

Vehicle Wrap Frequently Asked Questions



What is a Vehicle Wrap?

Answer: A Wrap is a large vinyl graphic or decal. It is applied directly over the original paint of the vehicle. The application of the Wrap allows you to change the vehicle's appearance in a very short period of time and in turn allows you to remove the Wrap, returning the vehicle back to its original condition if necessary.

What's involved in a Vehicle Wrap?

Vehicle wraps, bus wraps and fleet wraps are comprised of three phases. The first is the design phase, which includes getting accurate measurements for the vehicle and actual design of the graphics to be applied. The second is the production phase where the graphic is printed and then laminated to protect the vinyl from abrasions and UV rays that can cause graphics to fade over time. The third phase is installation where the vinyl is actually applied to your vehicle. In some cases there may even be a fourth phase, the removal of graphics if requested.

What's the difference between a partial wrap and a full wrap?

Anything less than a full wrap is normally called a "partial wrap." 1/2 partial wrap normally includes the entire rear of the vehicle and 1/2 way up the vehicle, and includes a hood logo. 3/4 partial wrap normally includes the entire rear of the vehicle and 3/4 way up the vehicle, and includes a hood logo. Typically, a Full Wrap includes the entire surface of the vehicle (door jams are extra).

How long will the wrap stay on my vehicle?

Normally, you can leave a wrap on between 1 to 5 years. Life of your wrap depends on many factors such as environmental and care. In general, a high performance cast vinyl wrap using solvent long life inks and a UV protective over laminate can last 2 to 5 years.

Will a Vehicle Wrap damage my paint?

Vehicle wraps will not damage OEM factory paint jobs. Paint in poor condition may peel when vinyl is removed.

Do I have to wash my vehicle before installation?

Yes. All vehicles have to be free of dust, mud, wax, oil, armor-all type products, and other agents that may prevent the vinyl from adhering to the vehicle surface during the installation process. Even if you clean the vehicle yourself we will still do prep work to the vehicle to ensure it is ready for the vehicle wrap. Most vehicles need to be high pressure washed with detergent. After washing, it is also critical to prep the vehicle surface with degreasers, alcohols and other solvents.

Do I need to bring my vehicle in for measurements?

Yes. There are software programs that have accurate dimension of most standard production run cars, trucks, and vans. However exact measurements are required for an accurate quote. If your vehicle is a limited run issue, custom measurements may be needed. Also, we like you to bring your vehicle in so we can take photographs and do our designs from the pictures rather than a software template.

How long will it take to wrap my vehicle?

Installation times vary widely from project to project. However, in general vehicle wraps can be done in significantly less time than painting. Paint jobs normally require curing and drying time and much more preparation than a vehicle wrap. A full wrap could take between 2-5 days.

If my vinyl vehicle wrap graphics are damaged, can they be fixed?

Yes. You can normally have the damaged pieces or panels of your vehicle wrap replaced after your vehicle is repaired. You normally do not need to redo the entire wrap if the damage is limited to certain areas of the vehicle. Ask us about it.

Can you wrap a leased vehicle?

You must always obtain permission to wrap a leased or rented vehicle. However, in general, most leased or rented vehicles have factory paint jobs with excellent paint quality. Vinyl applied over factory paint is best because vinyl can be removed easier without damage or "paint peel." Leased vehicles are often wrapped throughout the country without incident or damage.

How do I care for my Wrap?

Hand washing is best. Try to avoid high-pressure washes and be careful never to use an ice-scraper on window graphics. There are specially designed products to clean and polish vinyl graphics we will let you know.

What is considered when calculating the cost of a Vehicle Wrap?

There are several things to consider: Design Time, Materials (including vinyl and lamination), Print, and Installation. Size of the vehicle, amount of the vehicle to be wrapped and type of vehicle play a part in cost. In general, vehicles with compound-curves, or indentions, like a VW Bug or PT Cruiser are more difficult and more expensive to wrap than a box van with flat surfaces.

