



DTG helpdesk



Each month, leading manufacturers and DTG print shop owners share their know-how in our DTG advice column. This month, Angelo Schiestl, managing director of Aeonon, gives an overview of the basic maintenance cycle for all DTG printers

You've bought your new digital textile printer and had it properly installed; now production begins. This is a big investment, so you'll want to have this machine for quite some time, and for it to be delivering the same great results years later as it was on day one. It doesn't matter which company you bought the machine from, it has to be operated correctly and, just as importantly, carefully maintained.

Thankfully, maintaining a DTG printer is no challenge at all. Nearly all the steps can be carried out easily by the operator, and carrying them out as part of your working routine will save you from

production delays, problems and, hence, costs. The sooner you start including these maintenance steps in your working routine, the longer your printer will last.

To prove how quick and simple maintenance can be, I've summarised the cycle into easy-to-understand steps. Below, you will find all the tasks that need to be carried out. Some are required on a daily basis, while others only need to be done every week or month. It may sound like there is a lot to do and that it will take up too much of your valuable time, but on the contrary, these tasks are all crucial to successful production and will save you both time and headaches in the long run.

Please bear in mind that this is an overview of the DTG printer maintenance schedule: not all machines are constructed the same, so the specific cleaning and maintenance steps may vary slightly from model to model.

The daily routine

It may seem a lot, but you'll get into the swing of the daily routine in no time at all. First of all, you need to check the power and air supply. Then inspect the capping station to confirm that it is sufficiently wet. Next, look at the ink levels and see if everything is okay or if you need to change any of the cartridges. Then check the cleaning tank – refill if necessary and give the rest of the cleaning fluids a look-see. Is there white ink in stock? Do you have enough pretreatment left? And don't forget to agitate the cartridges.

Next, check whether the humidity and temperature of the printer's surrounding environment is stable enough to start printing. Then, have a look at the most sensitive part of your machine: the print heads. They require special care. We recommend wiping the print heads before starting production – don't forget

production – don't forget to adjust the back pressure! – then, every hour when in non-stop production and at the end of the working day. Last, but not least, you should print a nozzle test to verify the condition of every print head. You can then start printing.

Two simple steps per week

Once a week, after performing the daily routine, be sure to clean the wiper blades, and clean the capping station area. There is no special day for undertaking these two steps each week, although it can be useful to carry out these tasks every Friday, as production is likely to be paused during the weekend, the printer won't be used for at least two days. Cleaning the blades and the capping station before the weekend will save you from persistent dried stains on a Monday.

A monthly task

In addition to your daily and weekly tasks, once a month you should clean all the encoder strips and the pallet axis of your machine. Similar to a car, you'll

also want to clean your machine's body structure and remove all the ink stains and, if necessary, refill the grease units.

One last piece of advice

A DTG printer, no matter what its size, should undergo a yearly service by

the printer's manufacturer. It is very important that a qualified service engineer or technician performs a more thorough maintenance service as there may be some things that need to be adjusted for maximum performance. ☺

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