

Frequently asked questions about Alcolin Contact Adhesive

1. **Must Alcolin Contact adhesive be spread onto both sides?**

Yes. Contact adhesives bond by means of crystallization which can only occur when the adhesive is applied to both surfaces, allowed to dry and then brought together.

2. **Must I wait until the glue gets tacky before I bring the surfaces together?**

The surfaces must be completely dry – no transfer of glue must take place when touched with a finger. If surfaces are brought together while solvents are still in the glue line, crystallization will not take place and can result in poor bond strength. Additionally, solvents trapped between two non-porous surfaces may cause bubbling up and delamination of substrates.

3. **How does one use Alcolin Contact glue?**

Surfaces must be clean and dry – if necessary degrease with a solvent. e.g. Acetone.

Apply contact to both surfaces evenly with a scraper or brush. A notched trowel 1.5mmx1mm teeth is most suitable.

Allow surfaces to dry until they can be touched with the back of a finger/knuckle without any adhesive transference – approx 10–20 minutes. If the adhesive is shiny, its still too wet.

Once the surfaces are dry, align carefully. Since contact bonds instantaneously, it is recommended to use spacers between the two surfaces to enable the surfaces to be adjusted as needed. After the surfaces are aligned, start removing the spacers from one end. Join carefully and take care not to entrap air.

Apply as much pressure as possible for a 30-second period. High bond strength should develop within an 1 hour.

Very porous substrates may require two coats. e.g. Low-grade chipboard – the 1st coat absorbs into the substrate and acts as a seal.

Contact adhesives are solvent based and flammable so adequate ventilation should be available when working with the product, as well as no sources of ignition should be nearby.

4. **Why was my bond not so strong when I glued Formica to chipboard?**

Normally the main reason is that insufficient pressure was applied after the Formica was placed on the chipboard. High pressure for a few seconds is needed for good bonds.

If either of the surfaces was too porous, glue starvation could be a problem as adhesive is absorbed into the substrate and does not remain on the surface – in this case, apply two coatings of Alcolin Contact on the porous surface – the first coating acts as a seal.

*A contact adhesive guideline for bonding laminates to chipboard is available on request.

5. Can I use Alcolin Contact to bond expanded polystyrene?

No. Alcolin Contact contains solvents that will melt the expanded polystyrene.

Use Alcolin Waterproof or Alcolin Fix-All instead.

6. What precautions should I take during cold weather when working with contact adhesives?

During cold weather condensation can take place on the surfaces to which the glue has been applied. (This is as a result of lowering of temperature at the immediate glue surface due to evaporation of solvents) This layer of water will interfere with the bond. Before joining the surfaces, check carefully to ensure no condensation. Use a hair drier to dry the water before placing the surfaces together.

7. How can I thin Alcolin Contact?

Alcolin Contact can be thinned down for spray applications with Alcolin Contact thinners, Acetone, Toluene, Ethyl Acetate or Methylene Chloride. We recommend diluting by no more than 10% as too much solvent can negatively affect the bond strength.

8. How much Alcolin Contact do I need for 10 square meters?

Approximately 5L. The spread rate of contact is 4m²/L, but since it is a two-sided application, one litre is needed for every 2m².

9. Why do I find some white substance at the bottom of the contact tin?

This is the separation of metal oxides that are part of the formulation. Stir the contact until the substance is well mixed in before using it. The metal oxides are in the formulation to make the bonds more durable. They tend to separate out of the contact adhesive on aging due to their heavy density compared to that of the adhesive bulk.

10. Why do people sniff contact glues?

The solvents in contact glue are slightly narcotic. When using contact adhesives work in a ventilated area and avoid breathing in the fumes.

Our Alcolin Contact adhesive has a low n-Hexane content, unlike a number of other products on the market, especially the cheap imports! n-Hexane is the component in Benzine that causes brain damage in long-term glue sniffers.

11. Why did my Formica top show bubbles?

The following reasons may apply –

- Not enough time was allowed for the adhesive to dry, trapping some solvents;
- Improper lamination, trapping air pockets;
- Dirty surfaces;
- Condensation;
- Insufficient pressure;
- Insufficient adhesive

12. Formica laminate has come loose – how can I repair it?

If the laminate has become loose in a spot in the middle of the panel, it can be repaired by using an iron on a low heat setting to reactivate the contact cement. This may not always work because the problem can be caused by a lack of adhesive in that spot. If loose on the edge, lift and reapply contact adhesive.

13. Countertop Delaminating – After 5 years, my HPL countertops are starting to delaminate due to either faulty contact cement or improper installation. Removing, cleaning and re-gluing is not practical.

As a rule, a laminate that has been stuck for 5 years doesn't just start to delaminate. If the substrate is particleboard, moisture could be the problem, causing the particles to separate. Equally possible is the contact adhesive was not formulated correctly i.e. the adhesive doesn't have the proper antioxidant package to protect the polymer from oxidative degradation. The only solution is to re do the job – alternatively, if the laminate has become loose in a spot in the middle of the panel, try repairing it by using an iron on a low heat setting to reactivate the contact cement. If loose on the edge, lift and reapply contact adhesive.

14. What is n-hexane?

n-Hexane is a component found in one of the solvents commonly used to formulate a solvent based contact adhesive. The n-hexane causes brain damage in long-term glue sniffers.

15. Can I apply contact adhesive to one surface and wet bond it?

This can be done if at least one of the surfaces is non porous. Generally this method of adhesion will not result in the strongest of bonds, however it is suitable method for gluing small porous components.

