

Instructions for Multiple Layer Stencils

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As with any type of finishing product, you will need to do a little experimenting with the finishing materials you have chosen to achieve the best results. I have used Nelson Hobby water based polyurethane, Sig dope, automotive PPG, Model Master, and even generic spray can paints with great success. I do not recommend mixing different types of paint. Use the same type paint as the base coat if at all possible. Follow the paint manufactures directions. You can cause many, many problems such as adhesion, paint lifting, etc. by using different paints. Practice and test your paints for compatibility.

Since most all stencils will be custom cut for a particular job, we will cover some of the basics for applying them here in this direction sheet.

PLEASE READ ALL DIRECTIONS PRIOR TO USING THE STENCIL.

Your stencil will come with an application tape applied over the white vinyl stencil. Do not remove this application tape until the stencil is in place.

Do not remove the backing from the stencil until you are ready to position the stencil.

1. Make sure your surface is clean and free of oils and residue. It's not a good idea to be eating a bag of potato chips while preparing your plane for a finish. The oils on your fingers can ruin it all. A mild soap and water solutions works very well, I use dish detergent or baby shampoo, then clean rinse and dry the surface. Next, place the sticky side of the stencil down over the point end of a thumb tack using a piece of good masking tape. If your stencils are roundels, you will only need one thumb tack per stencil set. Most other multi- layered stencils will require two thumb tacks. Place the thumb tack(s) with masking tape applied, through the registration hole/s from the back side of the #1 stencil. The point end should be pointing outward away from surface with the sticky side of the masking tape facing the surface.
2. Place the #1 stencil along with the thumb tacks in position on the surface.
3. Press down on the area around the thumb tack(s) to make sure the masking tape applied to the thumb tacks has good adhesion to the surface.
4. Remove the stencil from the thumb tack(s) and again press down on the masking tape holding the thumb tack(s) to the surface, to assure good adhesion. You may want to add another little piece of masking tape to the thumb tack/s. Make sure the masking tape does not interfere with the cut out area of the stencil. The thumb tack(s) must stay in place until the last stencil is used. Do not remove the thumb tack(s) until you have finished with all layers.
5. Now, take the #1 stencil and place over the thumb tack/s.

6. At this point I like to add a small piece of masking tape to the lower edge of the stencil so it attaches to both the stencil and the surface. This helps hold the stencil in place and keeps it from lifting off the thumb tacks during the next step. Now, carefully lift back “top” half of stencil, opposite side you applied masking tape to in previous step, and very carefully peel about half of the backing away from the stencil. Be careful! Make sure all of the “small” parts stay with the stencil and application tape. There should be nothing on the backing when you peel it from stencil. Now cut that part of the backing off using scissors. If you are applying a roundel, only remove as much backing as you can without removing the stencil from the center positioned thumb tack. Carefully lay the adhesive exposed portion of the stencil in place on the surface.
7. Now remove the small piece of masking tape you applied earlier to hold the stencil in place over the thumb tack(s) while you removed the first part of the backing.
8. Carefully lift the “lower” half of the stencil up and off the thumb tack/s. Remove remaining backing material. And carefully lay the stencil in place. You will tear a small part of the stencil when you are laying the stencil back down over the thumb tack/s. It is important that you do not move or shift the thumb tack(s) during this procedure!
9. Burnish the stencil down on to surface.
10. Remove the application tape. All though the application tape has a low tack adhesive, it likes to stick to the vinyl. It is best to pull it back over its self while removing.
11. Burnish down all the edges of the stencil.
12. Carefully lay the adhesive exposed portion of the stencil in place on the surface.
13. Now remove the small piece of masking tape you applied earlier to hold the stencil in place over the thumb tack(s) while you removed the first part of the backing.
14. Carefully lift the “lower” half of the stencil up and off the thumb tack/s. Remove remaining backing material. And carefully lay the stencil in place. You will tear a small part of the stencil when you are laying the stencil back down over the thumb tack/s. It is important that you do not move or shift the thumb tack(s) during this procedure!
15. Burnish the stencil down on to surface.
16. Remove the application tape. All though the application tape has a low tack adhesive, it likes to stick to the vinyl. It is best to pull it back over its self while removing.
17. Burnish down all the edges of the stencil. If you are applying the stencil over non painted fabric such as colored Solatex or Nelson Lite Fab, you may want to apply a very light coat of clear. This will help seal the fabric and reduce chance for bleed through. If you are applying the stencil over painted or sealed fabric or any other prepared surface you should not need the clear coat.

18. Applying paint to the stencil/s. For best results and least chance of bleed through you should spray the color on. You should apply at least three very, very, very light “dustings” of color with tack free drying times between each “dusting”. The trick to achieving a great stenciled image is in applying the color and in applying the color in very light “dustings”. If you brush the color on, or if you try and rush spraying the color on to “heavy”, you increase the chance for bleed through many fold, plus you will end up with a nasty ridge around the stenciled image. Paint will always “puddle” at the stencil edge if you apply it too heavily, the trick here is to apply it so lightly there is not enough paint to “puddle”. It should take at least three “dusting” coats of paint to achieve opaqueness, any less and you are applying the paint to “heavy”. If your stencil has yellow, light or bright red, you should apply a very light coat of white prior to the color. Yellows and light reds are very transparent and need the white base coat.
19. After you have the color applied to the #1 stencil, allow the paint to dry/ cure to a “no thumb print” state. Then carefully remove the #1 stencil. It is best to pull the stencil back over itself while removing. If you notice paint lifting while removing the stencil - STOP. Allow the paint to dry/ cure longer, this should stop the lifting problem. Please be careful and do not move the thumb tack(s) while removing the stencil.
20. If you are using water based paint, follow the manufactures recommendations concerning the application of multiple coats of paint. Most will require some type of mechanical bond and you should prepare the surface before applying the remaining stencils.
21. Apply the remaining stencils just as you did the first stencil. Remove each previous stencil before applying the next.
22. Once all the stencils have been applied and removed you can now remove the thumb tack/s.
23. This all sounds hard and time consuming, but it is not. It goes pretty fast once you get the hang of it.
24. I am getting feedback on the use of latex and polyurethane paints. It seems as if these types of paint require additional curing times before the stencils can be removed without lifting the paint. Please allow several/ many hours after these paints have dried before removing the stencil.