

Q: What concerns should we have about our card stock?

A: Cards are manufactured worldwide and can be purchased from a multitude of sources. It is critical to obtain cards of acceptable quality for dye-sublimation, direct-to-card printing for these reasons:

- **Damaged Pixels:** When a printhead comes in contact with a dirty card surface, the dirt can crack the covers on the printhead pixels, as well as damage the pixels themselves. These damaged or broken pixels cannot transfer dye to card surfaces, and will leave thin white streaks across a card.
- **Assembly Methods:** Varied methods of assembling IC smart cards and proximity cards.
- **Jagged Edges:** Some manufacturers use inexpensive production methods (e.g., punching cards out with dull dies) that leave rough, jagged edges.
- **Burrs:** Burrs on card edges can snag printheads and ribbons.
(Note: This can result in defective card prints and costly printhead replacement expenses.)
- **Unclean Printing Room:** Cards produced in factories (with no quality control or clean room practices in place) are often coated in dirt and debris.
- **Dirty Card Surfaces:** Small pieces of dirt and debris on a card will appear in the print. (Note: This can make the cards appear unattractive and unprofessional.)

Q: What are High Definition Printing (HDP) Cards? What do we need to know about these types of cards?

A:

- **Low-cost and non-laminated:** HDP 100% PVC cards are low-cost, non-laminated cards with a distinctive matte finish.
- **Moderate Durability:** HDP Cards provide moderate durability and are ideal for cost-sensitive applications.
- **Usage:** HDP Cards are intended for use only with FARGO's HDP Card Printer/Encoders.
- **Non-usage:** HDP Cards have a matte surface, which is not suitable for direct-to-card printing
- **Card Stock:** Video-grade PVC card stock (UltraCard and UltraCard III cards) with polished, scratch- and debris-reduced surfaces are also fully acceptable for High Definition Printing. (Note: A perfect print image is virtually guaranteed by using a card that has been optically scanned to eliminate surface imperfections in conjunction with HDP Film.)

Q: What is the difference between high-coercivity and low-coercivity magnetic stripe cards?

A: Magnetic stripes are commonly found on credit cards, access level cards and other cards used in all kinds of applications. (Note: This well-established technology is used in industries with low- to medium-data storage requirements.)

- **Black or Brown Stripes:** Magnetic stripe cards are simply PVC cards with either black or brown stripes on them (made up of magnetic particles of resin). Brown stripes are generally low-coercivity (LoCo), while black stripes are high-coercivity (HiCo).

- Encoding Levels: FARGO LoCo cards encode at a level of 300 Oe (oersteds) while HiCo cards encode at 2750 Oe.
- Coercivity: Coercivity is the ability of the magnetic stripe to resist demagnetization. (Note: Higher coercivity means that it is harder to encode and erase information from the stripe; thus it provides more robust data.)
- Magnetic Head: Magnetic stripe cards can be printed and encoded in a card printer/encoder (equipped with a magnetic head).
- (Note: The FARGO HDP, DTC™, and Pro-L Card Printer/Encoders can be used to both print and encode magnetic stripe cards.)

Q: What card sizes and finishes do FARGO Card Printers accommodate?

A:

- Standard Card Size: The standard credit card size is called CR-80. CR-80 has dimensions of 3.375" x 2.125" (85.6mm x 54mm) and a thickness of 30 mil (.030"/.76mm).
- Oversized Cards: Oversized cards are called CR-90 and CR-100. They are available from FARGO and are accepted in FARGO Card Personalization Systems. CR-90 has dimensions of 3.63" x 2.37" (92mm x 60mm). CR-100 has dimensions of 3.88" x 2.63" (98.5mm x 67mm). (Note: FARGO HDP, DTC700 and Pro-L Card Printer/Encoders can be used to print oversized cards; HDP is required for printing edge-to-edge on oversized cards.)
- Smaller Card Size: The CR-79 UltraCard stock offers medium card durability with a glossy PVC laminate on top and bottom. CR-79 has a 10 mil/.25mm thickness with a 10 mil/.25mm adhesive backing (total thickness is 20 mil/.5mm). CR-79 has dimensions of 3.313"L x 2.063"W / 84.14mmL x 52.39mmW. (Note: This card is slightly smaller than the CR-80 size. It is designed mainly for adhesion to proximity cards, fitting just inside the edge of the cards for ease of placement.)
- Glossy and Matte Finish Cards: FARGO provides both glossy UltraCards™ for direct-to-card printers and matte finish HDP Cards for High Definition Printing.

Q: What card types should we use in our Card Printers?

A: Identiphoto provides two card types for use in traditional direct-to-card printing, as described below: (Note: The optimal surface texture for printing is smooth and glossy, as well as dirt- and debris-free.)

