

SERICOL

Hints & Tips

Advice From Sericol Technical Services

Caring For Your Squeegee

A squeegee must be sharp, and uniform. You cannot properly transfer ink uniformly or consistently through a mesh with a dull or nicked squeegee. The following conditions will assist to maintain this requirement:

- Always store your squeegee on a flat, smooth surface.
 - If the surface has contours, the squeegee will (over time) adopt these contours.
- Blades should be stored flat and not left in rolls – before and after use.
- After purchasing a blade, uncoil it, and allow it to be stored for 24 hours before being used.
 - This gives the squeegee time to relax, and straighten, assisting to create an even print.
- Blades should be stored between 20-25°C in dry conditions, and away from inks and chemicals.
 - This is because squeegees can absorb moisture and solvents from the air.
- Always store your squeegee away from direct sunlight.
 - Prolonged exposure to sunlight will unduly age your squeegee.
- Do not use a squeegee without ink, as it will quickly destroy the fine printing edge.
- Blades should not be left soaking in inks or solvents.
- Directly after printing, blades should be cleaned.
- Blades should be rested after approximately 3-5 hours operation, and rotated with 'rested' blades.
 - Ideally each station should have at least 3 blades to rotate between. It will keep your squeegee living approximately 30-40% longer.
- After use, blades should be cleaned and left to rest for approximately 10-24 hours before being re-used, or sharpened.
 - This will allow the solvents to evaporate from the squeegee and assist the blade to revert back to its near original state.
- When cleaning a squeegee, ink and residue should be wiped away from the printing edge, instead of towards the printing edge.
- When storing a squeegee that is still mounted in its blade holder, always store with holder side down, and squeegee side up.
 - The blade should not touch anything during storage.
- Sharpen dry squeegees only. Never allow a squeegee with solvents to be sharpened and don't wash a hot, freshly sharpened blade with chemicals.
- Do not try to grind excessive material in one pass of sharpening.

General Printing Recommendations

- Ideally, the squeegee blade should not overlap the stencil by more than 12-25mm at either end of the widest section of the design.
 - If the blade is too long, it will exert pressure on the stencil and cause pinholes.
 - If the blade is too long, it is increasingly difficult to maintain an even, consistent ink deposit. Typically, there will be a higher film weight in the middle of the image, and a finer film weight towards the edges of the image area, resulting in a poor quality print.
 - Each end of the blade should not be any closer than approximately 5cm from the edge of the frame; otherwise it could negatively affect registration.
- The flood bar should be the same length as the squeegee, otherwise similar issues will arise.
- Rounding the ends of the blade assist to create an even ink deposit, and minimise the damage to the edges of the stencil.

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