

Printer Maintenance

Sometimes a printer will go for hundreds of prints with no problems only to all of a sudden begin smearing and misprinting. Have you ever been faced with poor print quality and smudges? Have you ever seen white lines running through your text like a Venetian blind? It's likely that your printer needs to be cleaned. Relax - it's not as difficult as it sounds. Cleaning printers does not involve rags, cotton swabs, and cleaning solutions. Instead, you need to run a software program that controls the printer.

While the exact instructions may vary from printer to printer, here are some instructions that may lead you to your printer's cleaning utility.

1. Click the Start Button
2. Click the Control Panel (or go directly to Printers and Faxes)
3. Click Printers
4. Right click on your printer and choose Properties
5. Look for a Tab labeled Cleaning, Utility, Maintenance, or something similar and click on it.

This will print out a test page and ask you to confirm that it was correctly printed. If not, repeat the process. If it fails to work again, you may need to replace your printer ink cartridge

You don't need to clean your printer often - only if you notice a problem. Printers automatically clean the print heads when they start up, or sometimes even in the middle of a print.

Aligning the Cartridge

Cartridge alignment settings are usually on the same screen as the cleaning utilities. You should align the cartridge anytime you change ink cartridges. The printer prints a sample sheet of vertical and horizontal lines, and you must tell the computer which looks the best. On some computers you type in the number of the set of lines that looks best, on other computers you click a button next to the matching number.

Shut Down Properly

It is important to shut down your inkjet printer using the power button on the printer. **DO NOT SHUT IT OFF AT THE POWER STRIP. When the printer is powered down correctly, the cartridges rest against a rubber head to prevent them from drying.** If the computer is turned off by the power strip, the heads are not protected from the air and ink dries in the nozzles more quickly. You know what it's like when you have a spray can that's partly clogged - the spray comes out in rough spurts instead of a smooth spray. The same thing happens with your printer.

FAQS

Q. Why does my printer jam?

There are three primary causes of printer jams:

- There could be some small pieces of paper stuck in the paper path. To fix this, remove the paper pieces. If you are unable to remove all the paper pieces, please call fill out a work order and myself or Ross will take a look at it.
- The rollers may be worn. The rollers are designed to be a bit tacky, but they may pick up dust from the paper, causing them to slip. Cleaning the rollers with alcohol will remove the dust.
- The paper may be sticking together. Dampness and static buildup can cause this to happen. Keep your paper stored in a dry location. To eliminate static buildup, remove the paper from the printer, "fan" it, then reload the paper try.

Other physical problems with the printer can also cause jamming.

Q. I installed a new ink cartridge in my inkjet printer several months ago, but have not used it very much. It is now acting like the cartridge needs to be replaced. Why?

When an ink cartridge is exposed to the air for an extended period of time without being used, the ink starts to dry in the nozzle of the cartridge. If this doesn't fix it, you'll need to replace the cartridge.

Q. When I print to my inkjet printer, there is a line that runs across my paper. What causes this?

This occurs when the printhead or something on the printhead is too close to the paper. Keep in mind that the ink is still wet whenever the paper comes out of the printer, so if anything rubs against the paper in the process of printing, the ink will smear or look like a line across the paper. To correct this, check the thickness of the paper. If it is too thick, the head will rub on the paper causing the problem. Some printers have an adjustment for the head. Try backing this adjustment back away from the paper. You may also need to use a lighter weight paper.

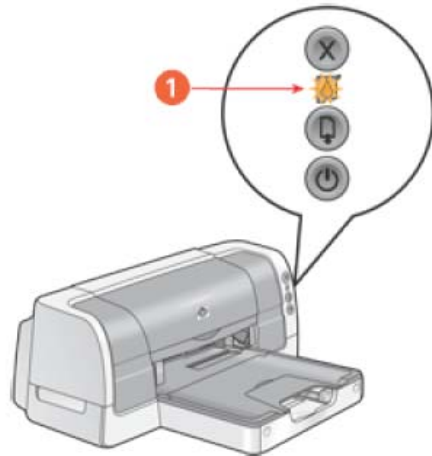
Ink may also build up on the bottom of the head, creating a bump on the head. This bump may rub on the paper and cause the lines. This may be fixed by cleaning the printhead. It will also need to be cleaned under the carriage. Please fill out a work order if you feel that the printhead needs to be cleaned.

Example: Deskjet 6122

checking the print cartridge status

understanding the print cartridge status light

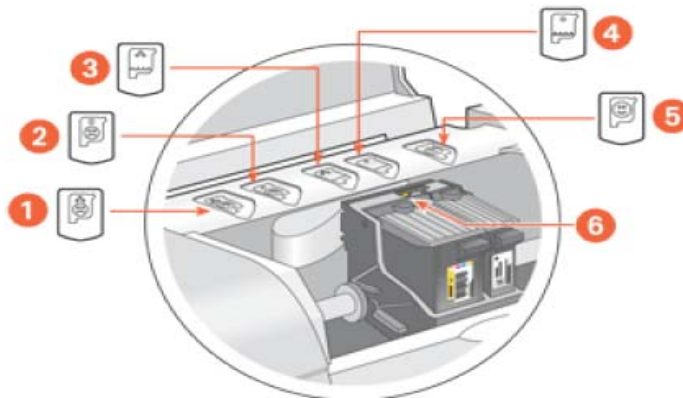
The Print Cartridge Status light flashes when one or both of the print cartridges are low on ink, improperly installed, missing, or malfunctioning. This light also flashes if the wrong print cartridge type is used.



1. print cartridge status light

checking the print cartridge status

Open the printer's top cover. The arrow on the top of the print cartridge cradle points to one of five Print Cartridge Status icons revealing the status of the print cartridge.



1. tri-color cartridge problem icon 2. black cartridge problem icon 3. tri-color cartridge low-ink icon 4. black cartridge low-ink icon 5. cartridges OK icon 6. indicator arrow