**General Masking**

Masking is the process of covering the entire surface of a vehicle except those specific areas to be painted. It protects those surfaces from overspray and contamination. There are 4 general product categories used for masking. Paper, plastic, liquid and tape.

**General Masking Techniques**

* If vehicle is dirty, wash with soap & water.
* Dry thoroughly.
* Cover the vehicle with liquid mask or plastic sheeting, if used.
* Clean off or cut out from the repair areas
* Wipe the repair areas with Wax & Grease Remover
* Mask the areas that require Fine Line Tape first.
* Protect any moldings with Trim Tape
* Apply Foam Tape in any gaps in the work area
* Mask the rest of the repair with coated paper and crepe masking tape
* Backup the Fine Line Tape and Trim Tape with crepe masking tape.
* Mask any openings
  + Back Mask outer edge of door opening using wide width tape, ensuring that half of tape width is exposed to the opening.
  + Apply paper or plastic film to the exposed tape

Masking Paper

Masking paper is used to some degree on most paint projects. It comes mainly in two categories. Green paper and coated paper. The most common sizes are 6, 12, 18 and 36 inches. It is applied by hand or with a masking machine.

Green masking paper is the most economical. It is graded by weight; i.e. 30#, 35# 40#. That grading describes how much a 36” x 1000’ roll weighs. Lighter weight paper is more flexible, but bleeds thru more quickly. As weight increases, flexibility goes down and bleed thru is lessened. The most used sizes of green paper are 18” and 36”, for masking the larger areas around the vehicle.

Coated Masking Paper is used in areas prone to receiving direct spray, such as the areas immediately adjacent to the repair area. They are coated on one side with a plastic film, which prevents bleed thru. They are normally very thin paper, such as 25#. The most common sizes used are 6” and 12”.

Masking Plastic

Plastic is the most common product used for many masking tasks. So common, in fact, that many technicians changed their description from masking the car to bagging the car. The common types of plastic used are sheeting, wheel covers, antenna covers, mirror bags and seat covers.

Plastic Sheeting is used to completely cover the vehicle and protect it from overspray. Important features of sheeting are;

* M-folded – this is the easiest style to unfold over the car
* Etched – this allows paint and overspray to stick tighter to the plastic, reducing the likelihood that it will flake off onto your paint job.
* Static charged – this charge will cause the sheeting to pull itself into the car surface, preventing overspray and other contaminants from finding their way under the sheeting.

We offer 4 widths of plastic sheeting. They are;

* 12’ – used to cover sub-compact cars, motorcycles and other small jobs.
* 14’ – used to cover compact cars and low profile sports cars
* 16’ – the most commonly used for cars of all sizes and light duty pickups.
* 20’ – for large pickups and vehicles.

**How to Use Plastic Sheeting**

* Place the box or roll at one end of the car,
* Pull the sheeting out and over the car,
* Cut it off at the box,
* Unfold it to cover the entire car.
* Tape it where necessary to prevent overspray from getting under it.
* Cut out around the area to be repaired and tape the edges down with crepe masking tape.

Plastic Wheel Covers

The quickest, surest way to mask of wheels and tires. Just pull it out of the box and slip it over the wheel. It has a slit on the back to fit around the suspension. Available for standard, large and dually wheels.

Antenna Bags

These are simply long, skinny bags that slip over the antenna. These are almost extinct due to the decline of separate radio antennas on modern cars.

Mirror Maskers

Mirror maskers are simply bags that you slip over the mirror. Throw a piece of tape around the bottom and its done.

Seat Covers

These bags are formed to fit over most bucket seats. Their purpose is to protect the seat from dirt, stains and contamination during the repair process.

Liquid Masking

Liquid Mask is a thick, mostly clear liquid that is sprayed over the entire car, including glass, tires and wheels. It is water soluble and contains a type of soap to help clean the car after repairs are completed.

**How to Use Liquid Mask**

* Spray it over the entire vehicle, taking care to get adequate film build on all surfaces.
* Wash off of the area to be painted with water,
* Dry thoroughly
* mask the area with coated paper and masking tape.

NOTE: Liquid Mask is not designed to leave on the vehicle for long periods. It can be difficult to remove from rubber surfaces if left on too long.

Masking Tape

Masking tape is available for a variety of uses, each requiring special features. They are: crepe masking tape, fine line tape, trim tape, foam tape and transition tape.

Crepe Masking Tape is designed for the critical paint masking processes used in the collision repair industry. The adhesive should give instant adhesion to all vehicle surfaces, has good holding power that allows for fast and efficient application. It should also release cleanly and easily from the roll, and from the surface when being removed.

The paper backing should be solvent and moisture resistant, thin and conformable.

NOTE: The wrong masking tape for the job will leave adhesive transfer, sliver when coming off the roll or the job, not stay in place, “edge creep” on curves or contours, and/or allow paint to migrate under the tape edge.

Fine Line Tape has a thin, smooth backing designed to create a sharp, low-profile paint edge.

There are two kinds of Fine Line Tapes.

* Paper backed fine line tape for straight line applications
* Vinyl backed tape that is used to create graphics.

Common widths for both are 1/8”, 1/4" and 1/2".

**How to Use Fine Line Tape**

1. Clean Surface before applying Masking.
2. Mask the areas that require Fine Line Tape first. The Fine Line tape will prevent paint bleed thru on critical edges.
3. After the Fine Line tape has been placed, mask the rest of the repair and backup the Fine Line tape with Creped tape.

Foam Tape

A soft foam tape with an adhesive on one side. It is used to fill the gap between the fender and door, door jambs and other gaps on the vehicle surface. It gives a soft edge inside those gaps, minimizing paint lines, and it is quick and easy to use.

**How to Use Foam Tape**

* just press it into the gap
* smooth it down to the desired depth with a finger or spreader.

Trim Masking Tape

Trim tape lifts molding away from the vehicle allowing paint coverage under the molding. It works particularly well on rubber moldings, typically found on flush mount windshields, sidelights and back glasses. It saves time and labor by eliminating paint lines without removing and installing new moldings.

**How to Use Trim Tape**

* Push the wide edge of the trim tape well under the trim, making sure the adhesive side of the tape faces the trim.
* Press the adhesive side down onto the trim

Transition Tape

Transition Tape is designed to create smooth transitions to existing finishes. It has a raised center ridge with adhesive on it, leaving the outer edge raised slightly above the surface. This allows the paint to feather beneath the edges for an invisible paint line.

**How to Use Transition Tape**

* Apply the first strip, following the outside body line of the door jamb with the outer edge of the tape. Extend tape onto adjacent masking.
* Apply a second strip of tape that overlaps the inner edge of the first strip.
* Apply additional material behind the strips to prevent overspray.
* Apply coating.
* After coatings have dried, remove the outer strip of tape. Pull back on itself and directly out of door jamb.