NHS Supply Chain

Laminator FAQ's

V.2*

1. What is jam-free?

Jam-free means that your machine should not experience any incidences of jamming providing you follow the manufacturers operating instructions. Machines can now be purchased with anti-jam features including a reverse mechanism, a release button or an easy access lift off lid to clear jams. Although most laminators are not classed as jam-free, they should not jam providing the operating instructions are followed.

2. Does the maximum stated thickness refer to the contents of the pouch or the contents + the pouch itself?

The total thickness includes both the contents of the pouch and the pouch itself.

3. What is the thickness of standard copy paper in mm?

As a guide, standard 80gsm paper is 0.08mm thick.

4. Do I need a carrier with my laminator?

Most laminators supplied now have been designed to be carrier-free (please see instructions). This means that using a carrier may result in a poor finish or increase the risk of jamming. When using a carrier, you may have to pass the document through the laminator more than once in order to properly seal the pouch as carriers can absorb heat

5. Why is the laminator not sealing the edges?

It is possible that the document is too close to the edge of the pouch to create a strong seal. For best results, allow a 2-3mm border to allow the pouch to seal correctly. If this does not solve the problem, then check that you are using the correct temperature setting and try passing the document through the laminator for a second time. Most laminators have been designed to be carrier-free. This means that using a carrier may result in a poor finish or increase the risk of jamming.

6. Why is the laminated document cloudy?

Cloudiness is usually caused by either the temperature being too low, or the document being too thick. Try passing your document through the laminator one or more times. If you have a temperature adjustment on your laminator then you can raise the temperature slightly. If the problem is not resolved, then consider choosing a thinner pouch or reduce the thickness of the document you are trying to laminate. Most laminators have been designed to be carrier-free. This means that using a carrier may result in a poor finish or increase the risk of jamming.

7. Why is the laminated document wavy/rippled?

It is likely that the temperature is set too high. Check that the temperature setting corresponds to the pouches being used and turn the machine to a lower setting if you can. Passing a clean sheet of uncoated paper through the laminator will also help to cool down the rollers. Most laminators have been designed to be carrier-free. This means that using a carrier may result in a poor finish or increase the risk of jamming.

8. Why does the laminated document have spots on it?

It is possible that the rollers may have small deposits of adhesive on them from previous laminating. To clean the rollers, simply pass a plain uncoated sheet of paper through your laminator when it is still hot. Any adhesive residue should then be absorbed by the paper.

9. What are the advantages and possible uses of laminating?

There are a number of advantages and examples of where laminating can be useful. Some more popular examples are listed below:

- Protects from spills: sales presentation materials
- Protects from rain: sports and outdoor activities
- Protects from grease and chemicals: maintenance check-lists
- Protects from smudges & fingerprints: menus
- Protects from abrasion: instructional materials
- Protects from the sun: outdoor directional signs
- Protects from creases and wrinkles: sales promotion material

10. Why does my laminator smell?

It is normal for new laminators to have a slight smell during the first use. This is simply from the new element and should fade with subsequent uses. If you experience a consistent smell or smoking from your laminator then please check that you have not set the temperature too high. Under normal use a laminator will produce a slight smell when the pouch is inserted but this is simply the polyethylene which is not harmful to your health.

11. What is cold lamination and what do I need in order to cold laminate a document?

Cold laminating uses pressure sensitive adhesives to bind the film to the material being laminated. As a result, cold lamination requires specially designed laminating pouches containing sticky adhesive which do not require heat. Cold lamination is your best option when laminating heat-sensitive documents or photos. Most laminators have cold and hot lamination settings to provide maximum flexibility.

12. How do the number of rollers affect lamination?

Depending on the complexity of the laminator and the finish required dictates the number of rollers needed. Generally, 2 roller systems heat and seal in tandem. For more sophisticated systems the first set of rollers heat the pouch to melt the adhesive and subsequent rollers are designed to seal the document to produce a more professional and higher quality finish.

13. Can I laminate multiple documents in one pouch?

We strongly advise against laminating multiple cut-outs inside one pouch. Attempting to laminate more than one document in a pouch is likely to result in jamming. Instead, purchase smaller pouches and laminate each document individually.

14. Is there anything I should not laminate?

Never attempt to laminate the following items, as they are likely to damage your laminator or result in jamming. As a general rule, laminators are designed for documents so laminating anything other than a sheet of paper or thin card will increase the risk of a jam.

- Leaves, flowers or vegetable matter
- Several small pictures in one pouch
- An item that is too small for the pouch and leaves more than a 2-3mm border unless using a 'Lifejacket Carrier'
- Newspaper
- Thermal paper

15. What thickness of pouches can I use with my laminator?

All laminating pouches have a thickness measured in microns. Laminating pouches enclose the document between 2 sheets and as a result the thickness can be expressed in two ways. For example, pouches can be described as being 2 x 75 microns (mic) thick or 150 microns thick which simply means that 2 sheets of 75 microns are sealed together to make a total of 150 microns. Please see individual models for more details.

16. What kind of pouches should I use in my laminator - can I use any kind?

It is generally recommended that you use the Manufacturers branded pouches for their laminators as the products are formulated to work together and will therefore produce the highest quality results. Using unbranded products from other suppliers is acceptable as all products have been tested and approved. We do not however, advocate the use of low quality pouches as they may cause jamming, produce a poor finish, leave a damaging deposit on the rollers, and can void manufacturer's warranties. Pouches come in a variety of sizes and thicknesses normally from 2x75micron (total 150mic) to 2x250 micron (total 500mic) – ID size to A1 size. It is also possible to use special roll pouches for more professional systems which can be cut as a when required. Please note that you must use specially designed pouches for cold lamination.

17. A pouch is jammed inside my laminator – how do I remove it?

If the pouch is jammed inside and is no longer visible from the front or back of the laminator then you will not normally be able to remove it unless you have a model with either an anti-jam system like a reverse switch, a release mechanism or easy access lifting lid. Attempting to remove the pouch through tampering with the laminator will void the warranty. If part of the pouch is visible from the back or front of the laminator then you may be able to remove it by pulling the pouch from the front or rear but please note that it might be better to have it removed by a qualified technician as jamming caused by misuse or failing to following the operating instructions is not covered by the warranty.