

Special report

Film

stars

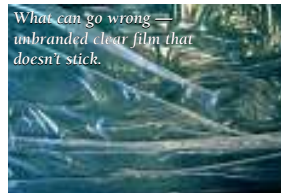


Branded film from an easy-to-use dispenser.



A fit-for-purpose, plastic adhesive film.

Builders and decorators using clear, unlabelled adhesive films to protect surfaces, floors and windows may be causing themselves more problems than they solve. PBM looks at how cheaper, so called 'all-purpose' films can be a false economy.



What can go wrong — unbranded clear film that doesn't stick.



Pulling up film.

days or months depending on the quality of the film. With clear, unlabelled 'all-purpose' film the user has no idea how long it can be left in place before this happens. Other important factors such as slip-resistance and fire-retardance are equally uncertain when the film is supplied as an anonymous unlabelled roll on the builders' merchant's shelf.

To avoid these problems, builders and decorators should look for

surface-specific self-adhesive films from reputable branded manufacturers which:

- are clearly printed with the manufacturer's name;
- are clearly printed with the surface type for which they are designed;
- give clear guidance on the maximum length of time they can be used;
- have slip-resistance, fire-retardance and other data on the packaging and labelling.

For the merchant, the obvious advantage of stocking a reputable brand of protection film — as opposed to the apparently cheaper unbranded alternative — is the confidence that it will do the job it is designed for without come-backs from the customer. Result: more repeat orders and greater long-term profitability.

There is no doubt that self-adhesive protection film is the future of professional surface protection, and, with the right precautions, it can save hours of costly cleaning up and making good. But apparent up-front savings from cheap unbranded films can cause unwelcome extra expense down the line, not to mention customer dissatisfaction. There is no such thing as an all-purpose protection film.

In recent years both builders and decorators have recognised the advantages — in both safety and effectiveness — of using self-adhesive plastic films instead of dust-sheets or plastic sheeting to protect working areas from dirt and damage. The material offers a leak-proof, slip-resistant skin which can be quickly removed after use, greatly reducing clean-up time. However, in response to this demand, a number of supposedly all-purpose self-adhesive films have come on the market, which can create a new set of problems for the user.

When it comes to protection, no two surfaces are exactly the same, and protection films have to reflect these differences. For a film to stick securely to carpet, for example, it needs a fairly strong adhesive to cope with the relatively poor contact between film and surface. A low-tack film can easily slip in much the same way as a dust sheet, exposing gaps and causing trip hazards.

On the other hand, if a carpet-strength film is applied to a window, after a day or two of sunshine the adhesive will transfer to the glass causing a clean-up job probably more difficult than the one the film was there to prevent. Much the same effect — with yet more costly consequences — can happen with expensive, newly-laid wood-block floors.

Any adhesive film will eventually transfer some of its adhesive to the surface it is designed to protect. This process can take

With thanks to Packexxe for help preparing this article.

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