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Color Too Weak

Problem: Solids appear to lack density.

Cause:	Solution:
1. Improper ink/water balance	1. Adjust to proper ink/water balance
2. Improper concentration of fountain solution	2. Adjust fountain solution to proper conductivity
3. Non-uniform dampening	3. Clean brushes, flicker blades, etc; replace if necessary
4. Lack of impression	4. Adjust blanket height
5. Loss of image area	5. See PLATE WEAR
6. Improperly set form rollers	6. Adjust form rollers to proper setting

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Dot Gain on Plates

Problem: Halftones appear muddy.

Cause:

1. Plate over-exposed
2. Inadequate film-to-plate vacuum
3. Dots in film too soft; too much fringe

Solution:

1. Cut back on exposure to 4-5 steps on the UGRA scale
2. Check vacuum gauge (25-27); look for leaks
3. Check developer chemistry; recalibrate image setter

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Former Board & Pipe Roller Build-up

Problem: Accumulation of ink and lint on former board and pipe rollers.

Cause:

1. Improper ink/water balance
2. Improper concentration of fountain solution
3. Excessive ink
4. Improper maintenance, insufficient clean-up
5. Inappropriate ink for special stocks
6. Non-absorbent stock
7. Improper ink strength

Solution:

1. Adjust to proper ink/water balance
2. Check conductivity; adjust fountain solution accordingly
3. Adjust press to carry less ink
4. Clean former board & pipe rollers regularly
5. Make sure correct ink is being used; consult ink manufacturer
6. Change stock; consult paper manufacturer
7. Consult ink manufacturer to reformulate ink

NOTE: Use Teflon® tape on edge and nose of former board to prevent build-up

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Ink / Water Balance

Problem: Frequent adjustments required on press to maintain print quality.

Cause:	Solution:
1. Improper maintenance	1. Check and adjust: ink form roller settings to plate and drum; water form roller setting to plate; pickup roller to chrome roller; speed setting on water motors
2. Glazed rollers	2. De-glaze rollers
3. Excessive ink emulsification	3. Consult ink manufacturer
4. Improper concentration of fountain solution	4. Check conductivity, then adjust fountain solution accordingly
5. Ink density too high	5. Check with densitometer, then reduce ink and water to proper aim points

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Linting

Problem: Accumulation of fibers from uncoated stocks onto plates, blankets and/or ink train rollers.

Cause:	Solution:
1. Ink too tacky for stock	1. Consult ink manufacturer to adjust ink for less tack
2. Too much water reaching paper	2. Adjust to lowest possible ink/water balance
3. Improper concentration of fountain solution	3. Check fountain solution by adjusting to proper conductivity
4. Improperly packed cylinders	4. Check and repack to manufacturer specifications
5. Improper tension controls	5. Check specifications and adjust rolls
6. Excessive lint on newsprint	6. Consult paper manufacturer

NOTE: On presses with roll stands, reverse the direction of unwind

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Mileage

Problem: Too few impressions per pound of ink.

Cause:	Solution:
1. Improper ink/water balance	1. Adjust to proper ink/water balance
2. Excessive waste at start-up of run	2. Improve start-up procedures
3. Low pigmented inks	3. Consult ink manufacturer for stronger inks
4. Ink penetrates stock too quickly	4. Consult ink manufacturer for ink with more hold-out
5. Different specific gravities of ink	5. Consult ink manufacturer for specific gravity values
6. Stock too absorbent	6. If possible, change to less absorbent stock; consult paper manufacturer
7. Ink densities too high	7. Check with densitometer, then adjust to lower print densities while maintaining acceptable quality

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Misting

Problem: Excessive amount of ink being thrown from ink train rollers.

Cause:	Solution:
1. Excessive ink on rollers	1. Check with densitometer, then adjust press setting to carry less ink
2. Improperly set or worn rollers	2. Adjust rollers to proper settings; replace if necessary
3. Improper ink/water balance	3. Adjust to proper ink/water balance
4. Improper fountain solution concentration	4. Check conductivity and adjust fountain solution accordingly
5. Ink viscosity too low	5. Consult ink manufacturer to reformulate ink

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Mottle

Problem: Solid areas not of uniform density, resulting in uneven appearance.