Partial wraps are a great way to minimize cost as opposed to a full wrap. Cast (High Performance) Vinyl is more expensive than Calendered (Intermediate) Vinyl and lasts longer so be sure to discuss with your supplier. Make sure to request a clear vinyl overlaminate also. It costs a little more but is well worth it.

How can I justify the cost of a vehicle wrap?

If you are using your vehicle wrap as signage there is no more cost-effective advertising method available. It has been proven that the cost per impression of vehicle wraps is less than other forms of advertising such as billboards, television, radio and yellow pages. If you are using your vehicle wrap to improve the appearance of your vehicle, digitally printed vehicle wraps can simply not be duplicated by other methods such as paint or air brush.

Can you easily remove vinyl graphics used for wraps?

Yes, in most cases. There are many types of vinyl that can be used on vehicle wraps. Some vinyl are designed to be removed easier than others. Please ask us which vinyl is right for the vehicle you are wrapping. Also find out what the maximum length of time the wrap may be on the car. In general, all vinyl tend to be harder to remove the longer it remains on the vehicle.

What to look for when shopping for a wrap?



Whether you are beginning to explore the idea of vehicle wraps or other ways of exterior advertising, or are ready to start your project, Lucent Graphic Solutions can provide you with the advice and information you're looking for.

We can help you decide what products will be most effective for achieving your objectives. No matter what your vision, we can provide the design, materials and installation to make it become reality.

Our team bring over 15 years of experience from the graphic design, digital printing and graphic installation industries.

Digital Graphics on vehicles and other surfaces require full attention on the design, print and installation. From our in-house graphic designers and installers to using the world's best printer and materials we take pride in what we do and it shows in every project we touch.

Material

There are many high and low quality vinyl manufacturers out there. At LGS we only use the top brand names that have been around for years and offer the best car wrap vinyl: Avery Dennison and 3M.

Over the past few months we have noticed an increased use of low quality vinyl being offered by our competitors. Just like everything else, with car wraps you truly get what you pay for. If you care about quality and longevity of the wrap then you want to make sure that wrap shop is using a high quality vinyl...

You also need to keep in mind that simply stating that a 3M vinyl is being used it doesn't mean that particular vinyl is the right choice for your project. 3M and all other manufactures offer many different types of vinyl from high-quality, high-cost Cast Vinyl to lower performance, cheaper Calendered Vinyl.

Preparation

The most time consuming part of wrapping a vehicle is the prep process. This is where the installer has to go over every inch of your car's surface as well as under the weather trims, cracks, fenders to make sure they're 100% clean & wax free.

The car must be washed the day before & has to be dry. A special solution is used to wipe the car down completely to make sure any wax residue has been removed. Then again, using alcohol the car has to be wiped down to make sure the solution that was used to remove the wax has been removed (otherwise it will effect the adhesive of the vinyl).

The smallest dirt left behind could result in the vinyl's adhesive to fail & lift. A small lift will allow water to get under the wrap and eventually cause the entire wrap to fail.

Since this is the most time consuming part of the wrap it is also the least favorite part of the job for an installer and therefore most overlooked... specially by an independent installer that has been hired by a print shop to perform the installation.



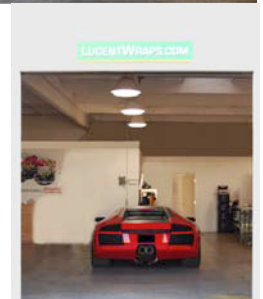
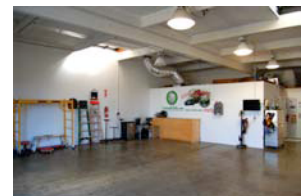
Facility

The question now is where will the actual installation take place? Indoor or Outdoors? Will the indoor facility be dust free and have the right temperature required by the vinyl manufacturer during installation?

If your wrap is being installed outdoor, well then you're to a terrible start. There is absolutely no way to keep large & small dust particles away from the surface of your car. The results can be noticed right away because even the smallest dust particle will show through the wrap and having thousands of them under your wrap will look like a layer of sand was put down before the wrapping of the car.

