

Successful Trim Caulking of PlasDECK E- Series Decking



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Items Required

- Blue Painters tape. We prefer 3M #2090 in $\frac{3}{4}$ " width. Do NOT use painters tape labeled for use on Delicate Surfaces.
- Exacto knife or similar fine tip hobby knife
- Rags, rags and more rags
- Denatured alcohol
- Latex or Nitrile gloves
- Standard Caulking gun
- 10 oz. tube of appropriate caulking. We prefer Bostik 940 but 3M 4200 Fast Cure is a good alternative.
- Empty bucket or box for garbage and used tape. Trying to put a long piece of tape which is covered in adhesive into a garbage bag when there is a breeze is impossible. Get something that you don't have to hold open.
- Patience!!

Prep

Start by making sure the edges of the teak and adjacent fiberglass are clean and free of dust and dirt. Wipe them down with denatured alcohol if necessary. Next make sure that there is no cured caulk that has been squeezed out from under the panels during installation. If there is, just cut away the cured adhesive using a utility knife or the Exacto knife. Be careful not to scratch the fiberglass but try and remove as much as possible. Sometimes scraping the cured adhesive with a good fingernail works best.

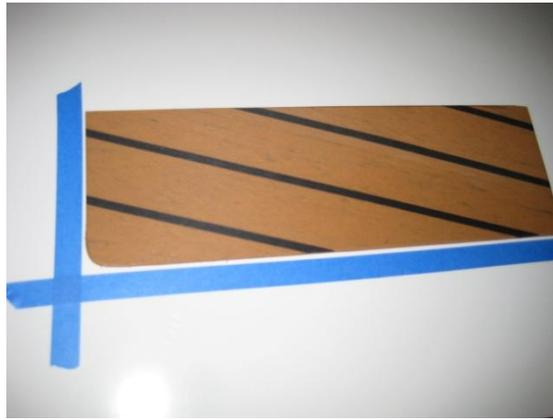
Next develop a plan of action. For best results work on one panel at a time by taping it, caulking it and then removing the tape before moving on to the next panel. You must consider that adjacent panels are often unable to be caulked in procession as the tape from one panel will overlap the edge of the adjacent panel. You will need to caulk one panel and give it time to cure before caulking the adjacent panel. If you are working in direct sunlight you will want to save the larger panels for later, or earlier, in the day as warmer temps will cause the caulk to "skin" over faster and necessitate faster working times.

Taping

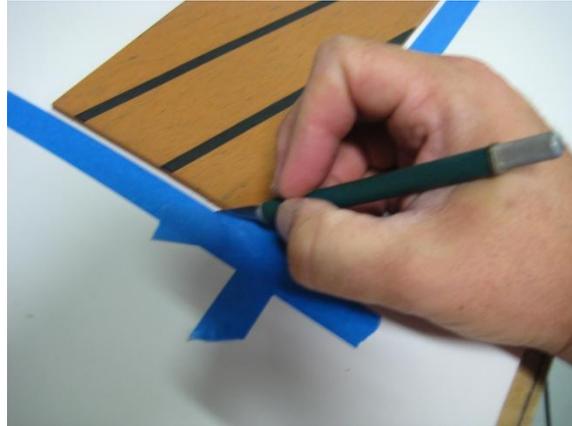
Taping is the most critical part to ensuring a good caulking job. It is time consuming and somewhat monotonous but take your time during this step and you'll save yourself a lot of time later.

Hint- Always lay the tape overlapping in one direction, either clock wise or counter-clockwise. This will make removal much easier when it is covered in sticky caulk.

