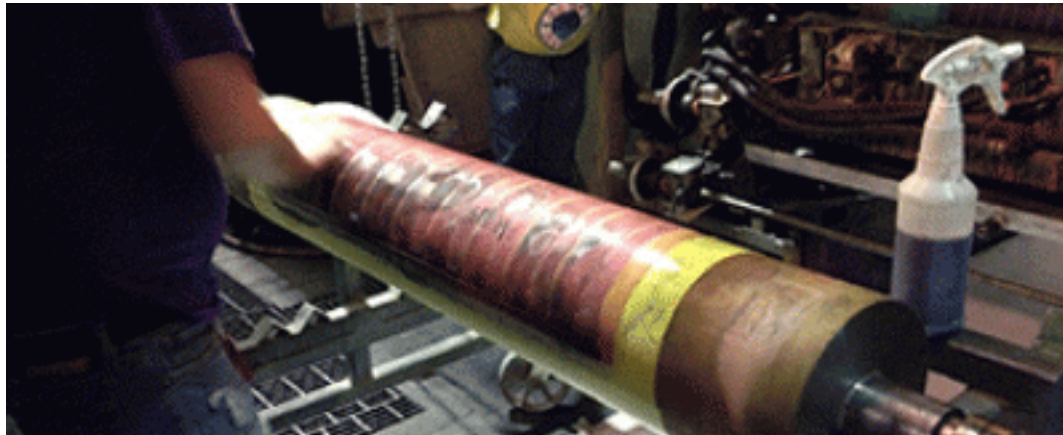


Flexo Pre-Press Technical Tips



TechTip #1

Flexo Plate Cleaning and Maintenance

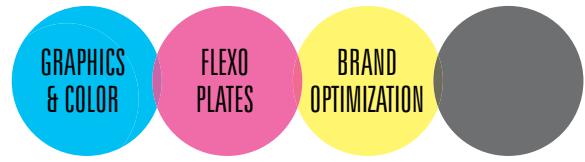
Proper plate cleaning and maintenance are two of the most important factors in extending the life of a flexo plate. Proper plate care not only prolongs optimal print quality, but also saves money by reducing press downtime along with the inconvenience associated with damaged plates.

FLEXO PLATE CLEANING

Timing is important to the effectiveness of plate cleaning. Plates should be cleaned immediately after printing, using a soft nylon horsehair bristle brush along with a compatible wash-up solution to loosen and remove dried ink deposits, and a lint-free cloth to blot up excess cleaning solvent. Because dried ink deposits become more difficult to remove, and may require harsh scrubbing, make sure ink is washed off before it dries. Firm bristle brushes are not advised, as they can snag on fine copy and cause damage to the plate.

Allowing plates to soak in the plate cleaner for more than 30 minutes is not recommended. The reason is that even acceptable cleaners can affect plates if kept in contact with the plate print surface for extended periods of time.

Among the “Do Nots” with regards to chemical use in cleaning plates > Gasoline, Kerosene, Acetone, Ketone, Toluene, Xylene, or any other “tone” or “ene” are not advised and can damage plates.



Flexo Pre-Press Technical Tips # 1

Some of the recommended flexo plate cleaning solvents and solutions include:

- Water
- Ethyl Alcohol
- Butyl Cellosolve
- Carbitol
- Diacetone Alcohol
- Isopropyl Alcohol
- Methyl Cellosolve
- n-Propyl Alcohol
- Specific Solutions or Cleaning Machines (commercially available)

FLEXO PLATE STORAGE

Ensure the cleaned plate is completely dry before storage. Storing plates whenever possible is recommended. Ideal storage for plates is in black untreated poly bag and laid flat in a drawer or on a shelf. If plates must be stacked, it is important to place foam between plates, never stacking plates directly on top of each other. If plates must be stored on sleeves or cylinders, wrap plates with Saran Wrap and black poly to prevent delaminating as well as to protect plates from overexposure to light. Plates should always be protected from UV light, white incandescent or fluorescent light, window light, and sunlight. UV filters are recommended in plate storage area.

It should be noted that plates stored on sleeves or cylinders are more susceptible to ozone attack and cracking due to the constant stress on the plate, thus it's not a good idea to store plates near areas of high ozone concentration (corona discharge units, electrical equipment, arc lamps, etc.). The temperature of the plate storage area should range between 40-85° F, and be located away from heat sources like heating vents, etc... Humidity does not usually affect plate life on solvent washed sheet polymer, and no special precautions are necessary in the storage area. In the case of water washed polymer, check with the manufacturer for specific requirements.