



EXPERTIP

Category	PRESS
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Press Fabric Guidelines During a Curtailment or Shutdown

If your machine is scheduled for a shutdown exceeding two hours and the press fabric is to remain on the machine, the following procedures will help to extend fabric life as well as prevent start-up problems.

Safety First!

First priority, of course, is SAFETY. The following precautions should be taken when working with the press fabric:

- Wear appropriate personal safety equipment.
- Be vigilant about moving machinery, pinch points, etc.
- Communicate, coordinate, and observe.
- Never place body parts under/between cantilevered equipment.
- Report anything UNSAFE.
- Assign a LO-TO-TO = Lock-Out, Tag-Out, Try-Out safety coordinator if lock-out is required for roll inspections.

Shutdown/Curtailment Procedure

Each machine is different and may have different Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for fabric issues. But, there are some key points that should be considered when shutting down a machine where the press fabric will remain on the machine:

1. Wash the Press Fabric and Thoroughly Rinse It

This is important to remove any contaminants that might be on or in the fabric. If these contaminants are allowed to remain, they will harden and will be difficult to remove later. Many of these contaminants are hydrophobic and will resist rewetting the fabrics.

- A. Reduce machine speed to a crawl and reduce nip load to "close" or "threading" load.
- B. Turn off or drop Uhle box vacuum to a minimum while cleaning chemical is applied. Apply fabric cleaner via a shower and allow the cleaner to act on the fabric for 15-20 minutes. Ensure that the entire fabric is treated with the cleaner.
- C. Turn the Uhle box vacuum back on to normal settings.
- D. Rinse the press fabric with a flooding shower, lubricating shower, or suction roll flushing shower.

- E. Once the first rinsing is complete, set the showers to normal operating pressure for 10-15 minutes to completely rinse the fabric.
- F. Shut off the showers.
- G. Use vacuum boxes to uniformly dewater the fabric and to get the fabric to the lowest practical moisture level.
- H. At this point, applying a fabric softener or wetting agent is sometimes done, which will help in wetting up the fabric during the machine start-up.
- I. Stop the press and turn off the vacuum.

2. Relax the Press Fabric Tension

Once the fabric has been cleaned, rinsed, and conditioned, the showers and vacuum should be turned off and the machine stopped. Release the fabric tension by backing off the stretch roll. This will prevent excessive tension from developing and roll deflection from occurring as the fabric dries. Leaving the fabric dry under tension can also lead to uneven width shrinkage.

3. Unload/Lift the Press Roll

After the press section and fabric are stationary, the press roll must be unloaded/lifted so that it does not contact the fabric. This eliminates the possibility of localized felt compaction. If possible, lock press rolls in up or open position.

4. Inspect Rolls, Showers, and Uhle Boxes

Now is the time to inspect all roll surfaces for wear or damage, which could cause abnormal wear to the press fabric. Also, inspect and clean shower nozzles and Uhle box covers.

Questions?

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