# Sublimation Tips & Tricks

## Cleaning the Substrate

Cleaning your sublimatable materials is easy. Simply dampen a cloth with alcohol and wipe the surface clean of dust, fingerprints, dry-erase marker, or other debris. Even if you wrote on a glosscoated substrate with permanent marker by mistake or accidently spraypainted it, don't throw it out! It will clean up effortlessly with a cloth moistened with mineral spirits.
Rowmark recommends that you wipe your substrate free of dust with alcohol prior to attaching your transfer for pressing. This

## Printing the Transfer

No matter which Epson printer you're using, it's always best to do a nozzle check each time you turn on the printer. Use a piece of copy paper so you don't waste transfer paper. If you experience a bad nozzle check pattern, proceed with a cleaning. Print the nozzle check pattern again. Repeat this process up to 5 or 6 times until you achieve a good test pattern. If you notice that the test patterns are getting progressively worse, you may need to replace the ink cartridge that is "missing".If you don't use your printer on a daily basis, Rowmark recommends that you "maintain" your printer. This is very easy to do. If you know you aren't going to use your printer on any given day, turn it on anyway (by the manual switch - not a power strip or a switch on the wall). You will notice that the printer will start making a bit of noise. It is cleaning itself. This takes very little

## Time, Temperature & Pressure

If you're just getting started in sublimation, time, temperature, & pressure settings are a mystery, no doubt! Based on our experiences, Rowmark has developed a guide to time, temperature, and pressure settings. You will find, however, that your own practice & experiences are your best guide.

| Substrate | Time | Temperature | Pressure |
|---|---|---|---|
| Plaques | 1 minute | 400° F | 3:00 |
| Ready Signs | 1 minute | 400° F | 2:06 |
| FRP / Hard Wood | 1 minute | 400° F | :06 |
| MATES | 20-40 seconds | 375° - 400° F | :06 |
| magMATES | 10-20 seconds | 375° - 400° F | :06 |

## What is PowerDriver?

PowerDriver is the color correction software made for SubliJet inks. Be sure to download PowerDriver when you get started in sublimation. This software will either come with your set of inks, or you can download it from Sawgrass's website: www.sublimation.com. Downloading is easy and takes only a couple of minutes. You will notice a distinct difference between printing from the Epson driver and printing from PowerDriver...

## Transfer Paper

Be sure to use the recommended transfer paper. If you look closely, you will notice that one side of the paper is brighter than the other side. Print your transfer on the bright white side. Rowmark recommends drying your transfer before pressing. This can be done quickly and effortlessly by placing the transfer faceup in an open press for 10-20 seconds. A dry transfer will prevent “blow-outs” and “running” or faded images on the finished product..

Transfer paper can only be used once. Therefore, it is recommended that you utilize the space efficiently.

Store your transfer paper in its original black package. If the

## Pressing Plaques & Ready Signs

If you’ve been pressing plaques & Ready Signs, you may have already discovered what can happen if you tape on the edge. The finish on the edges of plaques and Ready Signs is a foil. If tape is on this foil, the foil may adhere to the tape while it is in the press, and the foil will peel off the plaque or Ready Sign, leaving an ugly mark on the finished product. To avoid this, simply cut “tabs” on the outer border of the transfer. Line up the transfer, wrap the

## Two-Sided Substrates

Sure, those two-sided widgets are neat, but how do you sublimate on one side without ruining the other side? While you can do two sides at once, it is recommended that you do one side at a time. Sublimate one side as you normally would. Let it cool. To do the other side, line up the substrate with the transfer, and cut “tabs”. Wrap them around so they touch each other, and place tape only on the paper so it does not touch the substrate. If the

## Protecting Your Press

To make the alignment of substrate to a full-bleed transfer easier, it is recommended that you make the transfer slightly larger than the substrate. For example, if you’re pressing a 2" x 3" name badge, make your transfer 2.1" x 3.1". This will create a “border” to which you can align your substrate. While this makes alignment easier, it also poses a problem. When pressed, the ink that does not touch the substrate will still heat up, and must go somewhere. If you don’t use some type of protection, it will go directly into the pad of the press. Every time you press thereafter, the ink will heat up and transfer onto whatever is in the press at the time. To avoid this, Rowmark recommends that you use either some type of paper or Teflon sheets. (If you are sublimating MATES, we recommend

## Color Matching

For easier color matching, Rowmark recommends that you print a color palette (either CMYK or RGB) and sublimate it to whatever substrate you are using. Label each color with its CMYK or RGB values. This will provide a quick reference for matching logos, PMS colors, or whatever. It will also take out the “guesswork” and may