

Relief Troubleshooting

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PAPER		
Symptom	Cause	Cure
PUCKERED	Paper is stored in a damp place or not allowed to acclimate to studio, or paper is damp.	Store paper in even humidity. Bring into studio two days before printing. Flatten under weight.
CREASED	Sheet or just corner folded.	Reject sheet, use for proofing only. Cannot eliminate crease.
WRINKLED AT EDGES OF BLOCK	Too much pressure is indenting the block and deforming the paper. Or paper is too hard (Sized)	Reduce pressure or dampen paper. Add block in front and behind of image block, so roller rides up on these. (slightly thinner)
FOREIGN BODIES IN PAPER	Dust particles etc. within sheet.	Use needle to lift particle off surface. Reject sheet if particle is embedded-use for proofing.
MARGIN MARKS	Fingerprints in margins or ink picked up from press.	Handle sheet with "paper fingers". Clean press and surrounding area.
SPECKLED INK (salting)	Paper too hard (sized) to absorb ink evenly.	Dampen paper
SURFACE FIBERS PULLED OFF PAPER	Paper too soft (unsized) so loose fibers pulled off by ink.	Size paper
INK		
Symptom	Cause	Cure
PICKING (Fragments of paper lift off)	Paper is dusty or the ink is too dry.	Wipe each sheet with a clean cloth to remove paper dust or thicken ink very slightly.
SPECKLED INK (salting)	Insufficient ink applied or pressure too low.	Apply more ink to block or increase pressure with packing. (adding more newsprint on top)
SQUASHED INK AT EDGES OF BLOCK	Too much ink or too much pressure.	Reduce ink applied or reduce pressure.
SHINY INK	The ink is not absorbed by the paper because of underlying ink films or because the paper is too hard.	Strip off excess ink with newsprint paper.
INK NOT DRYING	The ink will not dry because it is too oily, the paper is not absorbent or it is too cold.	Add driers to next batch of ink, use a softer paper, or warm the drying area. Or Strip off excess ink by running through press on newsprint.
INK ON SLAB IS PUSHING (uneven on slab)	Oil or solvent on the inking slab or roller.	Scape off and discard ink, clean slab and roller and begin again.
INK TOO STIFF	Ink is naturally stiff. Ink is old. Ink is cold.	Add a few drops of plate oil

INK TOO SOFT, RUNNY	Ink is naturally soft. Too much oil was added. Ink is too warm.	Add Magnesium Carbonate to ink.
PRESS & INKING		
Symptom	Cause	Cure
UNEVEN IMPRESSION	The pressure is not even.	1-Check the press mechanism to make sure roller is level, check the packing. 2-If the block is not centrally placed even out the pressure with small blocks of the same height placed in unoccupied space on bed. 3-If block is uneven itself or has dips, place pieces of tape or newsprint on back in low spots to even pressure. Or hand burnish that spot after it's been run through the press.
IMAGE TOO LIGHT	1-Not enough Ink 2-Not enough pressure	1-Apply more passes with roller. 2-Apply more pressure. If close, this can be done by adding a few more sheets of newsprint (packing) versus adjusting the press.
IMAGE TOO DARK	1-Too much Ink 2-Too much pressure 3-Brayer too soft	1-Strip off excess ink by running through the press with newsprint, then wipe block with dry rag. Re-apply ink, using very lean slab and multiple passes. 2-Use less pressure 3-Use a harder brayer
LINE ACROSS	1-A thicker line of ink appears across a printed area. 2-Roller mark	1-Check that a sheet of packing has not slipped, or something is not under the block. 2-Vary your rolling pattern
SMUDGED LINE ON PAPER ALONG LEADING EDGE OF BLOCK.	1-Too much pressure is pushing the block. 2-Bed plate is going too fast when it makes contact with the roller. 3-Too much transition	1-Reduce press pressure 2-Gently bring the block into contact with the roller. 3- Add block in front and behind of image block, so roller rides up on these first.
BLURRED LINES IN IMAGE OR DETAIL IS FILLING IN	1-Too much ink. 2- Too much pressure 3- Paper too wet. 4- Block orientation to the press 5- Inking pattern 6-Roller too soft 7-Roller too small diameter	1- Apply leaner amount of ink, using several passes. 2- Reduce pressure 3- Don't soak the paper 4- Rotate the block 90 degrees relative to the press roller. 5- Ink parallel to parallel lines or with quicker passes. 6-Use a harder roller. 7-Use larger diameter roller
BLOTCHY INK	Ink not mixed well enough with reducing medium or oil. Block surface is poorly prepared.	Mix the ink and reducing medium or oil for longer. Sand block surface with fine sandpaper.
LUMPS IN INK	Bits of dried ink making lumps.	Push ink through mesh to remove lumps.
SMALL LUMPS/DEBRIS IN INK SLAB	Bits of loose block have come off during inking, or bits of dry ink.	Remove from slab with ink or palette knife.

PICKING UP INK IN NON-PRINTING AREAS	The non-printing area is not cleared well enough or deeply enough.	Clear any parts that still pick up ink. Or cut stencil to lay over large open areas.
REGISTRATION		
Symptom	Cause	Cure
IMAGE RIGHT OFF POSITION	The paper was placed to block registration stops not paper stops or the sheet is placed top to bottom in reverse.	Check the pile of paper waiting to be printed. Is it the bottom furthest away from you? It should be nearest.
IMAGE SLIGHTLY OFF POSITION	1- Paper not placed snugly to registration marks or stops. 2- Paper not trimmed accurately or taped. 3- Blocks not accurately cut. (if using multiple blocks; make sure they are all the same) 4- Block moved position on bed. 5- Registration marks, holes have become worn.	1- Check placing the paper. 2- Check edges of paper where it meets the stops. 3- Re-cut blocks required. 4- Check block position and fix it down if necessary. 5- Replace worn parts with new sections.
SHADOW IMAGE	1- Paper smudged while putting down or lifting off. 2- If burnishing, the paper has moved while rubbing	1- Keep control of paper when putting down and lifting off. 2- Put block on rubber pad to prevent skidding and use heavy weights to keep paper in place.
COLOR RELIEF ISSUES		
PLATES DON'T SEEM TO LINE UP ON PAPER.	1-Plates not cut to same size or are not square. 2-Plate or paper slipped 3-Plate bumped going through press due to too much pressure or pushing plate bed too fast through press.	1-Hold plates up to one another to check sizes and trim as needed. 2-Make sure plate and paper are secured in place before printing. 3- Reduce pressure or reduce speed through the press.
FIRST PLATES SEEMS LONGER THAN SUBSEQUENT PLATES PRINTED OVER TOP	Plates not cut to same size.	Trim plates to same size
	Paper needs to be pre-stretched. If paper was dried between runs, then paper was not soaked in similar manner as first time.	Follow instructions for pre-stretching paper. Make sure you re-soak the paper in the same fashion as the previous run.
COLOR SEEMS LIGHT	Too much ink additive such as easy wipe compound, setswell or transparent base was mixed in and is now making it semi transparent.	Remix color and include less easy wipe.
	Underlying ink is too wet and preventing proper offset of overlying ink.	Let ink dry. Then re-soak paper and run next plate.
	Under-inked	Apply more ink