This not only looks terrible but large enough particles could cause holes & rips in the wrap and allowing water to leak under causing the wrap to fail.

If your vehicle is being wrapped indoors, well that's great, but the indoor facility must be super clean with some type of dust control and it must be at the right temperature. Installing a wrap at a high temperatures will cause it to over stretch and failure in long-term. Installing in a low temperature will cause the vinyl to shrink and eventually fail when it is exposed to high temperatures.



So a dedicated installation facility is extremely important to make sure the final outcome of the wrap is superb.

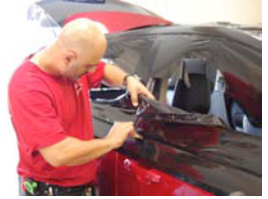
Installation

This is the last but the most important step of a car wrap.

You have a great material, your vehicle has been prepped perfectly and the facility is specifically designed for vehicle wraps.

All of these factors could be totally destroyed if an inexperienced and unmotivated installer does the wrap.

Everyone seems to think that is easy to install a wrap, after all it is simply a giant sticker...Wrong. It takes countless hours and a lot of wasted material and money to learn the proper way to install a wrap. Each media has different characteristics, for example it is much more difficult to install a Matte White vinyl then it is to install a printed design wrap.



Different materials behave differently and therefore the installer must have extensive experience with various media.

Although the actual installation of the wrap is very difficult believe it or not the final trimming of the wrap is even more challenging. You can have the perfectly installed wrap but if the excess material is not trimmed and tucked properly the final outcome will look terrible.

Trimming the wrap requires a steady hand, a lot of patience and technique. This is what sets an excellent installer apart from a good installer. Making the wrap to look like a paint job is what's all about.

Post Installation

Now you might think well we're done, the wrap has been installed and trimmed perfectly, I am ready to enjoy my car... again Wrong.

This is the step that is most overlooked by installers because it is the most time consuming and most boring part of the install.

The installer now using a Heath-Gun (not a torch) must go over the areas of the wrap that are recessed or curved and using digital thermometer to ensure every inch of these areas reaches a certain degree as required by the manufacturer. (Solid color wrap need to reach a 45 to 50 degree Celsius and printed media must reach 85 to 90 degree Celsius).

The reason for this is because all wrap vinyl has PVC as part of their ingredients. PVC allows the vinyl to have a memory, so when is overstretched and heated it will go back to its original shape.

That is a great feature, however once the wrap is installed you do not want the vinyl to go back to its original shape, this means it will shrink and pull back.



The only way to kill the PVC memory is to make sure the areas that are stretched or under pressure reach that specific temperature. This will ensure the vinyl will hold its shape & not retract from its position.

NOW we are done, well almost done... let's say all the above factors were met and performed perfectly, what happens if you still have issues with your wrap? Customer service is the only thing you can depend on, so choosing a reputable wrap shop becomes the most important part of your decision making process.

