

BMW SHADOWLINE

Please read this DIY instruction sheet on applying Shadowline vinyl to your vehicle's chrome trim to familiarize yourself with the application process before beginning.



bmwshadowline.com

Fig. 1

CLEAN & PREP THE CHROME TRIM

A clean surface is the most important step in applying Shadowline trim vinyl. Thoroughly clean the vehicle's chrome trim with a commercial detergent and water solution. Be sure to clean and rid the chrome of all dirt, grease, oil, wax, highway grit, tar, and any residue that may be present. After the chrome trim is clean and dry use isopropyl alcohol to clean the surface and ensure no residue remains from the detergent solution, then wipe it down DRY with a *clean, lint-free cloth*. Isopropyl alcohol ensures a contaminant-free surface. **DO NOT use an ammonia-based cleaner as it will leave a residue that will reduce the adhesive strength of the vinyl. It may also cause bubbles due to the outgassing of the ammonia.**

NOTE: It is important to monitor both the ambient and surface temperature as both can have an affect on the application. Higher temperatures will make the vinyl soft and more pliable. However, the high temperature also makes the adhesive more aggressive, which can lead to pre-tack and increased stretching if it is necessary to lift up and reposition the vinyl film. Lower temperatures will make the film more rigid and reduce the tack of the adhesive. *Air and application surface temps must be above 45 degrees F.*



bmwshadowline.com

Fig. 2

APPLYING THE SHADOWLINE VINYL

Determine the best starting point based on the shape of your vehicle's chrome trim. Ideally, you want to start application at it's widest section and work towards the thinnest. If your vehicle's trim is pretty much the same width, then it's just a matter of choosing to work in the direction which you feel most comfortable.



bmwshadowline.com

Fig. 3

At this point, the vinyl's white backing liner can be removed to expose the adhesive in the desired starting area. (It is not necessary to remove the entire liner all at once, in fact it is usually better to remove it a little at a time as you apply the vinyl.) Hold the vinyl smooth and taut, away from the application surface with one hand while applying firm pressure with a finger from your other hand (or application squeegee (not included)) to adhere and smooth the vinyl down over the chrome trim (see Fig. 1). As you work along, you want to keep the vinyl fairly "centered", leaving an equal amount of excess on both the top and bottom of the chrome trim. Once the entire surface area of the chrome trim is covered, re-smooth over the vinyl (either with your finger or squeegee), including all edges. The vinyl's adhesive is pressure-sensitive so be sure to use firm pressure (see Fig. 2 & 3).



bmwshadowline.com

Fig. 4

When applying the vinyl onto curved areas, small wrinkles may develop. To avoid this, pull and gently stretch (be careful not to over-stretch!) the vinyl in the direction of the trim's curvature and firmly smooth it down as you move along while keeping the vinyl "centered". If a wrinkle does appear, slowly lift up the wrinkled area, gently pull to smooth it out, then re-apply it down. The vinyl's adhesive allows for it to be "snapped up" and repositioned, if needed.

TRIMMING THE VINYL

Once the vinyl is completely and firmly overlaid on the surface of the chrome trim, the excess on the top and bottom must be trimmed away. When trimming, use a sharp razor blade or X-ACTO knife and take care not to cut or scratch your vehicle's paint. The best way to do this is to cut into the vinyl's "tenting" area, where it's laying over the channel between the chrome trim and the car's body. Trim the vinyl leaving approximately 3/8" to 1/2" excess "bleed" on top and bottom (see Fig. 4).



Fig. 5

Using an old credit card, plastic putty knife, or applicator squeegee (not included), round and smooth the excess "bleed" of vinyl over the trim's edges and tuck it behind the trim. Work your applicator tool into the trim's "channel" to adhere the vinyl to it's underside (see Fig. 5).

Finally, inspect the edges and entire surface of the vinylated trim and re-smooth any areas, if necessary. Check for any air bubbles that may have been overlooked and work them out towards the edge using your applicator tool or finger tip. Finally, you should firmly smooth over the entire surface again after a few hours to further improve the vinyl's adhesive bond.

See the next page for additional tips & advice for perfect Shadowline vinyl application.

BMW SHADOWLINE

TIPS & ADVICE

- S** Remember it's best to work slowly and take extra care not to over-stretch the vinyl. Patience is key!
- S** Although a heat gun is not necessary, if you own one it can't hurt to use it. Shadowline vinyl is a premium cast film, meaning it already has some stretch and flexibility to it which allows it to conform to contours and curves easily. A heat gun can be used to further relax the vinyl to help get rid of any wrinkles should they form. Just be careful not to overheat or damage the vinyl.
- S** Puncture any air bubbles (those which can't be worked out by smoothing them towards the edge) with a straight pin and re-smooth the vinyl down from the edge of the bubble towards the puncture. The small pinhole will not be visible to the naked eye.
- S** Cut thinner strips of vinyl for thin chrome trim pieces. There's no need to overlay a 3" or 4" wide vinyl strip over a 1" wide chrome trim. Although it varies based on the vehicle model/series, the lower window trim pieces are generally much thinner than the upper trim and require less vinyl for full coverage. They're also usually straight which makes application a breeze. For instance, if the lower chrome window trim is 3/4" wide then you're best off razoring a 3" wide roll in half horizontally (using a straight edge ruler) to produce two separate 1-1/2" vinyl strips (**see Fig. 6**). Not only is this economical use of the Shadowline vinyl, but for thin, straight chrome trim pieces it's actually much easier to apply.



- S** If you mess up and have to re-start applying the vinyl halfway through covering a trim piece, don't get discouraged and give up. Although most of us are perfectionists when it comes to our cars, having a seam isn't the worst thing in the world. Considering the vinyl's low caliper (2 mil.), a seam will be barely visible to the naked eye.
- S** Most importantly, relax and have *fun*. Modding your vehicle should be a hobby you enjoy so take your time and work slowly... the results are worth it!

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us at support@bmwshadowline.com. We try to answer all emails within 24 hours.

www.bmwshadowline.com