Cause:	Solution:
1. Improper ink/water balance	1. Adjust to proper ink/water balance
2. Excessive linting on blanket	2. See PICKING/LINTING
3. Improper blanket-to-blanket packing or blanket-to-plate packing	3. Check packing with Colight or Baldwin gauge and repack to manufacturer specifications
4. Improperly set or worn form rollers	4. Adjust rollers to proper settings; replace if necessary
5. Uneven dampening distribution	5. Clean sock rollers, brushes, flicker blades, etc.; replace if necessary

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Muddy Halftones

Problem: Halftones lack sharpness in highlight areas.

Cause:	Solution:
1. Excessive ink on plate	1. Adjust to carry less ink
2. Poor materials for reproduction	2. Check and improve reproduction process
3. Improperly processed plate	3. Check for improper exposure of plates using Gray Scale (Stouffer Scale)
4. Excessive dot gain	4. Check for dot gain on press and/or plates; adjust densities; remake plates
5. Excessive linting	5. See LINTING
6. Improper form roller settings	6. Adjust setting to manufacturer specifications
7. Improper ink/water balance	7. Adjust to proper ink/water balance
8. Glazed blanket	8. De-glaze or replace blanket

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Page-to-Page Set-off

Problem: Ink from printed side of page setting off an adjacent page of finished product.

Cause:	Solution:
1. Improperly set folder nip rollers	1. Adjust nip rollers to manufacturer specifications
2. Excessive ink	2. Check with densitometer, then adjust press settings to carry less ink
3. Improper concentration of fountain solution	3. Adjust fountain solution to proper conductivity
4. Improper ink/water balance	4. Adjust to proper ink/water balance
5. Non-absorbent stock	5. Change stock, consult paper manufacturer
6. Second fold rollers too tight	6. Adjust second fold rollers to proper pressure

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Piling

Problem: Build-up of ink on printing plates.

Cause:	Solution:
1. Highly pigmented inks	1. Consult ink manufacturer to adjust ink formulation
2. Improperly set or uneven rollers	2. Check specifications and adjust rollers; replace if necessary
3. Ink too tacky	3. Consult ink manufacturer to reformulate ink with less tack
4. Improperly packed cylinders	4. Check specifications and repack cylinders
5. Blankets too tacky	5. a) Consult blanket manufacturer, b) Treat blanket or change to less tacky blanket, or c) Change blanket wash
6. Emulsification of ink	6. Use minimum amount of ink and water necessary for the particular form

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Plate Wear

Problem: Gradual loss of image area where plate has eroded.

Cause:

1. Improperly processed plates
2. Improperly set Ink and/or water form rollers
3. Excessive linting
4. Improper concentration of fountain solution
5. Improperly packed plate and blanket cylinders
6. Running plates beyond capabilities
7. Inks much too strong
8. Poorly ground ink
9. Form rollers too hard

Solution:

1. Adjust plate developing process using Gray scale (Stouffer scale)
2. Adjust settings to manufacturer specifications
3. See LINTING
4. Check conductivity and adjust fountain solution accordingly
5. Adjust to manufacturer specifications using Colight or Baldwin gauge
6. Change to higher quality plates for longer plate life
7. Reduce ink strength to improve lubrication
8. Consult ink manufacturer to rework ink
9. Replace form rollers

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Roller Stripping

Problem: Rollers do not accept ink.

Cause:	Solution:
1. Rollers contaminated by hydrophilic material	1. Clean ink rollers thoroughly and re-copperize
2. Excessive emulsification of ink on ink train	2. Adjust to proper ink/water balance
3. Improper roller setting	3. Adjust rollers to proper settings
4. Improper concentration of fountain solution	4. Check conductivity and adjust fountain solution accordingly
5. Copper worn off ink drum	5. Re-copperize ink drum, reduce dampener setting
6. Dampening system contaminated with press chemicals	6. Drain and flush dampening system; revise wash procedure

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Rub-off

Problem: Printed surface has insufficient rub resistance.