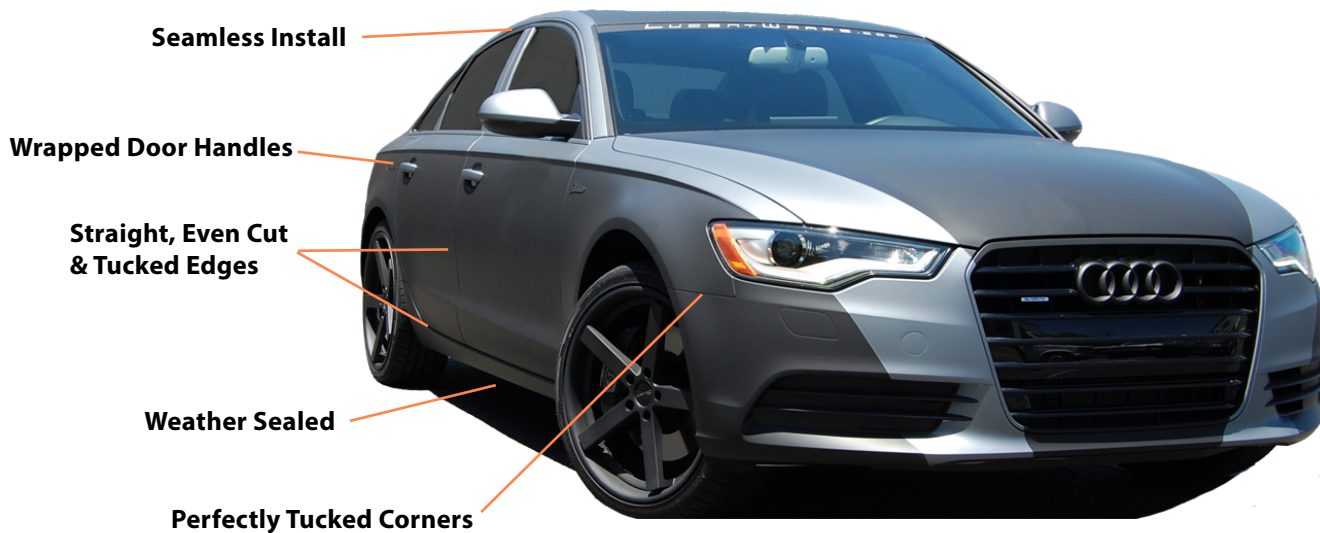
At Lucent Wraps we not only meet but exceed all the above requirements. We even ask that our customers to return with their vehicles in about two weeks so we can check the entire wrap to ensure is meeting our requirements. And if it doesn't we'll re-do it until it does.

We hope this document will helped you with your decision making process. For a free consultation please feel free to call or email us: 877-582-3680 info@lucentgraphicsolutions.com



3M Preferred
Graphics Installer

Compare the Quality of our Vehicle Wraps to those of our Competitors!



Certified In-House Installers - Highest Quality Material - Longest Warranty in the Industry - No Scratches or Blade Markings

Looking for the best vehicle wrap installers in Southern California? Compare our vehicle wrap installation quality with other local companies.

Don't Settle for Less:

- * Custom-built enclosed clean print room (dust-free & temperature controlled)
- * Indoor installation facility
- * Minimal seams
- * Minimal stretch
- * High Performance Cast vinyl's - We use Avery and 3M only
- * High gloss UV coated cast laminate
- * High resolution, wide format prints
- * In house from start to finish. Design, Print, Install
- * Installation and material warranty

Bumpers & Curves:

Curved areas of a vehicle such as bumpers and fenders are a dead give away of a novice installer. If rushed or un-experienced, an installer will make cuts with overlapping flaps to cheat the difficult areas. Unfortunately, this is only cheating you. Creating additional seams and overlaps in an area where the vinyl is already stretched almost always ends up with the vinyl peeling back up. Not only does this look bad, but it creates problem areas that will allow dirt and water to get in and starts a chain reaction dramatically decreasing the life span of your wrap.

Lights, Door Handles & Trimming

Cutting on a vehicle is something that takes a steady artistic hand, and practice. Lots of practice. The trick is to apply the right amount of pressure with the razor blade to score the vinyl enough to pull it apart, without going deep enough to cut the paint. You won't know if a novice installer has butchered your paint job until you remove the wrap. If done correctly, a wrap will actually preserve the paint and the resale value of your vehicle.

On certain areas we even use "Knifeless Tape" which eliminates the need of using a blade to perform the cut.

Alignment & Registration

Wraps are usually printed in multiple panels on 54" wide vinyl film and applied by hand. Alignment during installation is achieved by a combination of bleed, or compensation in the design, and proper installation techniques. Below are examples of alignment on both overlapping panels and window graphics.

Many wrap companies simply do not cut out the details on a vehicle. Emblems and trim, and door handles should be removed or cut out to avoid issues with cracking and peeling. Not only does it look bad, but it significantly decreases the life span of your wrap.

