

## **TAUTFLEX on TAUTLINERS**

### **What is a Tautliner?**

A tautliner is a sliding truck curtain that can be folded back to allow easy loading and then pulled taut to protect the goods whilst in transit.

The curtain material is normally made of high strength vinyl with an acrylic coating on the outside. The acrylic coating is designed to protect the vinyl to give a glossy finish and allow easy cleaning. The curtains must withstand extreme weather conditions, resist road and diesel grime and remain flexible.

They provide an ideal advertising medium.

### **Painting Tautliners.**

Traditionally Tautliners have been painted in 2 pack polyurethanes or vinyl inks. Many problems have been encountered including adhesion problems, curtains cracking, loss of flexibility and recoating problems.

The one lesson that has been learned when using 2 pack polyurethanes is that surface preparation is critical.

TautFlex has been introduced as an alternative to these products and has the following advantages

1. Water based and is considered non-hazardous according to the criteria of Worksafe Australia. (2 pack Polyurethanes contain dangerous isocyanates)
2. Easy to apply - brush, roll or spray. Single pack. No additives or expensive solvents.(water clean-up)
3. Fast drying and recoat within 2 hours. Quick turn around.
4. Excellent stock colour range and colour matching available to corporate colours and PMS.
5. Gloss Finish and a UV clear available for extra protection.
6. Can be recoated at any time. Signage can easily be changed.

We do not suggest that TautFlex has the toughness or performance of a 2 pack polyurethane but it comes a close second and is a safer alternative to vinyl inks.

### **Preparation before painting.**

Nearly all Tautliner fabrics are imported and are sourced from various countries. They all vary in quality and will have a protective coating on them. This is usually an acrylic lacquer that may contain a wax or silicone. The coating is designed to protect the vinyl and make it easy to clean, but it is not designed to be painted. Therefore surface preparation is critical.

TautFlex has outstanding adhesion to vinyl and if the acrylic lacquer was not present then surface preparation would be easy (detergent wash then wipe over with prep vinyl). Therefore, it is necessary to remove as much of the acrylic lacquer as possible. It is normally a very thin coating. Thoroughly degloss with a scotchbrite pad then remove remaining lacquer with a rag using all purpose thinners. Finally clean with Viponds Prep Vinyl.

Test an area for adhesion. If the TautFlex peels away like a strippable coating then more preparation is necessary or the fabric is unsuitable for painting.

The surface preparation is extensive but the same preparation is also necessary when applying 2- pack polyurethanes and vinyl inks. An extra hour spent in preparation may save several hours in rectification if the signage fails.

### **Painting with TautFlex.**

Even though TautFlex is water based it flows like an enamel. If the TautFlex is too thin for writing add a small amount of TautFlex Thickener.

For spraying use conventional or HVLP equipment. Reduce with TautFlex Adjusting Clear if required

Apply two coats for coverage and durability.

A final coat of TautFlex UVClear will enhance the durability, reduce the fading of colour and increase gloss.

### **When can the curtains be put into service?**

With normal drying conditions (above 16 deg C) the paint will be cured within 2 hours and the curtains put into service. The paint will be completely waterproof but will not be fully cured for at least a week. In the first week only wash the curtains with soapy water.

### **What if the signage needs to be altered?**

An important advantage of TautFlex is the ability to recoat at any time and therefore easily change the signage. To prepare the surface for repainting, thoroughly clean the area with a strong detergent then wipe over with Vipond's Prep Vinyl.

### **What can be used to clean the painted curtains?**

It is important not to use harsh chemicals containing alcohols (eg methylated spirits) to clean the painted curtains as they may attack the paint film. Mild soapy water is most suitable.

Truck wash has been tested and is suitable if applied in the diluted solution as recommended by the manufacturer.

### **Can TautFlex be used over previously painted curtains?**

TautFlex should not be used to paint over 2 pack signage and it may be suspect on vinyl ink.

As a general rule it is not recommended to paint old curtains because of potential adhesion problems. Call our technical department for specific information.

### **How durable is TautFlex on Tautliners**

Exterior accelerated exposure testing indicates good exterior durability. It maintains its film integrity, flexibility and adhesion to vinyl but will have a gradual loss in gloss level under extreme weather conditions. It is recommended to apply a coat of TautFlex UV Clear to improve gloss retention

Practical experience is at 20 months with the results imaging the accelerated testing.

If the gloss level on the signage deteriorates it can be rejuvenated with a thorough wash down and another coat of TautFlex UV Clear.

For other information ask for the Fact Sheet - TautFlex – Frequently Asked Questions. or contact the Viponds Technical department on 03 93504188