Tips for decorating cars for a parade

To fasten posters, streamers, or banners to a car without damaging the paint, use painter's tape, suction cups, zip ties, or magnetic sheets. Traditional tapes like duct tape or packing tape will ruin the vehicle's clear coat, so choosing the right adhesive and anchor points is critical.

Here is how to safely secure your decorations for a parade:

Safe Fasteners to Use

- **Painter's Tape (Blue or Green):** Use this as your primary adhesive. It is designed to release easily without pulling up paint or leaving a sticky residue.
- **The "Tape-on-Tape" Trick:** For heavier banners that painter's tape can't hold alone, apply a layer of painter's tape directly to the car paint first. Then, stick stronger double-sided tape or duct tape *on top* of the painter's tape. This keeps the harsh adhesive from ever touching your car.
- **Suction Cups with Hooks:** Perfect for mounting banners and streamers to the windshield, side windows, or sunroof. They hold tightly and pop off cleanly.
- **Zip Ties and Pipe Cleaners:** Use these to secure decorations to non-painted areas like front grilles, plastic roof racks, side mirrors, or door handles.
- **Magnetic Sheets:** You can buy printable or blank magnetic sheets, attach your banners to them, and slap them right onto the metal door panels.

Step-by-Step Attachment Tips

- **Wash the car first:** Dust and dirt trapped under tape or decorations can act like sandpaper and scratch the paint as the car moves.
- **Anchor to the windows:** Whenever possible, secure heavy banners by threading strings through the inside of the car. Roll down the windows, run the ribbon or twine through, and roll the windows back up to clamp them in place.
- **Twist your streamers:** If you are running crepe paper streamers along the side of the car, give them a tight twist before taping them down. This prevents them from flapping violently in the wind and ripping apart.
- **Test at speed:** Drive the car down the block at parade speed (around 5–10 mph) before the event to make sure nothing flies loose or blocks your vision.

Materials to Avoid

- **Never use duct tape, masking tape, or packing tape** directly on the paint.
- **Avoid wire or metal twists** that can scrape against the body of the car.
- **Do not block the radiator grille completely**, as this can cause the engine to overheat, even at slow parade speeds.

- **Never obscure the driver's line of sight** through the front windshield or side mirrors. This is both a safety risk and a crime (under the Motor Vehicle Act).