

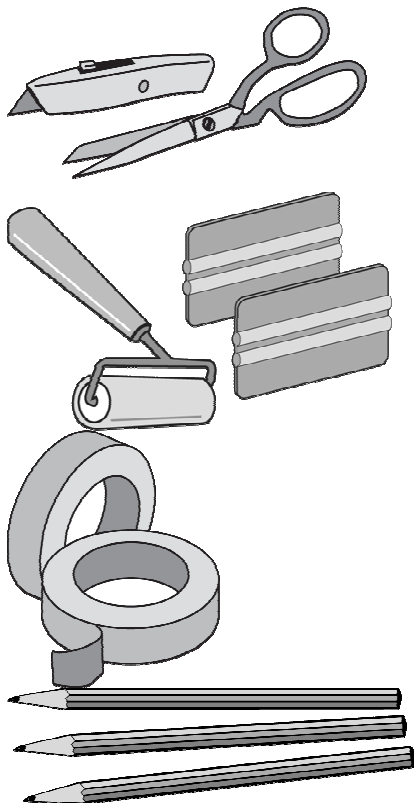
## Instructions for Applying Paint masks

### READ FIRST

At Higher Graphics we want your paint mask application to result in no frustration, no waste, and your complete satisfaction. These instructions contain all the tricks and tips you need to succeed. Review them before applying your paint mask to make it an easier job.

### Equipment You Need

Gather the equipment you will need:



- A sharp knife or scissors
- A squeegee or rubber roller (brayer)
- Painter's masking tape (required for large paint masks)
- A water-soluble marker (required for large paint masks)

## Introduction

The application of a paint mask is very similar to the application of a decal, with one big difference: bubbles are not a problem. So there is no need to wet the adhesive of the paint mask the way we recommend you do for a decal. By design, paint masks have less aggressive adhesives than decals and can be applied smoothly without bubbles and wrinkles without using wet application. In addition, small bubbles are not visible under the paint mask. However, large bubbles reduce the paint mask's adhesion and need to be removed (or broken down into smaller bubbles).

Like decals, paint masks differ according to size. The smallest paint masks are usually "weeded". That is, they have the parts removed where the paint will be applied. Larger paint masks are not weeded. They need all the parts to maintain the structure of the paint mask while it is being handled and applied. In those cases, the removable parts are highlighted with pen markings. They can be removed after the mask has been applied. Another reason for leaving the mask intact is to accommodate multiple colors. Parts of the paint mask can be removed and replaced as the job progresses and each different color is painted.

## Preparation

- Newly painted surfaces must be allowed to dry prior to paint mask application.
- Clean the surface it even if it appears clean. **THIS STEP IS CRITICAL.**  
Use a gentle solvent such as denatured alcohol or rubbing alcohol. Test the solvent in a small and inconspicuous area for damage to surface. Clean off all oil, grease, dirt, polish, and stains.
- Ensure that the surface is at room temperature, 60° to 90° F (16° to 32° C).
- Anyone who is going to handle the paint mask should thoroughly wash and dry their hands. Even hands that look clean may contain natural skin oils and other contaminants that could affect the mask's bond.

## Applying Small Paint Masks

- 1) Remove the protective backing from the paint mask.
- 2) Apply the paint mask to its target location.
- 3) Make sure the edges of the paint mask openings are completely adhered to the surface.
- 4) Add additional masking as required around the mask, to block overspray.

## Applying Large Paint Masks

A large paint mask requires more preparation than a smaller one because you cannot move a large paint mask after it has been applied.

- 1) Wash and dry your hands thoroughly.
- 2) Test your water-soluble marker in an inconspicuous area to be sure the lines can be wiped away without leaving any residue.
- 3) Mark layout lines on the application surface and matching lines on the transfer film of the paint mask.