Cause:	Solution:
1. Improper ink/water balance	1. Adjust to proper ink/water balance
2. Ink density too high	2. Check with densitometer, then adjust press to carry less ink
3. Improper concentration of fountain solution	3. Check conductivity and adjust fountain solution accordingly
4. Poor maintenance — especially rollers	4. Improve maintenance
5. Non-absorbent stock	5. Consult paper manufacturer for more absorbent stock
6. Switch to low-rub inks	6. Consult ink manufacturer

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Scumming

Problem: Non-image area of lithographic plate accepts ink in random areas.

Cause:	Solution:
1. Improper process plate (Test plate by honing non-image area with pencil eraser; if scum disappears in honed area, plate is the probable cause)	1. Remake plate; adjust plate-making process
2. Improper concentration of fountain solution	2. Check conductivity, adjust fountain solution
3. Improperly set, worn or hard dampening and ink rollers	3. Adjust rollers to proper pressure; check durometer and replace if necessary
4. Ink insufficiently resistant to water (off standard)	4. Consult ink manufacturer to reformulate
5. Dampening system in poor condition	5. Adjust, clean or replace sock roller, brushes, flicker blades, etc; replace if necessary
6. Plate not fully desensitized	6. Adjust plate making process
7. Plate improperly exposed to light or heat	7. Store plates under cool, dry and dark conditions

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Show-through

Problem: Reverse side of printed page visible.

Cause:

1. Insufficient opacity in newsprint
2. Impression too heavy

Solution:

1. Change to more opaque newsprint
2. Reduce impression setting

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Spitting on Injector Rail

Problem: Excessive ink spilling over end of injector rail.

Cause:	Solution:
1. Improper ink/water balance	1. Adjust to proper ink/water balance
2. Improper rail setting	2. Reset rail (top and bottom) to manufacturer specifications
3. Improper concentration of fountain solution	3. Check conductivity and adjust fountain solution
4. Improper ink train roller settings	4. Reset rollers based on manufacturer specifications
5. Improperly zeroed page pack columns	5. Reset page pack column to zero, per manufacturer specifications
6. Improper canister pressure	6. Adjust canister to proper pressure
7. Inappropriate ink body and tack	7. Consult ink manufacturer for ink with appropriate body and tack
8. Ink film too thick	8. Reduce ink film thickness

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Strike-through

Problem: Excessive ink absorbing onto paper stock.

Cause:	Solution:
1. Stock too absorbent	1. Change to a less absorbent stock, consult paper manufacturer
2. Change in basis weight of newsprint	2. Revert to original basis weight
3. Insufficient ink hold-out	3. Consult ink manufacturer for ink with more hold-out
4. Excessive ink	4. Check with densitometer, then adjust press settings to carry less ink

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Tinting

Problem: Emulsified ink transfers to printed sheet as background tint.

Cause:	Solution:
1. Improperly processed plates (Test by honing non-image area with pencil eraser; if scum disappears in honed area, plate is probable cause)	1. Remake plate; adjust plate making process
2. Improperly stored plate	2. Do not slip sheet plate after coating, store plates away from moisture and humidity
3. Improper ink/water balance	3. Adjust to proper ink/water balance

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Toning

Problem: A severe form of tinting.

Cause:	Solution:
1. Improper concentration of fountain solution	1. Check conductivity and adjust fountain solution accordingly
2. Ink bleeds into fountain solution	2. Consult ink manufacturer for ink with nonbleeding pigment
3. Ink insufficiently resistant to water (off standard)	3. Consult ink manufacturer to reformulate
4. Improper ink/water balance	4. Adjust to proper ink/water balance
5. Improper setting of dampener or ink rollers	5. Check and adjust dampener and ink rollers to manufacturer specifications; check durometer and replace if necessary
6. Paper chemicals contaminate ink train	6. Consult paper manufacturer

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