

Some difficulties can occur when using refillable or disposable technical pens. Disposable (stainless steel tip) pens can become quite sharp due to wear after use, and cut or tear the plotting media. And fine (.3 or smaller) replaceable tips can wear as rapidly. Here are some suggestions to help you get the best performance from your plotter when using this type of pen.

PLOT MEDIA: Good plotting material exhibits the following characteristics:

1. Flatness. No bulges when lying on a flat surface.
2. Does not stretch.
3. Surface is uniform (friction is constant).
4. Impressions made by the gritshaft are clean and crisp after one or many passes. Impressions that are weak after a few passes may indicate soft or thick material. Impressions that show fractures indicate a hard coating on a soft base material.
5. Matched for the desired pen and ink. The strength of the paper should not deteriorate when wetted by ink. The paper should not wear the pen point.

Bond and plotter bond paper: Very popular for check plots. Use caution with A0 sizes on plots lasting longer than approximately 30 minutes. Not suitable for use with refillable or other very fine tip pens. Wears pen tips out quickly.

Vellum (high quality coated rag paper): Excellent for final drawings. Very flat, uniformly coated for translucent copy processes. 1000-H or 10/20 vellum works quite well with most pens.

Film (mylar, polyester, acetate) double matte only: Excellent for final drawings. Abrasive to pen points.

In general, when using fine point pens, the plotting material must be strong enough to keep from wearing the pen out. Fine tip plotting pens wear quickly, and should not be used once they are too sharp (no matter how much ink is left!).