**unweeded**

*Example Paint Mask*



**weeded**

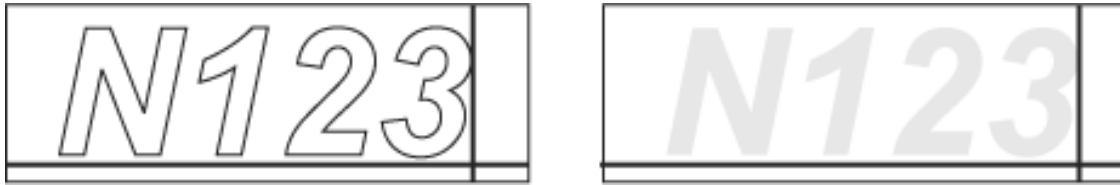


*Layout lines when paint mask should be centered*



*Layout lines when paint mask should be aligned on the left*

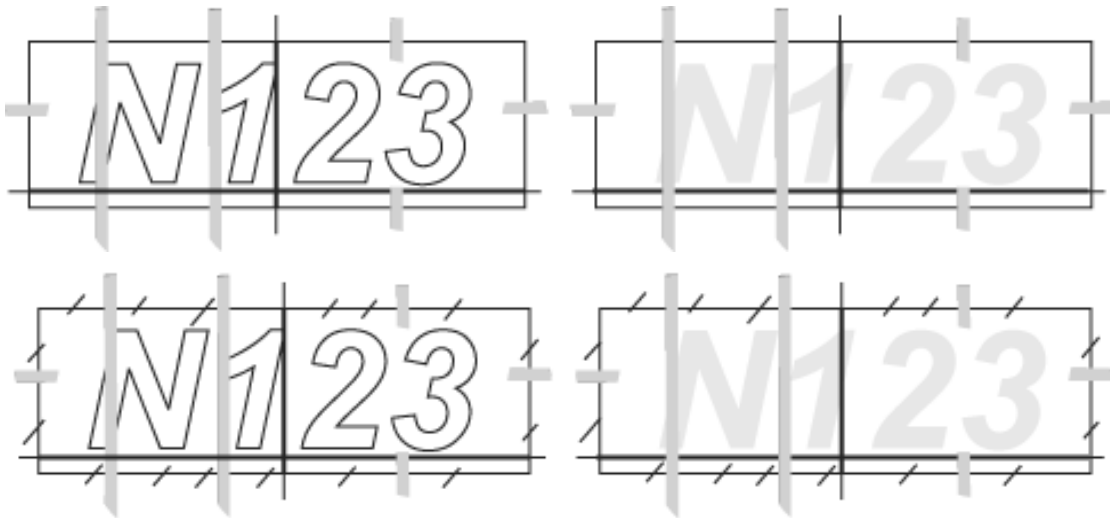




*Layout lines when paint mask should be aligned on the right*

- 4) With the backing paper still on the paint mask, tape the paint mask into position by aligning the layout lines. Use painter's masking tape to fasten the paint mask to the application surface, aligning the layout lines on the paint mask with the lines on the application surface. In the application step you will fold the paint mask back at the center, so make sure that the paint mask is firmly taped down at the center and at the end opposite of the end you are folding back.

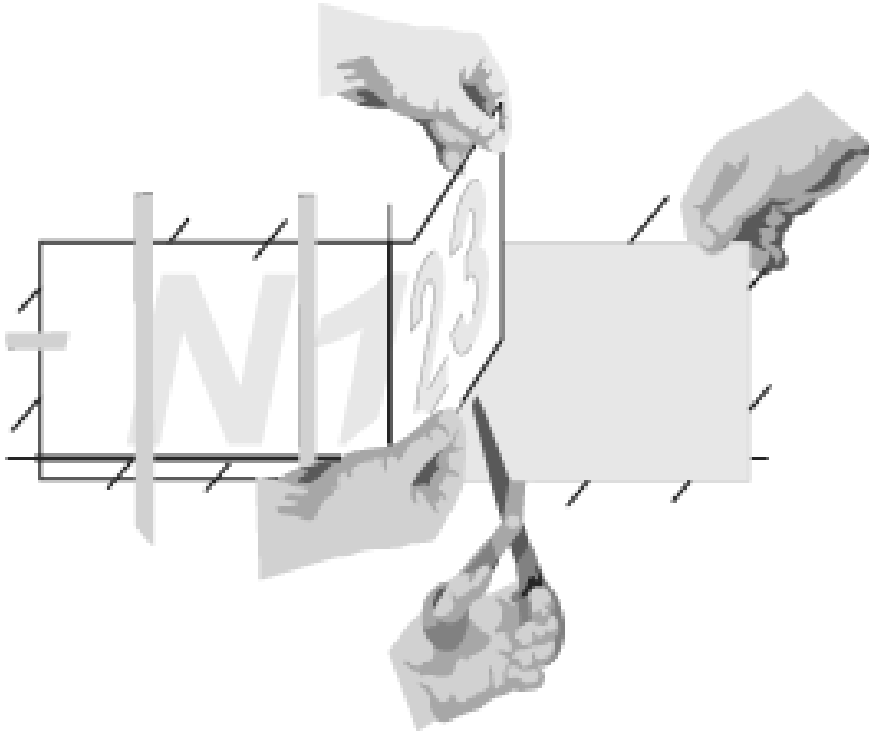
After the paint mask has been positioned and taped in place, use your water-soluble marker to make diagonal marks every few inches across the transfer film and the application surface. After the backing has been removed and the paint mask is being applied, you can place the paint mask precisely by lining up these marks.



*Paint mask taped to surface with centered layout. The right end is the end that will be folded back.*

- 5) Pull one end of the taped paint mask loose from the surface and gently fold it back at the center. If the paint mask is clear or translucent, make sure all layout lines that will be under the paint mask are removed. Do not wipe off any lines that are outside the area where the paint mask will be applied.
- 6) Verify that the target surface and your hands are clean.

- 7) Start from the end of the folded portion and peel the backing off the paint mask. Be very careful to not allow the adhesive surface of the paint mask to fold on itself. For very large paint masks, you might require an assistant to hold the paint mask while you peel off the backing. You can also temporarily tape the free end of the paint mask to hold it while you peel off the backing. After the paint mask has been peeled back to the center, cut the backing off near the fold.



- 8) Apply the paint mask to the surface working from the center of the paint mask toward the end. Align the paint mask to the diagonal marks. Use a squeegee and diagonal strokes. Apply the squeegee from the center toward the end to remove air bubbles, folds, and wrinkles.

Be careful to support the paint mask during the following steps. If you do not support the paint mask it can pull at the applied end causing it to move or twist.

- 9) Pull the painter's tape off the other end and fold that end back. Peel off the last part of the backing. As before, apply the paint mask working from the center toward the end, aligning with your diagonal marks. Use the squeegee to remove air bubbles, folds, and wrinkles.

- 10) **Remove the transfer film by pulling it parallel to the paint mask.** The worst way to remove the film is to pull perpendicular to the paint mask. This can result in pulling the paint mask off the surface. Instead, fold it back and pull it back along the surface of the paint mask to minimize the pull on the paint mask itself.



## Painting

For large paint masks and multiple color jobs, the parts of the mask are marked and can be removed and replaced as needed. After removing a section, make sure the edges are well adhered to the surface. These edges insure that the paint only goes where it is supposed to go, so it is important that they are closely adhered.

When replacing a previous removed section, make sure the paint has completely dried before replacing the section. You can tape the section in place if its adhesive does not hold. Make sure the section fits in place with no gaps. If it does not, then apply tape to the gaps.

When the paint is dry, carefully remove the paint mask. Then stand back and admire your new paint job.



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