

TITLE: General Maintenance Tips for Gerber Plotters

Gerber FastFact #: 5256

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Summary: This document offers some general tips for keeping your Gerber plotter running optimally.

Maintenance Tip # 1

Regular cleaning and maintenance are the keys to your Gerber plotter running like new. We suggest you incorporate them into your regular routine at a time that's convenient for you. Once a day, give your plotter a quick cleaning by wiping off all residue with a lightly oiled damp rag. Once a week, a more thorough cleaning is in order. First clean the sliding sprocket, bail arms, rear way and front way with an alcohol dampened rag to remove dust and dirt. Next lubricate these parts with a lightly oiled damp rag. (No WD40) Recommended oil is 3 in one only.

It's also important to cover your plotter at the end of the day and when it's not in use. This protects it from environmental dust, dirt and debris that can eventually affect its performance. If you notice poor cutting quality, non-precise tracking, X, Y, Z or theta axis problems, or overheating due to poor ventilation, your plotter may simply need a good cleaning.

You can find additional information or specific maintenance procedures for your plotter in the maintenance section of your owner's manual.

Look for the Plotter Maintenance Tip in the future issues of The Vinyl Word. If you have a tip or trick you'd like to share, please send it to us.

Maintenance Tip # 2

Maintenance Tip #1 focuses on the importance of keeping your Gerber plotter properly cleaned for optimum performance. Once a plotter has been cleaned properly it must also be properly lubricated for best results. The most important areas to be lubricated are where metal touches metal, or where smooth, unimpeded movement is necessary. More specifically the way bars, floating bail assembly, floating sprocket assembly, ball bushing housing assembly, and carriage bushings. (Exceptions to this rule are the tool holder and spindle bar. No lubrication is needed in this area, just a thorough cleaning.)

It is extremely important to remember that an excess of oil can be as detrimental as having no oil at all. Proper oiling consists of applying a light film of one or two drops of oil. Excess oil will drip into places where it shouldn't be and may cause premature wear, or a sensitive electronic component to short out. It is also vital to remember that oil that has been on the plotter parts for some time will start to get gummy from impurities it has absorbed and from a breakdown of viscosity. It must be removed before a new coat of oil is applied. For detailed directions on what and where to oil, refer to the maintenance section of your user's manual, and of course, if you have questions or need further assistance, call the Field Service Department toll free number at 1-800 828-5406.

Maintenance Tip # 3

Good maintenance of your plotter includes maintaining an appropriate environment. Although Gerber plotters are ruggedly built to survive in production areas, extreme conditions can shorten the life of your plotter or degrade its performance. Gerber recommends the following environmental conditions:

- An operating temperature between 50⁰ and 95⁰ F (10⁰ and 35⁰ C)
- An operating voltage of 120 VAC \pm 10%, preferably on a dedicated circuit
- A humidity level between 45% and 55%
- A zero potential grounding system, preferably including antistatic, grounded matting under each piece of electronic equipment
- Regular cleaning of the entire area to keep it free of dust, dirt and debris
- Sufficient room around the plotter to allow for unrestricted air flow and vinyl movement

Following these recommendations will keep your plotter performing up to specification and prolong its life. As always, if you need assistance, call our Field Service Department toll free at 1-800-828-5604.