

Clean the Printhead and Platen Roller

You can minimize printhead wear and maintain print quality with regular preventive measures. Over time, the movement of media or ribbon across the printhead wears through the protective ceramic coating, exposing and eventually damaging the print elements (dots). To avoid abrasion:

- Clean the printhead frequently, and use well-lubricated thermal transfer ribbons with backings optimized to reduce friction.
- Minimize printhead pressure and burn temperature settings by optimizing the balance between the two.
- Ensure that the thermal transfer ribbon is as wide or wider than the label media to prevent exposing the elements to the more abrasive label material.

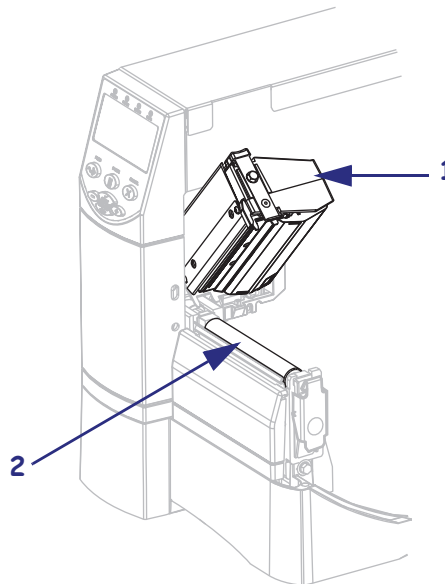
For best results, clean the printhead after changing every roll of ribbon. Inconsistent print quality, such as voids in the bar code or graphics, may indicate a dirty printhead.

Caution • While performing any tasks near an open printhead, remove all rings, watches, hanging necklaces, identification badges, or other metallic objects that could touch the printhead. You are not required to turn off the printer power when working near an open printhead, but Zebra recommends it as a precaution. If you turn off the power, you will lose all temporary settings, such as label formats, and you must reload them before you resume printing.



Note • For printers with a peel assembly, keep the peel assembly closed while cleaning the platen roller to reduce the risk of bending the tear-off/peel-off bar.

Figure 15 • Location of the Printhead and Platen Roller



1	Printhead assembly
2	Platen roller



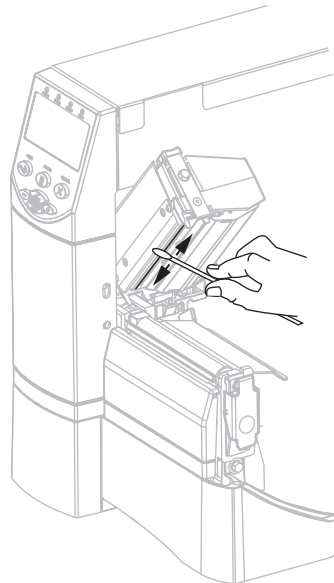
Caution • The printhead may be hot and could cause severe burns. Allow the printhead to cool.



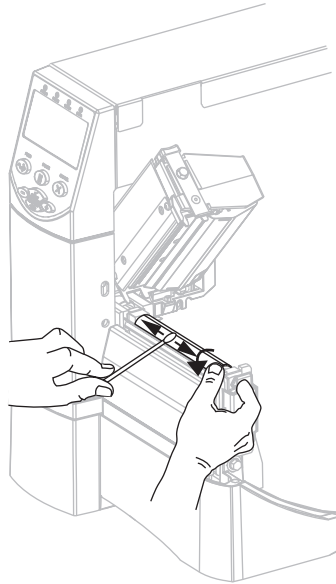
Caution • Before touching the printhead assembly, discharge any built-up static electricity by touching the metal printer frame or by using an antistatic wriststrap and mat.

To clean the printhead and platen roller, complete these steps:

1. Open the printhead assembly.
2. Remove the media and ribbon.
3. Using the swab from the Preventive Maintenance Kit (part number 47362), wipe along the brown strip on the printhead assembly from end to end. In place of the Preventive Maintenance Kit, you may use a clean swab dipped in a solution of isopropyl alcohol (minimum 90%) and deionized water (maximum 10%). Allow the solvent to evaporate.



4. While manually rotating the platen roller, clean it thoroughly with the swab. Allow the solvent to evaporate.



5. Reload media and ribbon, and close the printhead assembly.



Note • If performing this procedure does not improve print quality, try cleaning the printhead with *Save-A-Printhead* cleaning film. This specially coated material removes contamination buildup without damaging the printhead. Call your authorized Zebra reseller for more information.