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COMPUTER & PRINTER SUPPORT



## Laser Printer Symptoms and Common Causes

Every printer model is different and can have different symptoms. The following describes some of these symptoms and the likely source of the problem.

### Print Quality

- **Fuzzy Print** – letters that are not sharp or fuzzy are normally caused by damp paper. Try printing on freshly unwrapped paper
- **Faint White Lines** – a faint white line where the print is faint or absent. Clean the transfer corotron with a corona wire. Usually not found on newer or HP devices.
- **Sharp White Lines** - a white line from top to bottom of the print. Generally caused by a toner block in the doctor blade of the toner cartridge. Change the cartridge.
- **Variable Print Density (horizontally)** – the degree of black varies across the page.
  - Low toner in the cartridge; remove and shake cartridge to redistribute toner.
  - Printer may not be level; move to level spot.
  - Printer is near a strong light source; move to less lit spot.
- **Variable Print Density (vertical)** – sometimes called “banding”, the developer roller may be dirty. Clean connections.
- **Grey Print** – there are two likely causes, the density setting needs adjustment, or the OPC drum is wearing. Replace the cartridge.
- **Grey Background** – black area of print appears grey. Too much toner is being applied. Reduce the density setting.
- **White Print** – occurs when the transfer corotron is not connected or broken. Connect or replace transfer corotron.
- **Regularly Spaced Spots (large interval)** – 3 inch spaced spots. A hole or scratch is on the OPC drum. Replace print cartridge.
- **Regular Spaced Spots (small interval)** – less than 3 inch spots can be caused by toner on the fuser. Replace fuser cleaning pad, clean fuser, or replace fuser.
- **Random Spots** – normally caused by dirt or toner spill in device. Clean the printer.

- **Residual Images** – the image faintly repeats further down the page. Caused by print density set too high or the OPC drum is wearing. Replace cartridge.
- **Toner Smears When Rubbed** – most likely the toner has not been fused to the paper properly. Check and replace the fuser. This can also occur when sending correspondence through the postal mailing machines. The heavy press can fuse toner to opposite touching sides of paper. There is no known remedy for this, called postal offset by HP.

## Mechanical Symptoms

- **Miss Feeds** – printer fails to feed paper from tray.
  - Paper media is not supported by printer; the paper is too heavy, too light, or too smooth. Get right media.
  - Paper is sticking together. Remove paper and fan to reduce curling and sticking.
  - Repeated miss feeds can be caused by weak springs in the paper tray. Load more paper to compress the stack. Change the springs or replace the paper tray.
  - Repeated miss feeds can also be caused by worn feed rollers. Replace the feed rollers.
- **Paper Jams** – occurs when paper does not pass through the printer. Caused by wrong paper, damp paper, or for no apparent reason, i.e.: the printer is on the same circuit as a refrigerator or microwave, and when printing, the other appliance is activated causing a slight drop in power to the printer, which will then jam. Small fragments of paper in the paper path of the printer will also cause jamming. Clean printer.
- **Skewed Prints** – the image on the paper is skewed and not aligned on the page. Likely caused by improper paper loading. Remove paper from tray, fan the edges, and reload paper in tray ensuring that the paper is inserted below the small catches which hold the paper.
- **Creased Prints** – caused by damp paper, paper jam, skewed print or miss feed. Review options above for each possible cause.

## Image Corruption

- **Image is not the image sent to the printer** - usually an error in the commands sent by the computer. Call desktop support.
- **Garbled Data** – normally caused by a communications error occurring when a command is sent to the printer. Check that the printer cable is firmly seated, reset the printer and reprint job. If still garbled, ensure the communication settings on the printer and computer are matched. Print a configuration page, if still garbled, the printer may have a faulty controller.

- **Lost characters** – usually a communication error; follow the actions in Garbled Data above.
- **Wrong Font** – caused by communications error, a software error, or a missing font. Call desktop support.
- **Split Graphic Image** – when the image is split and covers two pages it is because part of the memory on the printer failed or there is insufficient memory to print complex graphic jobs. Install more memory in printer an error.
- **Split Text** - rarely caused by the printer but can occur when there is insufficient memory to print a very large number of characters.
- **Other splits** – signaled by a horizontal gap in the image splitting the characters and graphics; caused by a faulty print controller or faulty memory in the controller.

**Warnings:**

- ✓ OPC drums are light sensitive. Do not expose the drum to too much light.
- ✓ Fusers are very hot, before cleaning or examining them. Turn the printer off and allow a 15 minute cool down.
- ✓ Laser printers contain high voltage components. Always power off before any maintenance procedure.



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