

Troubleshooting Printer Problems

Problem

Printing problems can be divided into three basic types:

1. The printer equipment may be causing the problem.
2. The print queue on the network may be causing the problem.
3. The software through which the print job is being printed may be causing the problem.

Solution - Attached printers

Attached printers are directly plugged into a single computer. Try these steps if an attached printer isn't printing correctly.

1. Check to see that the printer is powered on.
2. Make sure that the cable between printer and computer isn't loose.
3. If both the computer and printer are on but the computer can't find the printer: Turn both devices off and wait 20 seconds. Power the printer back on first and then turn on the computer.
4. If, after all of the above, the computer still can't find the printer, the drivers may have become corrupt and need to be reinstalled. Call the Help Desk.
5. If the computer can find the printer but it still won't print, check the local print queue screen in the software. A print job may be stuck in the local print queue and deleting it from the queue may help.

Solution - Networked printers

Networked printers are generally used by a group of people and rely on a print queue on a print server to manage print jobs.

1. Check to see that the printer is powered on and the network cable is properly connected to both the printer and the wall jack.
2. Check the network print queue to see if any jobs have become stuck. Clear them if necessary.
3. Try sending a test print job to see if the printer is working.
4. If you get a "printer unavailable" error message when trying to view a print queue, the print server may be down.
5. If the print queue appears to be available and a test job causes a "printer busy or error" message, try to ping the printer's IP address to see if it is still communicating with the network. The printer may need to be recycled to reestablish its connection.



Reporting Printer Issues

When printing problems are reported to the Help Desk, the following information is needed:

- Your name
- Location of the printer (including building name and room number)
- Printer name
- Software (program) being used to print
- Error messages or symptoms of the problem

Common Printing Problems

Print job status says: "Printer busy...or printer error."

1. Certain print codes in the file that's printing can confuse the printer, causing the job to get stuck in the print queue.
2. Delete the top print job or purge the print queue if printer still won't restart. If the print job still remains in the queue, recycle the printer up to two times to clear the job.
3. Wait five minutes before printing a test page.

Print job status says: "Insufficient memory."

1. Indicates that the print job probably has image files in it that are too large for the printer memory to handle. They may have to be changed to a different image format to accommodate the limits of the printer, or perhaps printed to another printer with more memory. (Files in tiff format are very large and can be converted to jpg format).
2. Delete the print job or purge the print queue. If necessary, recycle the printer up to two times to clear the job.
3. Wait five minutes before printing a test page.

Print job status says: "PowerSave On."

Indicates that the printer needs to have its **Go** button pressed to wake it up. It should print soon after.

The current print job (at top of job list) will not disappear after deleting it. Print job status continues to be: "Deleting...printing"

1. If necessary, recycle the printer up to two times.
2. Wait five minutes before printing a test page.

A pending print job will not disappear after deleting it. Print job status continues to be: "Deleting...spooling"

1. If necessary, recycle the printer up to two times.
2. Wait five minutes before printing a test page.

Print queue screen indicates queue is "paused."

1. Unpause the printer.
2. Print test page to printer.

Print queue screen indicates queue is "stalled or stopped."

1. This may mean that the printer itself has been set "offline."
2. Direct the caller to check the printer display menu to see if it says "offline."
3. Pressing the **Go** button can put it "online" again so it says "Ready."
4. Printer should now begin printing again.

Print queue screen indicates queue is "unavailable" or "cannot connect."

1. This means that the print queue is not working.
2. Check other public print queues to see whether they are displaying the same message. If more than one print queue is unavailable, then the **Printers** print server is probably down. Report to the helpdesk.

Error in software: "Error initializing output device."

When printing within a program like WordPerfect, Word, Excel, etc., you may occasionally see this error message appear on the screen when attempting to print a file. It is often caused by a temporary network "glitch" in the processing of the print job. There are two options below that will often clear this printing problem.

1. Save your file and exit the program, log off the network, then login, open the program and try printing again.
2. If this doesn't work, shut down and power off the computer, wait 20 seconds and power it on again. Login to the network, get into the program again and try printing.
3. If the error still doesn't clear, wait at least 15-20 minutes and then try printing again.

Printer display menu says "Ready" but doesn't print; there is no print job showing up in the print queue screen, even though a print job was sent to it.

1. Recycle the printer up to two times. Wait 5 minutes and then try to print a test page. If it doesn't print, do the following:
2. Test printer software: Try printing to a nearby printer. If you can print successfully to it, it may indicate a corrupt printer driver for the problem printer that must be deleted and reinstalled.
3. If you can't print to a nearby printer, test the network connection by trying to ping the printer. (You may need to find the correct printer domain name or IP address before you can do so.)
4. If ping doesn't work, the printer is not communicating with the network.

Printer display menu intermittently says "receiving data" or "processing job," but the print job has stopped printing.

1. This message will often appear when the printer is printing out a large PDF file with charts and images in it. It takes the printer time to "digest" the contents, so be patient! It will periodically pause, then print, then pause again as it sends the pages of the PDF file to the printer.
2. If the printer stalls for a very long time, pressing the **Go** button will sometimes help to start the printer printing again.

Printer display menu shows message with error numbers (example: error 41.3) or message that the printer needs maintenance.

Any of these messages require a site visit from an IT staff member.

Printer display menu says there is a paper jam.

1. **Note:** Sometimes the printer display menu will say "paper jam" but it is actually indicating that the paper tray is empty.
2. Opening the front and back "doors" of the printer or removing the paper tray or toner cartridge will usually allow access to the jammed paper so that it can be released.
3. Paper should be removed slowly and gently so that it doesn't tear.
4. Paper that is too difficult to remove should be left "as is" and reported to the Help Desk, who will assign the issue to an IT staff member.

5. Turn off the printer until it can be serviced and place an Out of Order sign on it.

Printer display menu says "paper tray empty" or "low toner."

- If it is a public printer, Help Desk staff can be dispatched to replenish the paper or toner if it's not available near the printer.
- If it is a departmental printer, contact the administrative assistant for the department where the printer is located.



Still need help?

For additional assistance, contact the [IT Help Desk](#).

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