

## DEALING WITH SCUMMING

Unigraph offers you a short and practical guide in helping circumvent one of the most common printing problems: scumming (greasing). Scumming occurs when non-image areas of the plate begin to accept ink. Do not confound scumming with tinting, which is generally characterized by a light uniform ink film over the entire plate. There also exists simple procedures to distinguish between both problems. Increase the flow of fountain solution or hone the plate with desensitizing stick while the press is stopped. At restart, if the problem diminishes or disappears, it's most likely scumming. If your diagnosis leans toward scumming, we suggest a series of probable causes and associated remedies.

### 1. Scumming may arise due to inadequate dosage of fountain concentrate, alcohol or alcohol substitute:

#### CAUSE

- Not enough concentrate.
- Too much concentrate.
- Low alcohol or alcohol substitute.

#### REMEDY

- Check dosage, keep at recommended pH and conductivity.
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- Contact your fountain solution manufacturer.

### 2. Scumming may be ink related:

#### CAUSE

- Too much ink being carried and squashed over non-image areas.
- Ink is too soft and spreads over non-image areas.

#### REMEDY

- Reduce ink feed or use a denser ink pigment.
- Add heavy bonded varnish to ink.

### 3. Scumming may appear if insufficient dampening solution is transferred to the plate:

#### CAUSE

- Too little fountain solution.
- High dampening temperature (low viscosity).
- Dirty, worn dampener sleeve or metering roller.

#### REMEDY

- Increase flow of fountain solution.
- Ideally, should range between 10-15° C (50-60° F).
- Clean or change devices.

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- Improper dampening settings.
- Improper form roller settings.
- Improper roller durometer.
- Improper plate/blanket packing.
- Glazed blanket.
- Reset dampeners to appropriate settings.
- Check and adjust stripe on plate.
- Measure and change to specifications.
- Set according to instruction manual.
- Clean all gum, ink and particulates.

### **4. Too quick evaporation of the thin water film on the plate may cause scumming:**

#### **CAUSE**

- High dampening temperature.
- Air drafts blowing on the plate.

#### **REMEDY**

- Ideally, should range between 10-15° C (50-60° F).
- Prevent or shield from air drafts.

### **5. Scumming may also come from a faulty plate:**

#### **CAUSE**

- Improper gumming.
- Plate not opening or not desensitized.
- Sensitive or light-struck plate.
- Prepress problems: exposure or development.

#### **REMEDY**

- Clean plate with water and/or cleaner conditioner.
- Gum plate on press.
- Desensitize plate, apply scratch remover or plate cleaner.
- Make new plate.

Going through this troubleshooting procedure may help you to identify the problem and the cause, thus leading to the appropriate action to take. Keep in mind that tinting, bleeding and plugging may leave an image similar to scumming, however, the causes could be essentially different.