

# Printhead FAQ's for Zebra's High Performance Industrial Printers

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



### WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT DETERMINE PRINTHEAD LIFE?

The lack of regular cleaning and preventive maintenance is a leading factor in premature printhead failures. The quality of the media also has a large effect on printhead life. Zebra supplies are manufactured to exacting standards and are designed to perform better than third party media. Zebra recommends using genuine Zebra supplies. Selecting the wrong media can result in poor print quality, printer malfunction and/or frequent print head replacements.

Other factors that contribute to printhead life include the print mode, as direct thermal printing is more abrasive to the printhead. Typically, higher printhead pressure, higher volume printing and higher darkness settings will also shorten the life of the printhead.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO USE ZEBRA GENUINE PRINTHEADS?

Each Zebra genuine Printhead is made to specific standards for optimal reliability and performance. Zebra's Industrial printers go through significant testing for both print quality and printhead life. The Zebra printer is designed and certified with the Zebra genuine printhead; no other printheads are certified for safe usage within a Zebra printer.

### WHEN SHOULD I REPLACE MY PRINTHEAD?

Printheads have a finite life and require replacement on a regular basis. The timeline for replacing your printhead will vary based on usage, media type, environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity, printer settings, maintenance habits, etc.

Poor print quality is typically due to a build-up of residue on the printhead. When the build-up is not removed, it can lead to an element failure which significantly reduces the life of the printhead. If you see symptoms such as non-compliant barcodes, streaks, spots, white lines or voids to an image, it is time to replace your printhead.

### WHY SHOULD I CLEAN THE PRINTHEAD AND WHAT IS THE RECOMMENDED FREQUENCY?

An accumulation of dirt, dust or other contaminants on a printhead can result in poor quality, unreadable barcodes. Cleaning your printhead regularly will protect against print quality degradation and extend the life of the printhead over time. As a general rule of thumb, Zebra recommends cleaning the printhead when you change the roll of media or the thermal transfer ribbon. When cleaning the printhead, be sure to use a clean swab dipped in 99.7% isopropyl alcohol. Zebra recommends that you review the printer User Manual before cleaning the printhead.

### WHEN SHOULD I USE ZEBRA'S EXTENDED LIFE PRINTHEAD VERSUS ZEBRA'S TRADITIONAL PRINTHEAD?

For heavy duty, high volume, environmentally demanding direct thermal applications, Zebra offers Extended Life printheads. Zebra test results indicate that this printhead offers twice the printhead life compared to a standard printhead in the same application. By leveraging the extended life printhead, you'll experience reduced replacement time while minimizing printer downtime. Extended Life printheads are available for the following high performance printers: 110Xi4, 105SLPlus and ZE500. Please refer to the Extended Life Printhead Data Sheet for more details on this long life printhead.

### PRINTER DOWNTIME IS COSTLY TO MY BUSINESS; HOW DO I IMPROVE THIS?

To ensure that you experience minimal downtime to your operations, Zebra recommends that you keep extra printheads on hand which allows for a quick swap out and avoids downtime.

**To obtain Printhead part numbers for the High Performance Industrial printer portfolio,  
please use the following URL: [www.zebra.com/products/parts](http://www.zebra.com/products/parts)**

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