Cleaning Procedures for Graphics

Note: Markings damaged by improper cleaning are not covered by 3M warranty.

NOTE: the following information has been taken from: <u>Instruction Bulletin 6.5, April 2000.</u>

Maintenance

> **Caution:**
> Before handling any chemical products, always read the container label and the MSDS.

For Cleaning Graphics with an Overlaminate Film

Use a cleaner designed for high-quality painted surfaces. The cleaner must be wet, non-abrasive, without strong solvents, and have a pH value between 3 and 11 (neither strongly acidic nor strongly alkaline.)

For Cleaning Graphics with an Overprint Clear

Use a wet, non-abrasive that contains NO solvents and NO alcohol and has a pH value between 3 and 11 (neither strongly acidic nor strongly alkaline.)

Power Washing Exterior Graphics

Power washing, or pressure washing, may be used. However, Aggressive washing can damage the graphic. Two common types of damage are:

? Excessive pressure during power washing can damage the graphic by allowing water to get underneath the graphic. Water lessens the adhesion of the graphic to the substrate allowing the graphic to lift or curl. These problems are magnified by wind. This is a critical problem for perforated window graphic film.

> **Caution:**
> Loose graphics could tear away from a moving vehicle or from a building and cause an obstruction to motorists and pedestrians. After washing, check all the graphics carefully for edge lifting and repair, remove or replace damaged graphics.

To avoid edge lifting or other damage to the graphics, follow these important steps:
- Use a spray nozzle with a 40º wide spray pattern.
- Be sure the spray nozzle includes a nozzle protector (tip guard).
- Use a pressure of 2000 psi or less.
- If the system is heated, limit the water temperature to 180ºF or less.
- Hold nozzle at least 12 inches (300mm) away from and perpendicular (90º ± 10º) to the graphic.
- Do not direct the water stream at a sharp angle to the edge of the graphic.

> **Caution:**
> To reduce the risk of serious injury from high pressure spray:
> - Do not spray your hand or body near the nozzle or the spray
> - Do not direct the spray toward anyone else

Automatic Brush Washing

Automatic brush washing may be used, but keep these two points in mind:
1. Brushes can catch a loose edge of the graphic and cause further damage to the graphic.
2. Brushes can dull the finish of the graphic.

Hand Washing Exterior Graphics
1. Flush the graphic with clean water to remove loose dirt particles. A trigger-type hose nozzle is convenient for this purpose.
2. Use a mild liquid detergent and water solution and wash the graphic with a soft brush, rag or sponge.
3. Wash thoroughly from the top down.
4. Avoid abrading the graphic by unnecessary scrubbing.
5. After applying the cleaning solution, keep a steady stream of water flowing on the graphic to wash away dirt particles.
6. Rinse the entire graphic thoroughly with clean water. Allow to dry naturally.

Removing Difficult Contaminants

Some contaminants may remain after following the normal cleaning procedures. Most contaminants can be removed using one of these methods. Other cleaning products and methods should be used only on a customer test-and-approve basis.
1. To remove tar, oil, diesel smut or bituminous material:
   - Wipe with a rag dampened with kerosene, mineral spirits, heptane, or VM&P naphtha. Do not use other solvents.
   - Wash immediately with detergent and water, then rinse with clean water.
2. To remove pollen and fungus:
   - Wash the graphic with a 3 to 5% sodium hypochlorite (full-strength household bleach) solution or mild liquid detergent and water.
   - Rinse with clean water immediately.
3. To remove crayon, lipstick, or similar materials:
   - Select an appropriate solvent and test it in an inconspicuous area to ensure it removes the contaminant without damaging the graphic. This must be done on a customer test and approve basis.
   - Wash immediately with mild liquid detergent and water, then rinse with clean water.

Graphic Repair

Sometimes graphic damage can be repaired; **however repaired graphics are not warranted.**

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