Why won't my printer print in black and white when a colour has run out?

Are printers deliberately programmed to stop all function when an ink cartridge is empty? Why does printer say the cartridge is empty? *I can hear it sloshing around in there.*

Yes. Most printers will cease function when an ink cartridge is empty or missing. This is one of the issues that many owners of multifunction printers may face. Unless you own a monochrome printer, you will most like have come across this at least once or twice. While this may seem to be outlandish and somewhat shady, there is actually a good reason for it. The programming was intended to prevent/minimize damage (or further damage) to the printer while the printer is not in a fully functional state.

In addition, many inkjet printers have print heads that require available ink for the periodic servicing tasks. This usually consists of print head cleaning and maintenance to minimise the risk of clogging.

We can agree that it is fair to say the lack of any colour can be seen as something "wrong."

This is not a problem that is exclusive to any one brand of printers. It seems that it is a peculiarity that has been adopted across the board.

What's more, some printers will cease scan functions if any of the cartridges are empty.

Now we do have some good news. If all you need to do is scan, you can still scan using your computer. We are working another Tip Sheet that has instructions on how to scan from your computer. It will be in our website in the "News & Specials" drop down menu.

The safest solve for this is to replace the empty cartridge. It doesn't have to cost much as many printers are able to take generic cartridges. Also many inkjets have cartridges that can be refilled.

Contact us with your printer model and we can assist you in finding your most cost effective solution.

Ink/Toner Cartridges, Refills, Printers, Spare Parts, Service/Maintenance
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FAQs

How can my cyan be empty? I have only ever printed in black and white.

If your printer can print in colour, the default settings are to print in colour. This means that the printer will use all the inks to produce the colours required for the print (including black). To circumvent this, you will need to change the setting[1] of the prints from the application you are printing from. (This is usually found in Print Settings or Advanced Print settings in the pop up when you print).

However, in some machines monochrome and greyscale may use tiny amounts of colour. This is not to waste your ink, but to maintain ink flow in all the cartridges and feedlines in the printer. Sometimes (*rarely*) it is evaporation.

Your printer requires regular cleans to maintain optimum function. The cleaning cycles are programmed to clean and flush all the ink nozzles to minimize drying and clogging. This also removes air bubbles that may be present in the cartridge. This process uses ink from the cartridges.

Can I fool my printer into thinking a cartridge is full?

Yes. It is possible to trick a printer into thinking that an empty cartridge is full. We strongly recommend that such techniques are avoided. The printer requires ink in all cartridges to perform certain functions to maintain optimum operation. For example, a cleaning cycle will draw ink from a cartridge to flush out print heads and feedlines. Drawing on an empty cartridge can introduce air into the feedlines which will dry out any existing ink thereby forming clogs. Often there is no cost effective way to repair this kind of fault.

Why am I supposed to do a print head clean? What is the point?

Inks are made up of pigments and liquid and if the liquid evaporates pigment is left behind. This can cause clogs in the print head. It is important to do regular print head cleans (and a nozzle check where applicable) to minimize the clogging of print heads and feedlines.

As print head cleans can be a lengthy and expensive exercise, we recommend you do a print test prior to changing an (almost) empty cartridge. This will give you a better idea of whether a print head clean is necessary at the time.

Why are my printouts splotchy, faded, missing spots or full of lines?

Most of the time this means that the print head is clogged or blocked with dried ink. This can happen when the printer hasn't been used for a period of time. We recommend that you use your printer at least once or twice a week. Even a simple sentence with the font colour changed so that all available colours are utelised. This will minimize blockages

Why doesn't the cartridges print the number of pages it says it will?

The number of pages that a cartridge will print is calculated on a 5% coverage. (*The ink usage only covers 5% of a page*.) To get a better idea of the yield of the cartridges you use, you can see how many cartridges you need to get through one ream of paper. Alternatively, track how many reams of paper you get through before you need to replace your cartridge.

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[1] We recommend you select Black&White/Grayscale AND Plain Paper

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Why does my printer keep asking for a cartridge when I just put a new on in?
(*Why does my printer say the cartridge is empty*?)
Often, it is because the cartridge hasn't been installed properly. In some cases (inkjet), ensuring that it is flush with the other cartridges could be the fix, in others (laser); a manual reset might be required. In either case, remove the cartridge and the reinstall it ensuring that is clicks into place. For manual resets[2], refer to the printer manual. Occasionally, there might be a chip or contact error; you'll need to contact your supplier to remedy this.

Will using a refilled or generic cartridge void my warrantee?
In Australia, no. Using generic or refilled cartridges will not void printer warrantees. Please refer to our Fact Sheet "Information about your printer Warranty" This can be found on our website (www.cartridgeextra.com.au). [*Hover your cursor over "News and Specials. A drop down menu will appear. Click on "Product Tip Sheets"*]

Do you buy back empty cartridges?
No, however, we are able to refill many original ink cartridges and can accept any non-refillable cartridges to recycle for you. You can dispose of any printer cartridge by dropping it into a cartridge recycling box (Cartridges 4 Planet Ark). Most Australia Post Offices will have one. Many major retailers (that sell printers and printer consumables) will also have a Planet Ark box that you can drop your empty cartridges into. You can find your nearest recycling box by visiting http://recyclingnearyou.com.au/cartridges/.

For more FAQs please see our FAQs Page. This can be found on our website in the Product Tip Sheets (Hover your mouse over "News and Specials to access the drop down menu)

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[2] You can call us on 8084 2567 or email sales@cartridgeextra.com.au with your printer details and we can assist you with the reset steps.

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