NO PRESSURE WASHING on Die-Cut Lettering or Graphics

Care for your vehicle graphics like you would any fine paint finish. Using high quality products designed specifically for car care and these cleaning and maintenance procedures will help keep your vehicle graphics looking their best.

1. When to Remove a Vehicle Wrap?

A vehicle wrap should be removed at the first sign of discoloration or cracks appearing on the surface. If the wrap is left too long on the vehicle the removal cost will increase dramatically and the chance of damage to the clear coat of the vehicle will increase.

2. Wash Regularly - at least 1x a week.

- Wash whenever the car appears dirty. Contaminants allowed to remain on the graphic may be more difficult to remove during cleaning.
- Rinse off as much dirt and grit as possible with a spray of water.
- See item 4, Difficult contaminants, for spot cleaning bird droppings, tar, etc.
- Use a wet, non-abrasive detergent such as 3M Car Wash Soap 39000 or Meguiar's NXT Generation Car Wash or Deep Crystal Car Wash and a soft, clean cloth or sponge.
- Rinse thoroughly with clean water. To reduce water spotting, immediately use a silicone squeegee to remove water and finish with a clean microfiber cloth.

3. Automated Car Washes

Brush-type car washes are not recommended as they can abrade the film and cause edges to lift or chip, as well as dulling the film's appearance. Brushless car washes are acceptable.

4. Pressure Washing

Although hand washing is the preferred cleaning method, pressure washing may be used under these conditions.

- Ensure the water pressure is kept below 2000 psi (14 MPa).
- Keep water temperature below 80°C (180°F).
- Use a spray nozzle with a 40 degree wide angle spray pattern.
- Keep the nozzle at least 1 foot (300 mm) away from and perpendicular (at 90 degrees) to the graphic.

Important Note! Holding the nozzle of a pressure washer at an angle to the graphic may lift the edges of the film.

5. Difficult Contaminants

Soften difficult contaminants such as bug splatter, bird droppings, tree sap and similar contaminants by soaking them for several minutes with very hot, soapy water. Rinse thoroughly and dry. If further cleaning is needed, test one of these products in an inconspicuous area to ensure no damage to the graphics: Meguiar's Gold Class Bug and Tar Remover or 3M Citrus Base Cleaner. Isopropyl alcohol (IPA) (two parts IPA to 1 part water) or denatured alcohol may also help. Spot clean the contaminants. Do not use rough scrubbing or abrasive tools, which will scratch the film. Wash and rinse off all residue immediately.

6. Windshield Wiper Water

Replace the water of your windshield wiper reservoir with distilled water. Regular tap water contains particles that may damage the wrap over time surrounding the nozzles.

7. Fuel Spills

Wipe off immediately to avoid degrading the vinyl and adhesive. Then wash, rinse and dry as in Item 1 as soon as possible.

8. Polish and Wax

Do NOT use "Carnauba-based" or waxes that contain Petroleum distillates. Before use, test and approve in an inconspicuous area. Do not use any abrasive polishes or cutting compounds. For Matte finish vinyl use a waterless wash that is recommended for matte finishes such as Croftgate's After Care - JP Matte. We do not recommend any polishing or wax product for the matte or textured films. Listed below are cleaners from different manufacturers that have been successfully tested and used to remove dirt & debris from vinyl graphics as well as protectant for the graphics:

Croftgate USA
Aquinel Waterless Car Wash & After Care - JP Matte
www.croftgateusa.com

Avery Dennison
Supreme Wrap Care
Available to purchase from LGS Directly

9. Store indoors or under cover whenever possible

Vinyl graphics (just like paint) are degraded by prolonged exposure to sun and atmospheric pollutants, particularly on the horizontal surfaces such as hood, trunk lid and roof. Whenever possible, store in a garage or at least in a shaded area during the day. At night protect the car from dew or rain, which may contain acidic pollutants (a common problem in many large metropolitan areas). When a garage is not available, consider using a cloth car cover at night. If your graphics start to discolor or turn brown (which is caused by acidic pollution), immediately remove the graphics from the vehicle to avoid staining the underlying paint.