HEATSEAL LAMINATING - THE HOWS AND WHYS

Over-laminating artwork with heat-activated films is often referred to as heatsealing. Because many people never consider the true benefits of heatseal lamination, it is often overlooked as a method of protecting and enhancing artwork…and indeed as a way to increase revenue.

WHY LAMINATE WITH HEATSEAL LAMINATES?

SURFACE PROTECTION

Lamination guards artwork against fingerprints, moisture, UV light, smudges, abrasion. ozone exposure and cigarette smoke. Laminates also protect artwork from damage due to handling, rolling and shipping.

ADDED VALUE

There are a variety of heatseal surface finishes and textures available with which to enhance artwork and graphics. In addition to gloss, satin matt and matt finishes, our selection also includes linen, canvas and sand textures. Lamination can also deepen and brighten the colours of your artwork as well as reduce glare under challenging lighting conditions.

UNBREAKABLE

Where safety is a factor, especially in shopping centres, airports, schools, retirement homes, children's rooms, hospitals and other public places, lamination is superior to glass.

LIGHTWEIGHT

Ease of handling, particularly during shipping, makes laminating films preferable to other protective media.

MOISTURE RESISTANT

In high humidity or moisture areas such as in bathrooms, kitchens and around swimming pools, laminating films are preferred to glass due to the probability of condensation behind glass-protected pieces.

FADE RESISTANT

All of our heatseal laminates incorporate UV absorbers and UV stabilisers into the formulation, which prevent film degradation and image fade.

SPECIAL APPLICATIONS

Lamination is the only solution for artwork to be displayed without the use of a frame - especially plaq-mounted images. (See page 34).

PROFITABILITY

Laminating films are more economical when compared to speciality (or even plain) glass, yet add a perceived value to the finished artwork that means more profit for you.

HOW TO LAMINATE USING HEATSEAL LAMINATES

STEP 1 – Switch on your press and set it to 90°C. While the press warms up, set your timer. More information on processing times for different films is shown below. Make sure you have a sheet of silicone release film in the base of the press and a sheet of vacufoam or foam plastic (dependant on machine type) over the silicone release film.

STEP 2 – Measure the image to be laminated and cut a piece of heatseal film that is 15mm (1/2") larger than the image all the way round. For a 406mm x 508mm (16" x 20") image, the film should be cut to 432mm x 533mm (17" x 21").

STEP 3 – Peel back the release liner of the heatseal film to expose about 25mm (1") of adhesive and firmly crease back the release liner. Place your artwork (face up) on a clean, flat and cool surface and position the film at the edge of the artwork. Move the film around until it completely covers the artwork. The creased release liner will hold the exposed adhesive away from the artwork while you position it. When you are satisfied with the positioning, press the leading edge of exposed film down onto the artwork using very light pressure. Then slowly peel back the release paper, until the entire image is covered by the film. Smooth out any wrinkles, lifting and repositioning the film from the corners if necessary.

STEP 4 – Now trim off most of the waste film. Be careful not to trim too close to the image, as the film may shift. Take the heatseal assembly and place it in your press, under a sheet of vacufoam or foam plastic and process it according to the guide below.

STEP 5 – When all the air has escaped from your heatseal assembly and the adhesive has been activated, remove the artwork from the press and allow it to cool thoroughly.

STEP 6 – Any remaining film around the edge of the image should now be trimmed away with a straight edge and craft knife or scalpel.

Note: When working with non-porous artwork (such as photographs and other plastic based media), It is necessary to use a pierced heatseal film. Hot Press provide most heatseal films in a pre-pierced variant. Due to its thickness, Canvastex needs to be pierced by hand using a piercing tool.

SUGGESTED PROCESSING TIMES FOR HEATSEAL LAMINATION FILMS

	254 x 305mm	305 x 406mm	406 x 508mm	508 x 762mm	762 x 1016mm	1016 x 1524mm
Gloss Lustre	5	5	6	7	8	10
H/D Gloss Lustre	9	9	10	11	12	14
Satin Matt	5	5	6	7	8	10
Matt	8	8	9	10	11	13
Sand Texture	9	9	10	11	12	14
Fine Linen	9	9	10	11	12	14
Coarse Linen	9	9	10	11	12	14
Canvas Texture	15	15	18	19	20	22
Polyester Gloss	4	4	5	6	7	8

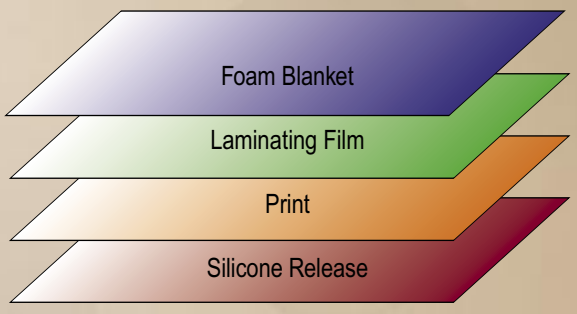
*25.4mm = 1 inch

The times shown above are in minutes and are based on artwork that is porous i.e. posters and prints. If your artwork is non-porous then it is advisable to increase these times. The operating temperature is another key variable. As more heat is used, processing times decrease. Processing times increase with lower temperature settings. It is common for Fine and Coarse linen to be processed at lower temperatures (80°C) to maintain the texture of the weave pattern; the same applies to Satin Matt and Matt, where a smooth finish is required.

Due to its thickness and strong weave pattern, Canvas Texture is often processed at 110°C to decrease the processing time. Similarly Gloss (Lustre), Satin Matt and Matt are often processed at 100°C to obtain a heavy texture to their surface.

Remember that Polyester Gloss film should not be pierced (as the holes will not heal) and is only suitable for porous artwork. This fact is reflected in its processing times.

If you are laminating artwork that has already been mounted to a board, the thickness, moisture content and porosity of the board will have an effect on processing times.



From top to bottom the assembly should be set up as shown here