

How do you apply ceramic decals / glass decals?

See also PART 2 for alternative decorating.

PART 1:

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE APPLICATION, FIRING AND STORAGE OF WATER SLIDE-OFF DECALS

Application

Place ceramic decals / glass decals in a shallow pan (such as a developing tray) of warm water and soak for about 30-60 seconds, or until the color layer can be released from the backing paper. The ceramic decal / glass decal can now be applied to the ware in various ways. The two most popular methods are described below.

Method # 1: (For Very Large Decals): Apply ceramic decal / glass decal over the object face-up, and slip out the backing paper from underneath. Adjust the position of the ceramic decal / glass decal on the ware and remove water using a rubber squeegee or damp sponge. This is accomplished by patting down from the center toward the outer edges until all excess water has been removed and wrinkles and air bubbles have been smoothed out.

Method # 2: Remove 10 to 12 ceramic decal / glass decal sheets from the developing tray and place them face-up on a glass slab. Slide ceramic decals / glass decals off the paper with a finger and apply each individually to the ware. The technique for straightening the ceramic decal / glass decal and removing water is the same as the one described in Method #1.

When all of the ceramic decals / glass decals from the top sheet have been removed from the backing paper, discard the backing paper and begin using ceramic decals / glass decals from the next sheet. Avoid soaking the ceramic decal / glass decal too long, otherwise it may release itself from the backing paper and float in the water, making it difficult to handle. Excessive wetting may also cause the adhesive backing of the ceramic decal / glass decal colors to dissolve.

Firing

For best results, allow decorated ware to dry before firing.

The recommended firing temperatures for our ceramic decals / glass decals are as follows; CERAMIC 1400-1500°F; GLASS 1020-1080°F. These temperatures are by no means absolutes and we therefore suggest that you request samples to try on your ware under your conditions.

Under optimum conditions, the firing cycle should be slow and well ventilated, with the first 800°F being the most critical.

Please note that we cannot take any responsibility for the lead and cadmium level of the ceramic decal / glass decal when fired. If ceramic decals / glass decals are used on food-bearing surfaces, we suggest that the products be tested.

Storage

For the longest shelf life, ceramic decals / glass decals should be stored at a constant room temperature of approximately 68-74°F and humidity of about 60-65%.

Storing the ceramic decals / glass decals will not degrade their quality, providing that the above temperature and humidity conditions are maintained. For long-term storage, ceramic decals / glass decals should remain in their original cartons, with the cartons in a vertical position. Only those cartons intended for immediate use should be left lying flat.

PART 2: INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE DECORATING

APPLICATION

Place the ceramic decal / glass decal in a shallow pan (such as a developing tray) of warm water and soak for about 30-60 seconds, or until the color layer begins to slide from the backing paper. The ceramic decal / glass decal is now ready to be applied to the item to be decorated.

Place the ceramic decal / glass decal over the area to be decorated (face-up), and slip out the backing paper from underneath.

Adjust the position of the ceramic decal / glass decal on the item and remove water using a rubber squeegee or damp sponge. This is accomplished by stroking from the center of the ceramic decal / glass decal towards the outer edges until all excess water has been removed, and wrinkles and air bubbles have been smoothed out.

FIRING PROCEDURES PRECAUTIONS

Let pieces dry at least 24 hours before firing. Use Cone 017 or 018 on Hobby Ceramics. Cone 016 or 015 on Decorative Chinaware. If using an automatic kiln, set firing cycle at the slowest setting. Firing Guide:

1st hour - Power switches on low. Lid cracked. Peep holes open.

2nd hour - Power switches on medium. Lid cracked. Peep holes open.

3rd hour - Power switches on high. Lid closed (if kiln has completely stopped smoking. If not, leave lid cracked until it no longer smells or smokes).

Total Firing Cycle: 3 - 3½ hours total < - After kiln has shut off, leave lid closed for at least 2 hours for a "soak" period. Then crack lid and let cool down slowly.

FIRING ON UNGLAZED SURFACES

DECALS ON CERAMIC GREENWARE:

1) - Clean greenware as normal.

2) - Prepare a solution of ½ water and ½ white hobby glue (e.g. Elmer's glue or equal). Or, use APT-II Ceramic Enhancer straight out of the bottle (an excellent product).

3) - Sponge or brush on two thin, even coats of either solution onto the area where the decal is to be applied. Allow to dry between each coat.

4) - Apply a third coat and put decal in water so that it will be ready to apply (see "APPLICATION" Section).

5) - Before the third coat is dry (i.e., while it is still a little tacky), apply decal to prepared area.

6) - Carefully blot decal with a paper towel or cloth to remove bubbles and smooth out decal. Do not squeegee.

7) - Allow to dry for 24 hours.

8) - Fire with your next greenware firing (cone 04-06).

9) - Spray a matte or gloss sealer to protect from being soiled.

Note: Because of the higher temperature, some colors will fade significantly (usually Yellows, Oranges, and Flesh Tones). Earthtones will stand-up the best (Blues, Browns, and Blacks). Reds, Greens, Pinks and Purples will alter depending on the manufacturer; sometimes staying true, sometimes darkening, sometimes fading.

Note: You can also fire decals on Ceramic Bisque, and on "Satellite", "Astro Gem", "Sand Star", "Galaxy", and "Gem Stone" glazes. Just use the above procedure plus put an additional coating of solution on top of the decal after it has been mounted. Also, fire at normal decal temperatures (cone 017 - 018).

On Porcelain Bisque you do not have to use a surface prep. Just polish the bisque very thoroughly before you mount the ceramic decal. It should mount and fire just fine (cone 015-16).

Note: You can also fire ceramic decals on pieces that have been glaze-fired and re-fire at cone 06 (as a third firing). You do not have to use a surface prep as described above. Just mount and fire as normal (except at the hotter cone). You will still get the same color variations as described above, and also, the edges of the design will mute (become less sharp & defined), as the color pigments tend to migrate out into the glaze at high temperatures. This is often a desirable effect as it makes the piece look antique.

DECOUPAGE INSTRUCTIONS:

After ceramic decal / glass decal has been applied to the piece (see "APPLICATION" section), allow to dry for several hours.

Using any common decoupage sealer (e.g., clear acrylic; polyurethane; clear lacquer; or any name-brand decoupage product), brush on thin, even coats, **ALLOWING PROPER DRYING TIME BETWEEN COATS.** (This will usually be indicated on the side of the sealer's container.)

Note: On rough surfaces it is advised to apply a basecoat of sealer **BEFORE** applying the ceramic decal / glass decal. Be sure to allow basecoat sufficient time to dry.

Note: Watermount decals (which are what you are using) possess a small amount of glue, which helps them adhere to the surface they are being mounted on. (That soapy film you feel on the wetted decal paper is the glue). As it turns out, watermount decals adhere very well on non-porous surfaces without further treatment. Glass, vinyl, plastic, soap, candles, enameled-finished metal; all are excellent surfaces to just "Squeegee and Forget". The smoother the surface, the harder it is to scrape off.