

Thermal Transfer Ribbon Printer Tips

Common Printer Problems

It must be the Ribbons Fault!

You've loaded the labels and ribbon in your thermal transfer printer and start to print...but wait, the barcodes have poor edge definition, there are streaks or dead spots on them, pits or voids that cause inconsistent image quality, etc. How many times have you heard – it must be the ribbons fault? Before you blame the ribbon, the problem might just be a simple printer adjustment.

Thermal Printing Trouble Shooting

If your barcodes and variable images aren't sharp and crisp, lack clean edge definition, or have an unbalanced print on them, chances are they also won't scan and be unreadable. While these problems can be frustrating, many times the printing problems you are experiencing are solved with a simple printer adjustment. Following are some common printer problems and solutions to fix them.

Loaded the labels and ribbon in my printer, but it is still not printing.

- Check to be sure the ribbon is loaded correctly (coated side in versus coated side out).

Label produces a dark/crisp print only on one side (left or right), the other side is faint or non-existent.

- Make sure your print head is aligned.
- Or, that there is no residue or label material stuck to be the print head.
- Check for cuts in your platen roller.

Why are there pits or voids on my barcode?

- Make sure your print head is clean. Use isopropyl alcohol and a lint-free cloth to wipe the printhead and platen roller clean of dust and adhesive.
- Check your print head for worn areas.

I have streaks or "dead spots" in my labels

- If the ribbon is wrinkled, check to make sure your print head and guide bar are aligned.
- Try adjusting the print head pressure and/or energy.
- Make sure your ribbon is slightly larger than your media.
- Adjust your rewind tension

Why am I getting poor edge definition, or have leading or trailing edge images that are translucent or "ghosting?"

- Printer is printing too fast, reduce the print speed.
- Print head temperature is not adjusted properly for label stock.
- Increase print head pressure.

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