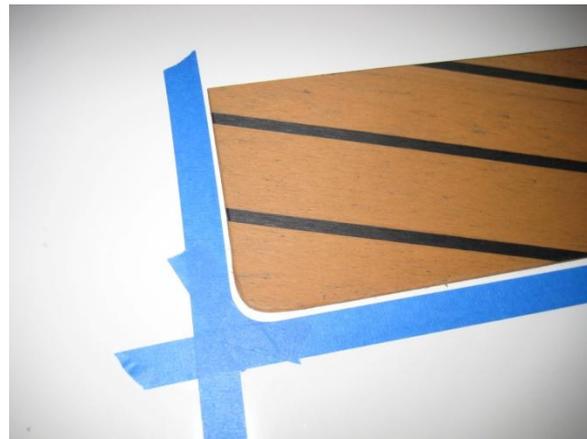
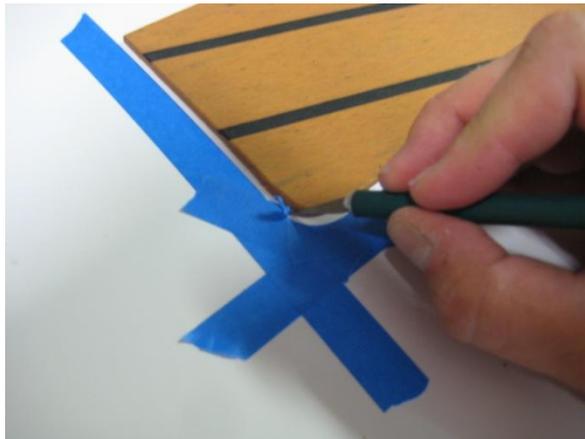
Start by laying the tape on the fiberglass about $\frac{1}{8}$ " to $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the decking material. Try to maintain an even distance from the teak for best results. You can also adjust the distance from the teak in order to visually close up gaps and reveals but try and maintain a smooth curve as you vary the width of the caulk line. The $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide tape is flexible enough to curve around the inside of even the tightest curves.



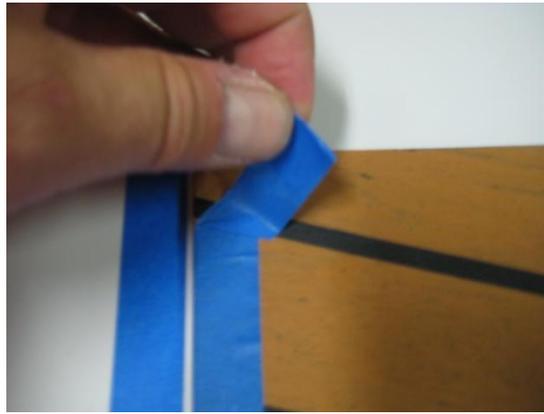
Cover outside corners completely with tape and then cut out using the Exacto knife. Be sure to cut hard enough to create a fine edge on the tape but not so hard that you cut deeply in to the fiberglass.



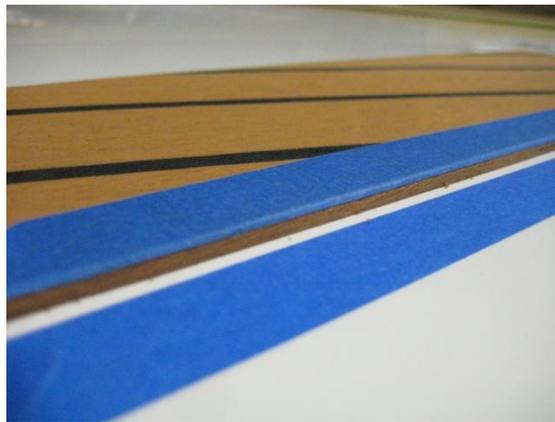
Remove excess tape from corners;



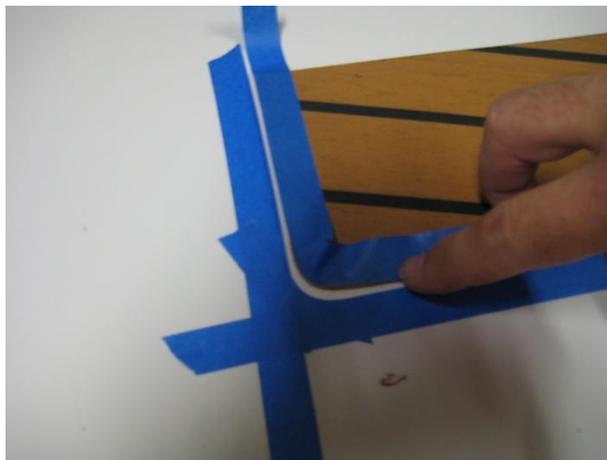
Hint- Leave starting and ending pieces of tape long enough to grab later on without having to dig at the end to get them started. We make a “pull tab” on the end of our tape which really makes things easier later. You’ll appreciate this when your gloved hand is covered in caulk and you don’t have to try and start a section of tape by scraping at it with your fingernail.



Next lay tape on the top of the decking so that it just barely covers the rounded edge.

