

insignia's guide to:

# Maximising the life of your label printer



Label printers have become an integral part of many business processes, identifying products, pallets, documents and even people. Ensuring the right label is printed in the right place, at the right time is critical.

In today's competitive business environment, company resources are being pushed to their limits in an attempt to maximise efficiency and

productivity; and label printers too, are pushed to generate more printed labels over increased operating hours with the goal of multiplying production volumes while cutting costs and minimising downtime.

This guide outlines simple processes to maximise both uptime and the service life of your Datamax-O'Neil label printer.



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# GETTING THE BEST OUT OF YOUR PRINTER

The first, crucial step is choosing the right printer model for the job, based on expected printing volumes and the work environment.

Then, correct printer use, as well as the day-to-day cleaning and maintenance procedures will keep the print crisp and clean and the printer running well.

Finally, just like a car, label printers need to be serviced regularly by an authorised technician to operate efficiently.

*“Just like a car, label printers need to be serviced regularly to operate efficiently”*

1

Choose the right printer for the job

2

Ensure correct use, day-to-day cleaning and maintenance

3

Follow recommended service schedule

Recommended Printer Model by Use.

Datamax-O'Neil Printer Model	Market Suitability	Volume, labels per day
E-Class Mark III	Economy	0 - 500
M-Class Mark II	Mid-Industrial	Up to 3000
I-Class Mark II	Industrial	Up to 7000
H-Class	High-Industrial	More than 7000

## THE HIDDEN COSTS OF PRINTER FAILURE

In an effort to reduce the total cost of ownership of label printers, regular maintenance and servicing can be regarded as an **'optional extra'**, or unnecessary expense to the production budget. Although this may provide short-term cost savings, **this strategy will cost more long-term.**

Beyond user frustration, printer failure has a significant negative impact on many aspects of an organisation - **lost productivity, increased cost of repairs, lost opportunities, and even impacting a business's reputation.**

This becomes more obvious when the value of the label is considered within the process or the product's supply chain, e.g. the value of a rejected shipment if the pallet's barcode label doesn't scan or the customer dissatisfaction and cost of goods lost in transit if delivery information is illegible.

Following scheduled maintenance plans will help ensure dependability and output. It is also worth noting that since the cost of label printers has dramatically reduced over the last 3-5 years, upgrading or replacing the printer can be surprisingly cost effective when compared to ongoing repair costs.

# RECOMMENDED DAY TO DAY CLEANING & MAINTENANCE

The table below outlines the recommended maintenance for various printer parts

Area	Method	Interval
Printhead	Turn off the printer before cleaning the printhead. Use solvent* on a cotton swab to clean the printhead from end to end	After every roll of media
Platen Roller	Turn off the power. Rotate the platen roller and clean it thoroughly with solvent* and a cotton swab	After every roll of media
Peel-Off Roller	Rotate the peel-off roller and clean it thoroughly with solvent* and a cotton swab	After every roll of media
Media Path	Solvent*	After every roll of media
Peel/Tear Bar	Solvent*	As required
Media Sensor	Air blow	Monthly
Exterior	Mild detergent or desktop cleaner	As required
Interior	Brush or vacuum cleaner	As required

*\*It is recommended that a solvent containing isopropyl alcohol is used, such as insignia's Kimberly-Clark Isowipes (Item 2900237).*

## SYMPTOMS AND CAUSES OF PRINTER FAILURE

If print quality on the label declines, the typical cause is debris build-up on the printhead. Symptoms to look for include **non-compliant barcodes, print drop-outs and streaks**. When the build-up is not removed it can lead to element failure, which greatly reduces the service life of the printhead.

The following factors can result in faded printing, ribbon wrinkling, and ribbon and label tracking issues, while also **shortening the life of the printhead and platen roller**.

Incorrect media width adjustment: May produce an image that fades across the label, as well as ribbon wrinkling, label tracking, and platen roller and print-head wear.

Incorrect printhead pressure adjustment: Excessive pressure can reduce the service life of the printhead and platen roller, while unequal pressure may cause ribbon and label tracking problems.

Large increases in the 'Darkness Adjustment' can also shorten printhead life.

Adjustments to these printer settings are best done by an authorised service technician, to protect the life of your label printer and printhead.

# REPAIR VS REPLACE

While recognised for their robust construction and reliability, eventually there is a point where the usable life of the label printer comes to an end. The effective lifespan of a thermal printer will depend largely on factors including the type and quantity of images being printed, media used, and the heat settings employed.

Understanding when the right time to 'pull the plug' is different for each organisation. Analysis based on the cost of increased downtime, lowered productivity and, of course, the cost of on-going repairs, should all be taken into account.

The table below details the cost of components commonly replaced and compares them to the price of a new printer.

REPAIR VS REPLACE COST COMPARISON

	Printhead (200 dpi)	Printhead (300 dpi)	Platen Roller	Power supply unit	New Printer
<b>E-Class</b>	\$259.74	\$279.42	\$52.51	\$211.45	From \$415.22, E-Class (Mark III)
<b>M-Class</b>	\$570.39	\$698.09	\$87.98	\$780.47	From \$1365.53, M-Class (Mark II)
<b>I-Class</b>	\$576.77	\$704.47	\$96.51	\$848.57	From \$1651.61, I-Class (Mark II)
<b>H-Class</b>	\$576.77	\$998.20	\$79.47	\$865.59	From \$3057.28, H-Class

*\*All prices shown for 4 inch models, prices correct as of June 2015.*

## CONCLUSION

Whether it is identifying your products, pallets or documents, label printers are a vital part of many different business processes.

Effective monitoring of the label printer's performance and an understanding of repair and/or changeover costs can assist with proactive planning on the service life of the printer, which is always preferable to reactive decision-making.



*insignia is certified to service your  
Datamax-O'Neil Label Printer*

# ABOUT INSIGNIA

We know how important your business is to you and how different it is from the next. This is why we work directly and collaboratively with you to understand your situation and needs, so we can create thermal label solutions tailored to add genuine value to your operations, and help build your market competitiveness.

Since 1967 we have been providing identification solutions to Australian industry. Our family-owned values, our people, our products and our services are the reasons we've become the nation's leading manufacturer of labels and tags, and distributor of top-tier thermal printing, marking and coding brands, including Datamax-O'Neil, Zebra, Bixelon, Intermec, Carl Valentin, and Domino.

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