

How to install thick film (7 mil+) for flawless results

Thicker films, 7 mil and greater, present particular challenges during installation. For professional results, it's important to use the right tools and techniques.

Preparing the film

For optimum results, it's best to pre-cut the film to the exact window size. This can be done with a Filmhandler or by first placing the film to the window with the liner still attached and then trimming film to size. The film's thickness makes it difficult to trim to exact size from slight oversized pre-cut film, so we don't recommend this method except to the most experienced installers.

Mixing the mounting solution

We strongly recommend mixing baby shampoo and distilled water to make the mounting solution. This is because baby shampoo is, for the most part, formulated consistently and it is available worldwide. With its neutral balance it achieves better visual clarity after the dry out period. Especially important for thicker films, baby shampoo eases film application and accelerates evaporation of the mounting solution.

Tools needed

Thick safety films require thicker heavy duty squeegees, such as an aluminum squeegee, power squeegee, or heavy duty squeegee with metal. The hard rubber blades transfer more of your weight, or input, directly to the pressure-sensitive surface for a more consistent evacuation of the mounting solution. If a blade becomes nicked or worn it reduces the squeegee's effectiveness, so replace it right away.

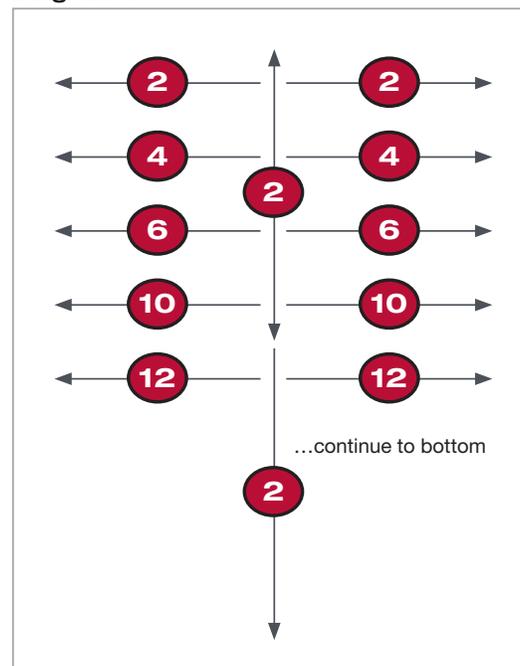
Step 1 - Prepare the surface

Thoroughly clean the glass surface, including around the edges, then spray on the mounting solution. Once the glass and surrounding frame have been thoroughly cleaned and dried, you are ready to mount the film. Remove the liner and spray the adhesive, making sure to completely wet the film; dry spots increase your risk of champagne bubbles. Then, re-spray the glass surface. Once both surfaces are wet, position the film on the glass.

Step 2 - Tack the squeegee pass

Spray the film surface (hardcoat), leaving no dry spots so the squeegee will glide smoothly over the film. You may need to repeat as you

Diagram 1



SolarGard Safety and Security Window Films

A better environment inside and out



squeegee the window. Starting at the center of the film, hold the film in place with your free hand and tack the film with a vertical squeegee stroke (1) displayed in Diagram 1, dividing the surface space into halves. This will keep the film from moving around on the glass.

Step 3 - Squeegee the body of the glass

Follow proper squeegee techniques and complete passes 2 through 5 (if the film is not an exact fit leave a 2 - 3 inch border). If you have not already done so, trim along the top edge of the window. Take time to squeegee and dry the top edge thoroughly; this will prevent excess solution and debris from running down between the film and the glass. Continue to squeegee the entire film surface as shown in Diagram 1. If the film was not pre-cut to fit exactly, trim the sides and bottom now. Spray side and bottom edges and squeegee remaining mounting solution.

Proper use of the squeegee is essential to achieving the professional results you want. Use both hands and your body weight to your advantage and lean into the squeegee as you push. Overlap the previous pass by 50% each time. As you squeegee, angle the squeegee blade slightly away from the previous path (a pattern similar to how a tractor would grade a dirt road). Use slow strokes, applying a good amount of even pressure through the entire pass. The squeegee blade itself should be angled 30 to 45 degrees from the glass surface. The goal is to remove as much mounting solution in a single pass.

Step 4 - Finish the edges

Wrap a paper towel or a blue shop towel around the edge of a five-way tool or hardcard. Starting from one corner, use short strokes and systematically work around the window to remove any excess mounting solution within 4 - 6 inches of the frame's edge. If the towel becomes saturated with solution, rotate the towel or replace it with a dry one. Repeat until the perimeter of the window has been completely dried.

Step 5 - Make final inspection

Step back a few feet and inspect the safety film from a straight view and from an angle. You should not have any large water pockets. If you do, work them out with your five way tool or hardcard and towel. Caution should be taken here as pushing any mounting solution through adhesive that has already adhered to the window is the primary cause of champagne bubbles. If possible, it's best to leave large water bubbles alone; in most cases they will eventually resolve themselves as the water permeates the film.