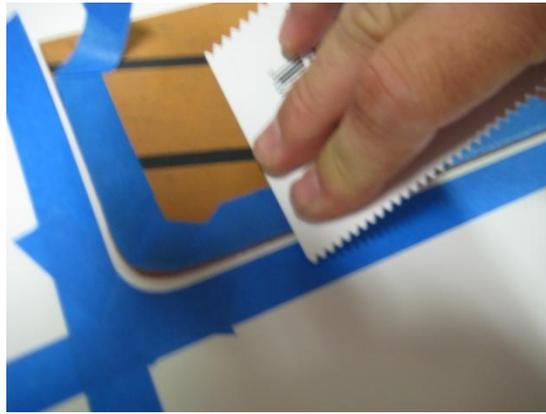


Corners are a bit tricky but patience will prevail.

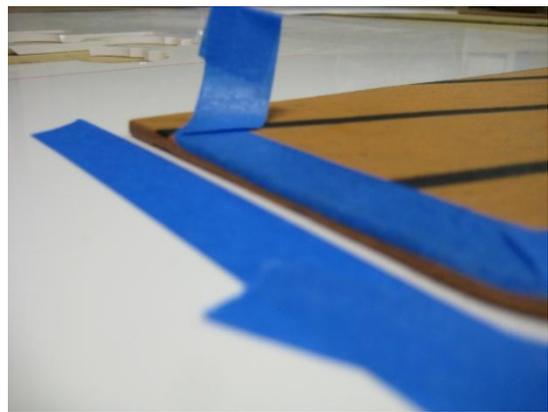
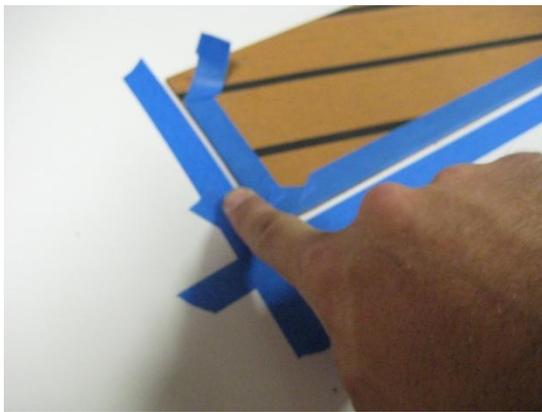


Hint- Keep in mind that there is nothing you can do with caulk that can't be fixed. So don't stress out! Just take your time and be methodical. 😊

The tape doesn't really like to stick to the top of the decking material due to the texture of the surface. It helps to burnish the tape by using the straight edge of one of our plastic adhesive spreaders, a plastic putty knife or similar. Use a low angle and pull toward you.



Next take your finger and run it along the panel to make sure all of the edges of the tape are stuck down firmly and that no adhesive will get under the tape. You cannot do this often enough! Make sure to do this again immediately before you caulk.

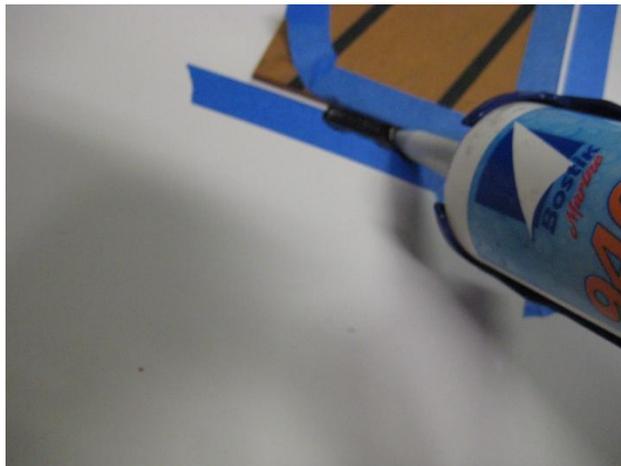


Now for the fun part!

Caulking

Once your tape is in a good condition you can begin caulking. At this point go ahead and get gloves on both hands as you will need to move fairly quickly once the caulk is applied. We also prefer to put TWO gloves on the hand you'll be using to smooth out the caulk. The PlasDECK material has a texture that can tear latex gloves when running your finger along the edge.

Insert a small bead of caulk using a caulking gun.

