**Backbone Campaign’s Activist Guide**

**to Giant Freeway Overpass Banning**

*The People’s Billboard*

---

**Tips for Procuring Materials & Painting Your Own Stock of Typar**

**Typar® House Wrap**

Typar is a vapor barrier used in construction that we’ve found to be the ideal reusable plastic material for the letters and numbers we affix to deer fencing.

**We strongly prefer Typar over Tyvek** for the material we create the letters out of because Typar has a grey fabric-like side onto which the paint adheres much better and won’t flake off over time.

Typar can be found in a couple different sizes. Most folks will prefer to get the 4.5 ft/200ft over the 9 foot wide sizes. (About $160 for the roll)

You can purchase it from [Home Depot](http://www.typar.com/where-to-buy/) and have it shipped to you or your local store or get it from [DIY Home Center on eBay](http://www.typar.com/where-to-buy/), or check out Typar’s website for your area: [http://www.typar.com/where-to-buy/](http://www.typar.com/where-to-buy/).

Most folks will probably never use up the full amount of that 200’ roll, which is a great reason to just get the banner toolkit through Backbone Campaign.

You might also check with building contractors who sometimes will give you leftover pieces. 20–30 feet will suffice for making about 60 11x17 letters.

**Paint for the orange Letters**

We paint the Typar material (*prior to cutting out the letters*) with two coats of paint.

A few days before cutting the letters, paint the Typar, allow to dry completely between each coat, and afterwards. In humid conditions, it may take several days to dry thoroughly enough to cut the letters. **DO NOT** try to paint the letters after cutting them—it’s messy and a waste of paint. (We know, we tried!)
Priming the material:
We always paint it first with a white primer like Kilz. We’ve found it’s best to use a thicker and slightly better primer than Kilz if one is available. The fabric tends to absorb the paint and when using a thin primer like Kilz the materials is a little more grey upon drying than the thicker primers. By priming it first, you don’t have to use as much of the orange because the grey fabric side absorbs more of the white first, and most importantly it helps the orange “pop” and appear brighter.

Painting Orange The Typar:
Then, we add the next coat of orange paint. This should be about as obnoxiously orange as possible, like road signs. We standardized our color once we found the perfect one so our letters look more uniform.

Procuring the Obnoxious Orange Paint:
Ace Hardware, (formula below) here on Vashon, has a formula they use that is pretty close to True Value’s “Tangerine Peel” (paint code # 09B7), which we have also used. If you can get your paint from either Ace Hardware or True Value, the formula or paint code should work well. If you get your paint elsewhere, we could probably send you a paint flake to have it matched. We use an exterior acrylic latex flat (not satin or eggshell).

At Ace Hardware if they use Clark and Kensington paints; this formula should work great for 1 gallon of Clark and Kensington paint and primer in one. Our paint can had this title on it: Premium Exterior Flat Enamel 100% Acrylic Latex Enamel (Neutral Tint Base):

Axxn 9 ounces 307 shots
LX 1 once 6 shots
OO 1 once 382 shots
RR 1 once 362 shots

Deer Fencing
Generally we make our overpass banners about 18–30’ in length.

If you don’t get your banner toolkit through Backbone we recommend purchasing your Deer Fence through www.deerbusters.com which runs about $129 for 7.5’ x 100’. They typically offer free shipping for purchases over $99.

We prefer deerbusters inexpensive Heavy Duty C Flex fencing. It is very durable, much more so than other lighter-weight plastic fencing, holds its shape and doesn’t droop as much.) You may be able to find the same heavy duty c flex fencing at garden or hardware stores but it will likely be for the same or greater cost and they are more likely to carry lightweight plastic fencing designed to keep birds out.

Making Letter and Number Templates

Letter and number templates (Additional patterns for 16” characters may be found at: www.backbonecampaign.org/banner_letters_templates)
We suggest printing letter templates on heavy-duty card 11 x17 stock without margins. For a more durable template, you could also trace them onto and cut them out of recycled political yard signs, but that takes a lot of time. **Storing the templates in something sturdy that doesn't allow them to get wrinkled or torn is key.**

You can also use 8½”x11” paper to create 10” high letters for street level or smaller personal banners. For freeway bannering, and most situations we recommend using the 16” high letters with the font “impact.” That size and scale is especially important for freeway overpasses. We occasionally make banners with larger lettering but then they are harder to repurpose for a different message, and they can be more challenging to use in windy situations.

