

## How to Choose an Overlaminating Film

Overlaminating films are used to protect graphics by adding qualities such as abrasion, humidity, UV and solvent resistance. Typically an overlaminating film is used when trying to extend the life of the graphic below. However, an overlaminating film may also be used to alter the appearance of the graphic with such effects as adding a gloss, matte or textured finish to the final product.

When considering the use of an overlaminating film, you will first need to have an understanding of the surface it will ultimately be applied to. For instance, if your graphic is going to require any type of multidirectional stretch, you will need to choose a cast vinyl option. One rule of thumb is to never apply a polymeric or monomeric non-cast overlaminate to a cast vinyl since the non-cast material will tend to cause shrinkage and/or edge curl. Cast vinyl overlaminates such as [3M™ Gloss Wrap Overlaminante 8418G](#) or [3M™ Scotchcal™ Luster Overlaminante 8519](#) can be considered.

Polyester overlaminating films are widely used for industrial, durable applications such as nameplates and warning/instructions labels. Popular facestock gauges of 3M™ Polyester Overlaminante Label Material options range between 1 mil to 5 mils. UL options are also available and include [3M™ Indoor UL Recognized Clear Polyester Overlaminante FM011](#) (1 mil) and [3M™ Overlaminante Label Material OFM010N](#) (1mil). [3M™ Polyester Overlaminante Material 7248](#) even provides protection against defacement such as spray paint, crayon, markers and pen. If a graphic will be exposed the elements, products such as [3M™ Polyester Overlaminante Label Material 7733FL](#) and [3M™ Overlaminante Label Material 7735FL](#) can provide three and ten year outdoor durability respectively.

When creating decorative labels, an overlaminate can be used to alter the look of the final product. Textured polycarbonate based products such as [3M™ Velvet Textured Overlaminante Label Material 7737FL](#) (3 mils) or [3M™ Velvet Textured Overlaminante Label Material 7738FL](#) (5 mils) are often selected to achieve the desired look. [3M™ Overlaminante Label Material, Series 8900](#) provides a variety of overlaminates that enhance the appearance and durability of printed and colored films. Special effects can be created using these films including carbon fiber, silver, gold sparkle and an overall brushed appearance.

Contact Tekra today at 1-800-448-3572 or at [orderscentral@tekra.com](mailto:orderscentral@tekra.com) for more information on available overlaminating film options.