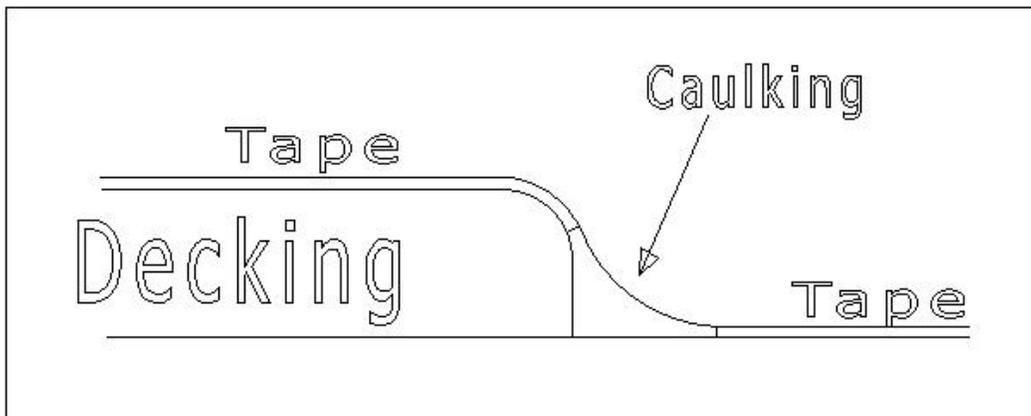


On every boat there is going to be some area where you just can't get the caulking gun at the right angle to insert a bead of caulk. It's not that critical to get a pretty bead of caulk, just get some caulk in there somehow even if you have to squirt some caulk on your finger tip and smear it in there manually. If you practice the process by doing some smaller panels first then you will be able to work rather quickly on the larger panels. This is important so the caulk doesn't skin over (partially cure) before you have removed the tape. Once you have gotten the caulk into the seam, smooth it out using a gloved finger working in one direction. One smooth motion is best.

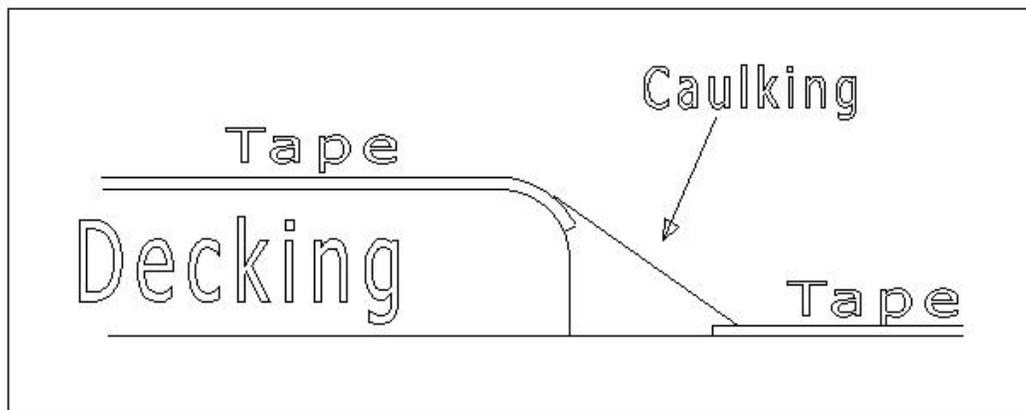


You want to really press firmly and make a perfect fillet from the edge of one piece of tape to the edge of the other. If the caulk is too thick it will cause problems when you remove the tape.

Correct Fillet;

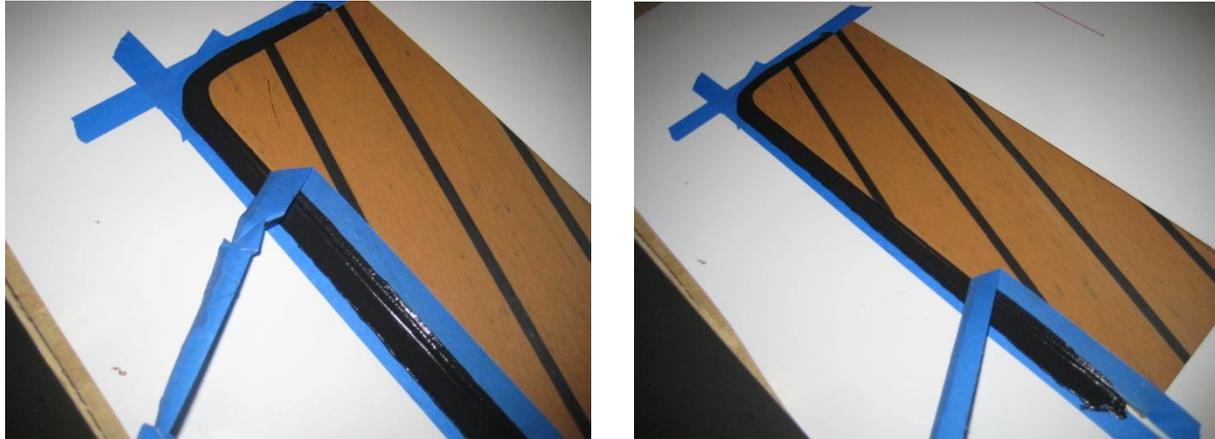


Fillet too thick which will cause ragged lines and an unsightly finished product.

