wall as graphics applied to insufficiently dried paint may lift or fall off. As a wall finish dries, it releases certain gases until it is fully dried and cured. Applying a graphic before the finish has cured can result in lifting, bubbles and premature graphic failure.

Once the paint has cured, it's important to clean the surface immediately before applying the film. Dust and other contaminants can collect quickly on the wall and prevent the film from adhering properly. Wipe down the wall with a dry tack cloth or a lint-free cloth to remove any dust, paying special attention to the wall's edges and corners.

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### **Installation**

When installing your graphic, always use a dry application method; under no circumstances should a wet application be used. Wall graphics are installed using the same technique as any other installation. Lay the graphic, image-side down, on a flat surface and pull back the liner about 3 inches. Sharply crease the liner while holding it away from the adhesive. Align the graphic on the wall and use finger pressure to tack in place. Using a squeegee, work from the center to the edge, then return to the center and work to the opposite edge. Use overlapping strokes while applying a small portion of the graphic at a time. If your graphic is made up of more than one panel, avoid using horizontal seams when possible. When the entire graphic has been applied to the wall, re-squeegee the edges of the graphic to ensure a good bond.