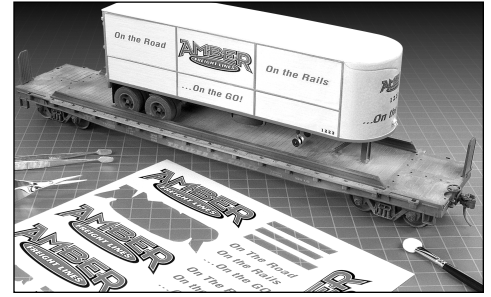# MICRO-MARK DECAL PAPER INSTRUCTIONS

Note: Decal printing and application are not difficult tasks, but do employ techniques that are developed with experience.

Notice: Micro-Mark guarantees this decal paper to be free of manufacturing defects for a period of 90 days from date of purchase. Although this decal paper has been successfully tested on many copiers and printers, equipment compatibility is not guaranteed by Micro-Mark. It remains the responsibility of the purchaser to determine compatibility with printers and copying machines and, by use of this paper, the purchaser agrees that Micro-Mark will not be held responsible for consequential damage to purchaser's or copy center equipment.

INTRODUCTION

Before making your own decals, it is recommended that you become familiar with these popular types of computer printers:

INKJET PRINTERS use liquid inks to create images on paper. Making decals with this type of printer requires the use of decal paper that has a special coating which prevents liquid ink from beading-up, plus a top coat fixative spray (either acrylic or lacquer), applied immediately after printing, that prevents ink from smearing or washing off during application. Since white ink is not available for printers, white paper stock supplies the white component of artwork; therefore, decal paper with a white film, instead of a clear film, is also available so that images with a white component may be created.*

LASER PRINTERS use dry, powdered ink (toner) to create images, and employ heated rollers to fuse the ink to regular paper. Most copy machines also use this principle to print images. As with inkjet printers, white toner is not available, so decal paper with a white film is also made for laser printers to create images containing a white area.* To keep laser printed images from cracking and chipping during decal application, a fixative spray (acrylic or lacquer) is required immediately after printing.

Note: Inkjet decal paper will also work in laser printers and copy machines, but laser paper will NOT work in inkjet printers.

*A NOTE ABOUT CREATING WHITE LETTERING AND ARTWORK Because printers cannot print white, they rely on the paper itself to supply the white component in lettering and artwork. To make a decal with white lettering and/or artwork, you would start with white film decal paper. Use your drawing program to create a block of color that matches (as closely as possible) the color of the model to which the decal will be applied. You can also photograph or scan the color and import it into your computer for a more accurate match. Once you have created this color background, import the image or create a color field in your drawing program and then type or draw your lettering and/or artwork in white on top of this colored background. When the decal is printed and applied to the model, the colored background will blend into the color of the model and only the white lettering will be visible. Carefully layering multiple decals on top of one another will provide greater opacity, but will also add thickness. You can also paint a white or light colored field on the model in the area where the decal will go, making the decal appear even more opaque. Experiment on scrap material to determine what method provides the best results for your intended application.

Follow the three steps below to create and apply your own custom decals:

1. CREATE ARTWORK

Use a computer, dry transfers, previously printed designs, and/or pen and ink to create your artwork. You may use multiple colors, but be aware that dark model colors may show through light-colored artwork. Again, since copiers and printers do not print white; decal paper with white film may be used to produce the white areas on your decal, or as an underlayment for light colors, such as yellow.

You may also print a background color that matches the surface of the item to which the decal is being applied. Touch up the edges of the decal after application to help it blend in with the surrounding surface before spraying an additional coat of fixative. Color photos may be used as artwork, but they should be printed on decal paper with white film so that the white component of the photo is present. Some creativity and experimentation may be required to generate artwork that will produce the desired decals.

2. PRINT ARTWORK ONTO THE DECAL PAPER

If you created your artwork on a computer and have a printer, remove any tissue-type sheet protector that may be present, and print that artwork directly onto the glossy side of the decal paper. For inkjet printing, we recommend using the "Transparency Film" (or similar) setting if your printer software supports this option. Also, you must immediately apply a few thin, but thorough, coats of fixative spray to seal the inkjet printed image on the decal paper; otherwise, it will smear and/or wash off.

Fixative spray is also recommended for Laser printed decals to reduce the chipping of image edges when the decal is trimmed out.

3. APPLY DECAL

Decals are best applied to a glossy surface. Apply glossy paint or spray a clear gloss coating on your model before applying decals. Carefully cut out the decal from the sheet and soak it in a cup of plain water for about one minute or until you see the film start to separate from the backing paper. Carefully test to see if the decal film has released from the backing paper, then slide the decal into position on your model. Gently blot excess water. Allow to dry.

For best results, use our Decal Finishing System to apply decals. It helps decals conform to irregular surfaces and hides decal film, making your artwork appear to be painted on the model, rather than applied by decal. Be aware that large decals may wrinkle when setting and softening solutions are applied. If this happens to your decal, splice together smaller decals to make up your final image.

Top coats of a fixative spray are required in all cases to minimize curling and to hold/protect the decal.