

Decal Application Instructions

All of our decals are laser-printed onto waterslide decal paper with a continuous carrier film, so each section must be carefully cut out as close to the printed artwork as possible with very sharp scissors or a knife before being applied. For best results, we recommend handling decals with nitrile gloves, very clean hands, or brushes and other non-abrasive instruments to avoid scratching them or leaving oily fingerprints behind. Store decals flat in a dark and dry location to ensure they will not discolour or be damaged by water during application (assuming proper handling). Therefore, as long as they are used within a few years, our decals do not require any clear-coating before use either.

- To avoid any noticeable discrepancies between our decals and any pre-existing raised or recessed details such as windows and doors, we suggest removing these details by filling them with modelling putty and/or sanding them flush.
- Once construction and painting of the model is complete, ensure the model surface is clean with a smooth, glossy finish to avoid “silvering” caused by air beneath the decal (apply a gloss clearcoat if necessary before application).
- Briefly immerse the section of decal in warm water, taking care not to allow it to curl upon itself. Allow larger decals to soak in the water for up to one minute. For very small decals, sometimes simply wetting with a brush may be sufficient.
- Allow decal to sit for an additional 30+ seconds while the adhesive loosens until the decal can slide freely on the backing.
- Wet the area on the model with water and/or decal setting and adhesion solutions such as Microset™.
- Carefully slide the decal onto the prepared model surface and ensure there is a sufficient layer of liquid underneath the decal film to allow for easy sliding into position.
- Once the decal is in position, gently brush and smooth out any wrinkles, air bubbles, or excess liquid.
- Apply decal softening solutions such as Microsol™ if required to help the decal settle over or under details on the model.
- Allow decal to dry completely before applying a protective clearcoat (24hrs recommended).
- We recommend clear-coating your model with “gentler” acrylic-based products such as Future/Pledge Floor Care™ but many “harsher” spray lacquers like Tamiya™ TS-79 may still be used very carefully in multiple light coats.

Reference Photos

Airliner modelling is a fantastic hobby. In addition to all of the more obvious reasons, we are also lucky to have an incredibly extensive selection of reference photos available to us online. By simply entering the aircraft’s registration (eg. N2331U) or more broadly, the airline and aircraft (eg. United 777) into the search engines of our favourite resources below, we are very rarely underwhelmed by reference photos.

Airliners.net

JetPhotos.net

Flickr.com

Google.com/images

PlaneSpotters.net

AirTeamImages.com

Airplane-Pictures.net

ABPic.co.uk

Painting

In the past, we attempted to provide specific paint match recommendations for our decal sets. However, exact matches are notoriously difficult to guarantee due to the variety, international availability, and discontinuation of paint product lines. Finding a perfect match is further complicated by scale effect, varied reference photo lighting, and differences in monitor colour balance. Factoring in CMYK/RGB conversions and slight day-to-day printing variations, we realized our energy is better spent designing more decals instead. Having said that, we do have a few general approaches we like to recommend. After searching the links above for reference photos with the most natural lighting, we recommend starting by comparing your chosen manufacturer’s paint swatch publications for the one that looks closest. For airbrush users, we recommend picking the closest colour (or two) along with a series of other primary colours to mix a good match to your liking. A quick YouTube.com search of “paint matching” will bring up some great instructional videos. Where finding a match to the same colour as one of our decals is beneficial, we have tried to add an additional matching colour swatch to the decal sheet itself.

A note about laser-printed decals: All of our decals have a certain element of transparency to them by default and will tend to show any underlying details or colour unless they have a layer of white printed underneath them. While painting the aircraft, ensure that any transparent decals are only applied over white paint (or very pale colours) for best results, and carefully trim away any areas that overlap each other or other paint colours with a sharp knife. If attempting to match paint colours to our decals, we recommend applying the colour or swatch to be matched over its intended underlying paint colour first, since its appearance will be more accurate than with the pale blue backing of the decal paper showing through.