Warning: Using a copy center to print 11x17 cardstock can get expensive.

**Poles for deer fence banners:**

**Wooster Extension Poles** 8-16 ft poles are great because they have a Hexagonal aluminum inner pole that is more durable and adjusts in 6 inch increments with a button versus a twist lock.

**Pro-Lock Extension Poles** 23 foot extension pole by Mr. Longarm is longer which is better for mobilizing banners above folks heads or as a backdrop for a rally/speakers. They have 3 sections. There are a couple potential drawbacks: the twist lock can be a little challenging if over tightened, the aluminum poles if abused or used in really challenging conditions could be more likely bend than would the hexagonal shape of the Wooster poles, and we have had some fail over the years where the red threaded part broke (we were able to secure it by trimming the length of black fastener and securing the red threaded part with a hose clamp and it's worked fine since).

Either pole costs approximately $36-43 each.

**Non Adjustable Plastic Poles:** If you want to go super low budget you can also use black ABS or white PVC poles around 2 inches in diameter or so (if going with smaller diameter PVC check that it doesn’t bend too much). At some hardware stores you can get these in lengths longer than 10 ft and cut to preferred length. If you get a standard length of 10 feet and don’t drill into it you can probably return it. They generally charge you by the foot. (10 feet is probably under $10). The drawback is that it’s non adjustable, you can’t get your message as high and transporting it may be more challenging.

**Bamboo:**
( + ) It’s renewable and plentiful in the Northwest. You can get all different sizes. Lightweight and strong if dried properly.
( - ) Not Adjustable. Not as durable. Ideally have to wait after harvesting for it to dry out.

**Small diameter PVC for Smaller Personal Banners:**
( + ) Using 1-inch and 1 and ¼ -inch PVC poles, you can create an adjustable extension
pole. They nest well into each other. They are cheap compared to other extension poles.
( - ) One drawback is that they may not be quite as sturdy if using long segments.

Creating Rubber Ties Tutorial:
Rubber ties are incredibly useful and can be reused for many purposes!!

Procuring rubber ties - You can get old bicycle tires at your local bike shop, they regularly amass a bunch of tubes no longer good for riding on. Take them home and turn them into strips.

Cutting the Ties-
- Put the tires inflation stem into a vise, or fully secure that stem in some way like with a vice clamp, such that it stays where you put it.
- Now cut the tire tube in half at the stem so you no longer have a loop. Instead you now have a long strip of rubber tube secured at one end. (Avoid using tires that have a goopy sealant for holes it may have endured).
- Utilize a sharp utility knife.
- While holding the inner tube, pull on it to stretch the rubber against the securement.
- Insert the knife through the tube that your pulling on.
- Carefully walk backwards away from the secured stem backwards so the inner tube pulls through your hand as you slice it with the utility knife.
- Get to the end of the tube and let it go.

Do this action in a smooth manner so that you don’t get jagged cuts or other nicks in the rubber which could lead to the rubber tie prematurely failing in the future.

- There is likely some powder that the manufacturer puts in the tube. When you release the rubber it may make a puff in the air. We like to think of it as baby powder, though we’re not sure why it’s there or what it is. We recommend you avoid breathing in the powder.
- Now you have two strips of rubber, still attached to the vise or your clamp.
- If this is a mountain bike tube then you can go back to the tube and cut it two more times. This results in 4 strips of rubber, still attached to that vise (or clamp)
- If, the original tube was for road bikes then the original cut, which created two strips of rubber is ready to cut down into pieces of appropriate size.
- You decide now what the appropriate length is that you’d like the strands of rubber to be. If we’re tying a bunch of poles together, we like a piece of rubber tie about 18 to 20 inches long. If we’re tying a deer fence banner to a pole, we like a 12 to 14 inch piece of rubber tie.

One final rubber tie tip: when using the rubber ties utilize a bow or slip knot to facilitate easier removal at the end of your action.

Thanks to Peter Weston for sharing his insights for the rubber tie tutorial and Lisa Marcus for turning us on to this reusable and up-cycled resource!

Don’t forget to download and print off copies of the deployment & construction instructions from Backbone’s DIY Banning page (http://www.backbonecampaign.org/banners)