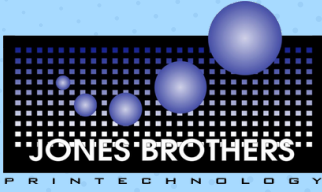


Summer Screen Printing Blues: Conquering the Water-Based Woes





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Summer: a time for sunshine, beach days, and... screen printing struggles? While the season brings its fair share of fun, it also throws unique challenges at water-based ink printers.

Today, we'll dive into the summer woes of water-based inks and emerge equipped with solutions and product recommendations to keep your prints crisp and screens open all summer long.

Who's to blame?

Heat and Humidity: Water-based inks, bless their eco-friendly hearts, are sensitive to temperature and humidity. Soaring summer temperatures and sticky air can cause the ink to dry prematurely on the screen, leading to streaking, uneven coverage, and clogged mesh.

This can be a huge frustration for many printers as you'll have to be working your butt off to keep the screen open. High opacity inks can dry out even faster than standard water-based inks due to the high pigment loading and resins in high opacity inks.



The Solutions:

- **Chill Out:** Keep your printing space cool and well-ventilated.
- **Slow Down:** Reduce the drying speed of your ink with retarder or extender mediums. This helps keep the screen open and more time to work with the ink before the ink blocks the mesh.
- **Embrace the Mist:** Invest in a cool mist humidifier to add moisture to the air and prevent the ink from drying too quickly. This works particularly well for high opacity water-based inks.
- **Print Quickly:** Keep moving while getting your print run done! This is not the time to stop and have a chat!
- **Keep your screen flooded in between prints:** The bigger ink layer over your open mesh area will take longer to start drying and setting into your mesh than a semi clear image area.
- **Timing:** Choose a cooler time of day such as early morning to complete a water-based print run.

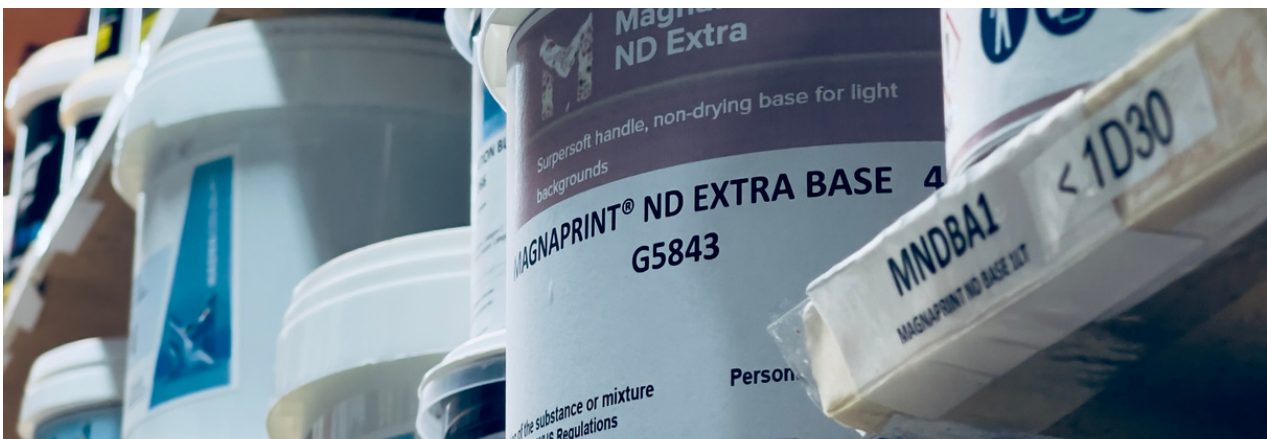


Our advice for Peak Performance:

High-Quality Inks: Choose water-based inks with a higher tolerance to heat. The MagnaPrint ND Extra range for textiles has been formulated with non-drying properties, allowing this ink range to stay open in the screen for up to 2 – 3 hours without a problem. The other benefits that this offers is the ability to use fine mesh grades (77T to 140T) for optimum image detail, and a super soft feel print without needing to frequently clean down your screens.

Mesh Matters: Understanding your mesh count will help you manage your water-based inks in the screen. Coarser mesh counts (34T – 54T) have larger hole openings and will hold more ink on the screen with a flood coat, helping it stay open longer.

Finer mesh counts (64T+) have smaller hole openings and will therefore hold a thinner film of ink on the screen with a flood coat that can lead to it drying faster. If using conventional water-based inks with a lesser heat tolerance, choosing the right mesh grade can make a big difference. Refer to the relevant TDS for your ink to determine relevant mesh ranges.



Make use of other consumables to make life easier! All water-based inks will also offer a print retarder, which is added to the ink to slow down the drying. We also carry the Albachem Water Base Screen Opener Aerosol Spray which will immediately open the image area for you, and the Franmar Water Based Ink Remover is a liquid which can be used on press to reopen your screen, or help dislodge dried in ink without destroying your stencil.

Emulsion Humidity Resilience: The below emulsions are great in humidity and will not become tacky -

- Chromaline CP Tex
- Chromaline UDC ACE
- Chromaline Max-R
- Saati Grafic HU – New to our range!

These emulsions will help you maintain a sharp and crisp stencil in any climate.



3 Quick Tips

1. Keep a spray bottle handy - A quick spritz on the screen can prevent ink drying and clogging during those long summer printing sessions.
2. Mix printing retarder into your spray bottle with water to help keep the screen open – a nifty little trick to keep on file!
3. Mix in printing retarder in your ink before going on press. This will slow down the drying process of the ink.

Remember, summer screen printing with water-based inks is all about adaptation and preparation. By understanding the challenges and implementing these solutions, you can conquer the heat and humidity, ensuring your prints stay fresh and vibrant all season long.



Recommended products

1. Print Retarder

- MagnaPrint Retardant Gel Concentrate
- Permaset Print Retarder

Print retarders are designed to assist with keeping the ink open on screen, slowing down the drying process.



2. MagnaPrint ND Extra Range

Non-drying, translucent ink range by Magna Colours for light coloured fabrics and backgrounds. Can be used over the Magna Colours Aquaflex V2 White as a base for dark fabrics.





3. Franmar Water-based Ink Remover

Extend the life of your screens with Aqua·Wash Water-Based Ink Remover!

Aqua·Wash saves screens by cleaning dried, water-based inks from screens that could not otherwise be cleaned and reused - without harsh chemicals.



4. AlbaChem - Water-based Ink Screen Opener

AlbaChem Water-Based Screen Opener safely open clogged screens of dried ink. The foaming cleaner works fast without leaving any film or oily residue. It may also be used to clean ink and dirt from the printing presses.





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