

Why Laminate Plastic Cards

Discover three benefits of a laminated ID card

In plastic card printing, lamination is a clear layer of film that is applied to the top of a printed card for protection. Card printers with lamination capability apply laminate during the regular printing process – it's quick and easy!

If you recall the old days of cutting and pasting an ID card together, lamination may confuse you a bit. You might wonder why you would need lamination when printing directly to plastic. Here are three primary reasons to laminate your cards:

#1: Lamination protects from wear

Lamination extends the life of your cards by protecting them from wear. Laminate acts as a barrier to protect the images and text on your cards and make them more durable.

The cards at the right illustrate the durability of lamination. The card on the left is laminated and the card on the right is not laminated.

To simulate wear and tear, both cards were scratched with a set of keys. The laminated card is unscathed, while the non-laminated card is visibly damaged.

Is lamination for me?

If you will be swiping your cards through a magnetic stripe reader or want your cards to have a longer life, lamination is for you!

Both cards were scratched with a car key.



#2: Lamination protects from fading & dye migration

So you accidentally left your ID badge in your car for a few days to discover that the card is now “stuck” inside of the badge holder. When you pull the card out of the holder, you realize that part of your card image has transferred to the badge holder. This process is called dye migration. It occurs when a printed card is worn in a badge holder that is exposed to heat.

Lamination protects cards from dye migration. To illustrate this, both cards at the right were placed in a badge holder, left in the sun for 15 days, and then removed from the card holders. Notice how the image on the non-laminated card transferred to the badge holder, while the laminated card remains unaffected.

Additionally, lamination protects cards from fading. The images and text on a laminated card will remain true to color for years longer than a non-laminated card.

Is lamination for me?

If your cardholders will be working outside, leaving their ID in their vehicles, or storing their cards in a wallet, lamination is for you!

Both cards were placed in a card holder, left in the sun for 15 days and then removed from the card holders.



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#3: Holographic lamination increases card security

In addition to clear laminate, holographic laminate is available. This allows you to quickly and easily add holographic images to your cards during the regular printing process. This provides added card security, as the holograms cannot be fraudulently duplicated.

You have two options when it comes to holographic laminate: standard or custom. Both provide the same holographic effect, however standard holographic laminate is available on the open market and therefore doesn't offer the same level of security as a custom holographic laminate.

Is holographic lamination for me?

If you require secure cards that are difficult to duplicate, holographic lamination is for you!



What supplies will I need for a laminating printer?

There are two special supply items that laminating card printers require: laminate and composite PVC-PET cards.

Laminate

In order for your printer to add a protective layer of lamination to your cards during the printing process, you'll need to keep it loaded with a roll of laminate, also referred to as lamination or overlamination. There are a number of laminate options, from clear to holographic, patch to full-coverage overlay.



Composite PVC-PET Cards

Rather than standard 100% PVC cards, you'll want to choose composite PVC-PET cards for your laminating printer. Composite PVC-PET cards are the same size and look the same as standard PVC cards, but are more durable. More importantly, they are more resistant to the high heat used in the lamination process. Standard PVC cards will warp from the intense heat when laminating, composite cards will not.



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