- Graphic quality PVC cards have a clear, glossy PVC laminate on the top and bottom of the white PVC cards. These cards provide moderate durability and are optically inspected to provide clean, scratch-free surfaces for optimum print quality and extended printhead life.
- Graphic quality PVC/polyester cards provide maximum durability and print quality. These cards have the same clear PVC laminate on the top and bottom as the graphic quality, but have a polyester core that prevents warping during lamination. (Note: UltraCard III cards are required when using PolyGuard™ or Thermal Transfer Overlaminates.)

Each is offered in our "Standard" and "Fargo" brands.

Q: How often should I clean my printer?

A: We recommend cleaning the printer every time you change a ribbon. Check your manual maintenance section for cleaning procedures.

Q: Cards aren't feeding into printer (Card Out /Card Not Fed error)

A: This could vary depending on the printer you have.

1. First verify that the card feed roller is turning. Remove cards from hopper and send a print job down to the printer. When the printer errors out, hold your hand on the card feed roller and press the resume button on the LCD screen. This will cause printer to try and feed a card again. Make sure you feel the roller turning. (If roller isn't turning printer needs to be serviced. Call your salesperson at 800-860-9111 to set up an RMA to have your printer looked at.)
2. For DTC 500 series printers, make sure that the card thickness lever is adjusted correctly.
3. Clean the card feed roller (roller inside card input hopper). See manual for cleaning procedures.

Q: DTC400 - Miscue error

A: Click Windows Start, locate Printers & Faxes and right click the printer default named DTC400 Card Printer. On the Calibration tab, click sensors and follow the instructions for calibrating the ribbon sensor.

Q: How do we install firmware in our FARGO Card Printer? Did we install the most current version of firmware?

A:

1. Go to www.fargosupport.com
2. Select the specific card printer from the dropdown menu. You will install your firmware on this printer. (Note: The search results include the operating system, the version number, and the date of release.)
3. Read the Firmware Update Guide. (If applicable; it will be displayed with the search results.)
4. Install your firmware by following the directions of Firmware Updates in the User's Guide or Service Manual provided for your card printer.

Q: Cards have little specks on them and the print is missing.

A: Make sure you clean all the rollers in your printer especially the cleaning rollers. The cleaning rollers remove any debris that may be left from the manufacturing process. Having this type of bad print may occur periodically, which is normal for this type of printing. If problem persists and you have cleaned the printer, try a different package of cards. It may be a bad batch of cards.

Q: I have 1 or more white lines running the length of my cards

A: You have a blown pixel(s) in your print head. This is usually caused by improper maintenance on the printer. Call your salesperson to order a new print head. (This is a part that can be replaced by the customer)

Q: When should I change the settings available from my printer control panel?

A: It is recommended that you only change the printer settings (default factory settings) under the guidance of a trained technician. These settings are unique to each printer and represent the optimum setting for that specific machine.

Q: What warranties are available for Printheads?

A: Check your warranty for details.

- DTC and Persona: One (1) year warranty/unlimited pass on Printheads. (Note: These warranties are subject to warranty evaluation.)
- HDP: Lifetime warranty with unlimited passes. (Note: These warranties are subject to warranty evaluation.)

Q: Ribbon keeps breaking

A: This could be a number of issues depending on how and where ribbon is breaking.

- If breaking between the clear and yellow panel, you need to adjust the image placement setting on your printer.
 - DTC series printer - increase the TOF setting. See LCD MENU section in your online users guide.
 - Persona C11 & C16 printers - increase the image placement setting. This is done through the drivers properties by clicking on the calibrate tab and clicking settings
 - 4250 printers - increase the image placement setting. See manual for access settings.
 - Pro, Pro-L, Cheetah, Cheetah II - this setting is adjusted on the motherboard. This requires that the cover be removed from the printer. Call us if you'd like instructions on making this adjustment yourself.
- If breaking, with noise and/or card jams
 - DTC 500 series - make sure the dowel pins on the print head frame are flush to the inside. Sometimes these get pushed in allowing the print head to be lowered too close to the card path.

Q: Do you have card-handling tips for direct-to-card printer/encoders?

A:

- Contamination: Always handle blank cards with care to prevent contamination from dust, dirt, lint, oils and fingerprints. This contamination can result in voids, lines and/or dull areas on the printed cards. This contamination can greatly reduce the printhead life of direct-to-card printers.
- Preprinted Cards: Handle all preprinted cards from the edge (like you would handle a photograph).
- Card Storage: Always store the cards in their original packaging or in a dust-free environment.
- Soiled Cards: If cards are dropped or soiled, do not attempt to use them. Instead, replace the soiled cards with clean, fresh cards.
- Card Maintenance: You should continually maintain clean cards at your site. (Note: This maintenance can result in an extended printhead lifespan, as well as an increased consistency of high-quality printed images.)

Q: What are card quality issues for direct-to-card printing?

A: There is a considerable variability in cards, based on:

- Surface Textures: Refers to different surface textures and different sources of raw materials.
- Assembly Methods: Refers to varied methods of assembling IC smart cards and proximity cards.