

# How to Choose the Correct Roll Laminator

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Wide format roll laminators come in all shapes and sizes, from varying widths, temperature settings, and application features. Laminating serves endless benefits to preserving and enhancing media of all kinds. Choosing the right roll laminator for your projects is the first step in enjoying the benefits of laminating.

## Thermal Hot Roll Laminating vs Pressure Sensitive Cold Roll Laminating

There are two types of application techniques for roll lamination, hot thermal laminating and pressure sensitive cold laminating. Thermal lamination is the method of using heat to activate the glue on laminating roll films to seal and protect the material you are laminating. Pressure sensitive laminating doesn't use heat in order to laminate film but instead uses the pressure of rollers to seal the laminating film onto your media. Laminating film used in pressure sensitive laminating is self-adhesive, similar to tape.

	<b>Thermal Roll Laminators</b>	<b>Cold Pressure Sensitive Roll Laminators</b>
<b>Laminating Film to Use</b>	Often referred to as "standard laminating film" or "thermal laminating film", use laminating roll film that requires melting in order to activate the adhesive	Often referred to as "cold laminating roll film" or "pressure sensitive laminating roll film", laminating film used in pressure sensitive laminating does not require heat because of its self adhesive characteristic, similar to tape
<b>When to Use?</b>	Thermal laminating is best used when the material you are laminating will not be affected by the application of heat. The laminator will melt the laminating film onto the material in order to seal and protect the media.	Pressure sensitive laminating is best used when the material you are laminating is sensitive to the application of heat or high temperatures. Cold laminators will press pressure sensitive laminating film onto the media using high pressure rollers.

## Width Sizes

Wide format roll laminators generally come in width sizes from 15" to 65". Smaller sized roll laminators that can fit on a table are referred to as table top roll laminators. Larger laminators that are too large to be supported on a table often come with self supporting stands.

The width size of your laminator will be determined by the size of the media or paper you will be laminating. It is generally recommended that you add 1 inch to 3 inches to your widest media you are going to laminate.

## **Examples of Finished Laminating Products**

Laminating can offer numerous added benefits to many different kind of graphics and displays. Below are just some examples of graphics that laminating can enhance:

- Posters
- Pop Up Displays
- Floor Graphics
- Window Graphics
- Presentation Boards
- Rigid Displays
- Flexible Displays
- Backlit Displays
- Vinyl Banners
- Outdoor Signage

## **Other Application Terms to Consider**

Laminating - The application of laminating film to the face of a printed image in order to enhance color, contrast, and overall durability of the media

Mounting - The process of permanently or semi-permanently affixing a printed image onto a rigid substrate using a mounting adhesive laminating roll

Encapsulating - The sealing of a printed image, front and back, with a thermal laminating film. Also commonly referred to as thermal laminating.

## **Film Core Sizes**

Film core size is the size of laminating film cores a roll laminator can accept in its film supply shaft. Wide format roll laminators use laminating roll film that generally come in either 1” cores, 2.25” cores, or 3” cores. Film core size refers to diameter of the cardboard roll the film is wrapped around. Roll laminators will specify compatible film cores in its specifications. It is important to know and select the correct film core sizes for your laminator to ensure that the film you purchase will correctly load onto the roll laminator.

## **Film Thickness and Mounting Options**

Roll laminators will specify the mil film thickness it can laminate. Roll laminating film mil thickness ranges from 1 mil – 10 mil. Certain roll laminators will have the option to laminate thicker material, such as foam boards, up to a certain thickness. Roll laminators can laminate materials anywhere between 1/2” to 1” thick, depending the laminator specifications.