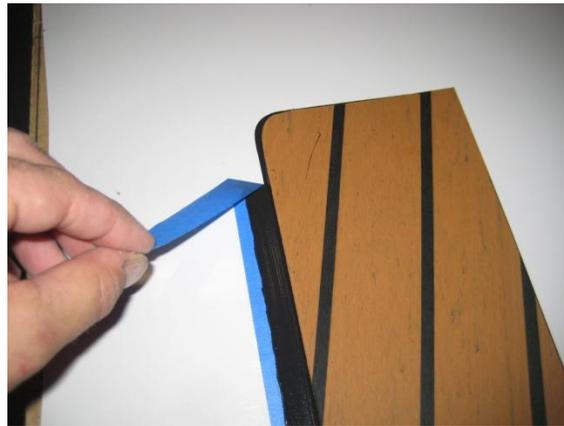


Caulk and smooth the seam as quickly and efficiently as you can. Do not worry about any adhesive that has dropped or been smeared on the teak at this point. We'll clean it up later and it is more important to keep focused on the job at hand. Remove any excess caulk as it builds up against your finger during the smoothing operation.

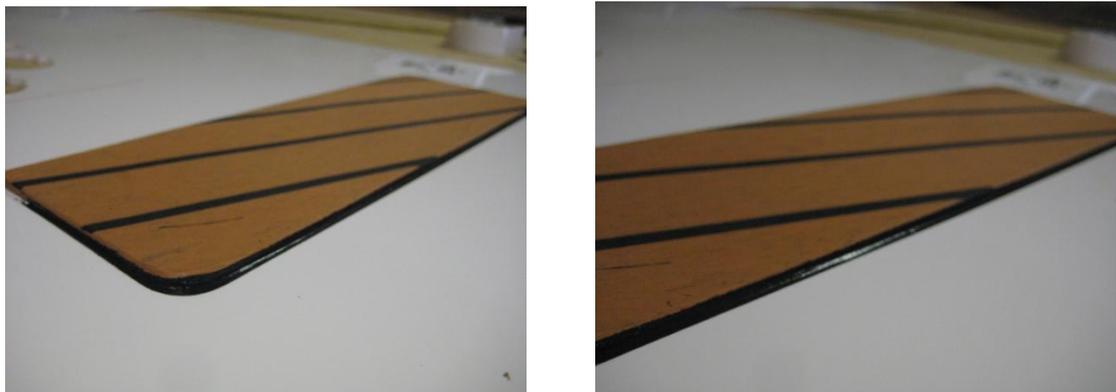
Remove the tape immediately after smoothing out the caulk. Pull the tape so that it creates a tight angle with the caulk and "cuts" a fine edge as it is removed instead of "pulling" which can create a more ragged edge.



Always start with the tape on the decking material first as it is most prone to releasing on it's own. Then do the tape on the fiberglass using the same technique. Use the angle of the tape to "cut" the fine edge.



You should be left with a beautiful, clean, fine edged caulking line. Like this;



Finishing/ Clean Up

Let your caulk set up according to the manufacturer's recommendations before walking on it or attempting to sand it.

Denatured alcohol is your best friend during this process. It can be used to safely wipe up errant caulk from fiberglass, seat vinyl and the PlasDECK itself. However, it's usually better to let the caulk set up before attempting to clean up any issues with the caulk line itself. Here are a few common problems and some quick fixes.

Errant lines on the decking edge- This can be from tape that wasn't firmly attached or simply a wavy taping job or even a finger/ foot that steps in the caulk line before it cures. Let the caulk cure overnight. Use a piece of 40 grit sandpaper to sand right along the roundover of the edge of the material. The sandpaper will remove the excess caulk and cut a nice straight line in the caulk..

Errant lines of the fiberglass side- This usually from the tape not being firmly attached or simply a wavy tape job, but is also a great way to even up a reveal once the caulk is down. Let the caulk cure overnight. Using the sharp edge of a plastic scraper/putty knife cut a straight line into the caulk and scrape away the excess. We use our thumbnail, it works great!

Blobs of caulk dropped on the PlasDECK- Do not try and wipe it up, you'll only make it worse. Let it cure overnight and pick it off the next morning.

**If you have any questions or concerns do not
hesitate to call us, even on nights or weekends.**

(888) 225-1074