

Instruction: Application of waterslide decals

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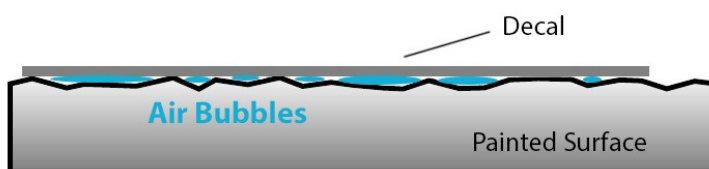
Application of waterslide decals

The application of decals requires good preparation, patience and calmness. If you carefully consider the following steps, achieving good results using waterslide decals is no difficult.

For the most perfect results the surface must be very smooth and flat. Most of the times it is very rough due to painting it, especially when using matte paint. This kind of surface is no good when using waterslide decals. They are made of a very thin foil with the actual decal printed on and thus they do not fully cover the whole surface when applied on a rough surface. Most of the time it will lay on top of the rough spots on the surface and imbed air bubbles underneath; between the decal foil and the lower spots of the surface. This is what eventually produces a silver shine when



looking at the decal. Most of the times softeners do not solve this problem at this stage. Ideally you want to have a very smooth or even shiny surface as they make the surfaces very even. If you used matte paint, we recommend to fully repaint the model with glossy clear coat to fill the



rough surface with paint and produce a flat and even result. You could also sand away the roughness on a model. To do that, use sanding paper with grain size 2000 or 4000 only. If you use a more

coarse sanding paper you will damage the surface, reproducing scratches where air can hide again.

First of all, you have to cut out the decals with sharp scissors or a sharp knife (scalpel). While doing so leave the smallest margin possible. For bigger decals leave about 1mm margin between the printed decal and the edge. For smaller decals you can leave a bit more to be able to grab it more easily. Be careful: when cutting, mind the lower end of letters like "g" – You can quickly cut away the "foot". Do not cut sharp edges and corners. Preferably everything is a bit round. If you have a paragraph of a maintenance decal, try cut it rectangular.

Before starting, we also need a deep plate filled with warm water, cotton swabs, a soft tissue, and if you have big fingers or small decals, tweezers can also be very helpful.

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Now, the cut decal is put into the water and immediately pulled out again. Any water drops on top of it should be soaked away with the tissue. You can also try to gently blow them away. Soaked with water, put them on the edge of the plate and let them rest to macerate. Do not leave the decal in the water, else the foil will separate from the release paper and float on the water surface. If you have a bigger decal, drip it into the water again after 2-3 minutes to let it fully macerate with water. To check if the foil is detached from the release paper, check if you can move the foil with ease. Try not to touch the printed areas. To start the application process, drip a bit of water on the area where you want to put down the decal.

Now carefully push the decal of the release paper to have a small part overhanging the edge. **CAUTION!!!** Do not push the decal too much, else it will wrinkle to the bottom and potentially damage. Put the edge of the decal now onto the model surface where you put the water before. Carefully pull the decal from the release paper and let it drop down onto the surface. Let it rest there for a couple of minutes before working with it. First of all you have to check the positioning of the decal and if any corners are wrinkled. If so, you can simply use a brush and water to reposition the corners again. Try pushing the wet brush under the decal, lift it and let it wrap around the top surface. As it now lays on top of the decal and push the flipped corner to its original position.

With the soft tissue now gently rub the decal to remove excess water and wrinkles. Usually you start in the edge of the decal, not the center. The direction of your movement remains the same: from the center to the edges. This way you are pulling the wrinkles instead of pushing them. The latter will only push them over each other creating bigger wrinkles which eventually are unmovable. If you have finished the first round of pulling the edge of the decal, go a bit more inwards and repeat the steps until you are in the center of the decal.

All the excess water now can be soaked with the tissue. After every round you should move the tissue which is wrapped around your finger a bit so that you always use dry parts of it to touch the decal. If you work with too much pressure and too much water you will eventually damage the printed colors of the decal. If you work with small decals, use a cotton swab instead your fingers. When all wrinkles and all the water is removed, let the decal dry for about 10 minutes.

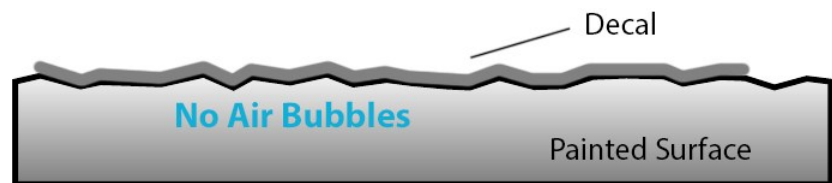
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Now we go over to use the softener. We recommend the brand "DACO", especially the "Strong" softener. Brush the liquid generously on top of the decal. It will soak through the foil and will break it up to release all the air left beneath. The now softened, nearly liquid, decal foil can now drop down into all the lower spots on the surface. If new wrinkles start to reappear on your decal, do not try to remove them! They will automatically disappear once the foil dries up and stretches out again. After one to two hours the decal is now dry. You can check now if there is still air under the foil. If that is the case,

the foil will appear milky and have a silver shine to it. You might only be able to see it once you look at it at a flat angle. Most of the times those spots

appear on the edge of letters. To remove those spots you can safely apply the softener again. Let it dry up again. Repeat this step until you cannot see any spots anymore.



If you have rivets or any other parts of your model which stick out, apply softener, let it dry, apply more softener, let it dry again... Repeat this steps several times as with each one the decal more and more wraps around those difficult parts of the surface. If you ever encounter bigger air bubbles, you can very carefully pop them with a very thin needle. Afterwards treat it softener again.

After this application process and after the decal completely dried, you have to remove all the excess softener. To ensure that the decal fully dried, wait at least one day. Use a moist tissue to remove the softener. Because the decal dried and was transformed due to the softener the water does not soak the decal foil anymore. You can also use solution based on alcohol to clean the area. But before you do so, always test it. Never use silicone remover as it attacks the printing ink and removes it too.

When the whole process is completed the decals should be covered with clear coat. After this step the decal foil will be completely invisible and the decal will turn into a "painted-on" look. Our waterslide decals are resistant against commercially available 1K or 2K clear coatings and



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should not produce any problems when painted over. The best results appear when at first applying a 1K clear coat, slightly sanding it with 1000 grain sanding paper and then apply the final matte clear coat. This works best when using very diluted clear coatings.