

A Guide To Printer Ribbons

Do you need help with understanding the different types of ID card printer ribbons?

The type of ID card printer ribbon you'll need will depend entirely on your printing requirements.

To maintain a high-quality print and to also prolong the life of your card printer, it is essential that you do these 2 things:

- **Only ever purchase genuine card printer ribbons**
- **Only use a ribbon that is compatible with your chosen ID card printer**



Let's Talk Types Of Printer Ribbons....

- Card printer ribbons are available in either monochrome or full colour.
- If you are printing in only one colour such as black, then a monochrome ribbon is perfect!
- If your design contains two or more colours, then you will need to opt for a full-colour ribbon.

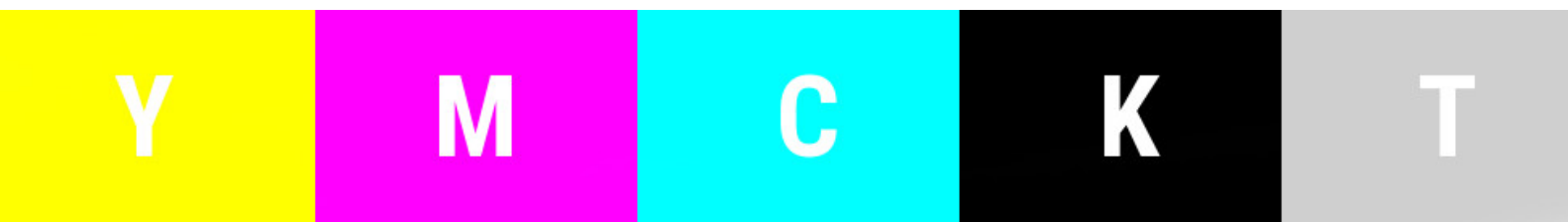
YMCKO – Yellow (Y), Magenta (M), Cyan (C), Black (K), Overlay (O)



Probably the most popular and adaptable of all the printer ribbons, the YMCKO offers 4 colours with the added extra of a protective overlay incorporated into the ribbon.

Their main feature is the clear coating overlay which gives your finished cards extra protection against abrasions or tampering, making them the perfect choice for cards that will receive a lot of handling or which contain secure information.

YMCKT – Yellow (Y), Magenta (M), Cyan (C), Black (K), Topcoat (T)



YMCKT ribbons work in the exact same way as the YMCKO ribbon above the only difference is the (O) is replaced by a topcoat (T) panel.

YMCKOK – Yellow (Y), Magenta (M), Cyan (C), Black (K), Overlay (O), Black (K)



If you are looking to print dual-sided cards with colour on the front and black text or barcodes on the reverse then this ribbon is suitable for the task.

Half-Panel Ribbons

Half-panel ribbons are available in YMCKO, YMCK, YMCKOK and YMCKK formats and are ideal for creating photo ID cards where colour is only required to be printed onto one half of the card.

You can add an image or logo onto one side of the card, and print in full black text onto the other side of the card.

By using a half panel ribbon, you will save money on ongoing consumables but are restricted to the print area on each card.



Monochrome Ribbons

Monochrome ribbons are ideal if your card design contains one single colour with no shading.

Black monochrome ribbons are popular when adding barcodes or text to the reverse of the card such as “If found, please return to”, while colour monochrome ribbons are more commonly used to adding to pre-printed cards.

Please note that Monochrome ribbon colours will vary by printer model and manufacturer depending on their setup, but to help we have listed the most common colours available below:

- Black
- White
- Green
- Red
- Blue
- Metallic gold
- Metallic silver
- BO & KO Monochrome Ribbons



In some instances, you may see options to purchase a BO or a KO monochrome ribbon.

B stands for pure Black, ideal for printing barcodes and K stands for composite Black which is a mix of combined colours to form the Black, more suited for printing detailed text.

Ribbons for Retransfer or Laminating Printers

If you are printing using a retransfer printer such as the likes of Fargo HDP5000 which is a card printer with a built-in laminator, then it is essential that you select the correct ribbon.

Retransfer and lamination ribbons never have an overlay panel as this protective overlay is added with a separate retransfer film during the lamination process.

When ordering a retransfer ribbon, please check to see the compatible retransfer film as you will need to purchase both at the same time.

YMC – Yellow (Y), Magenta (M) and Cyan (C)

Y

M

C

This retransfer ribbon can be used to print full-colour single-sided cards with no black text or images.

YMCK – Yellow (Y), Magenta (M), Cyan (C), Black (K)

Y

M

C

K

These are the four colours that can be combined to enable you to produce all the colours in the visible spectrum.

Create vibrant, full-colour images and black text on a single-sided card, ideal for printing photo ID cards.

YMCKK – Yellow (Y), Magenta (M), Cyan (C), Black (K), Black (K)

Y

M

C

K

K

If you're printing using a dual-sided retransfer printer then this ribbon will allow you to add full-colour images and black text to the front of the card, and black text or barcodes on the back.

YMCKI – Yellow (Y), Magenta (M), Cyan (C), Black (K), Inhibitor (I)

Y

M

C

K

I

Opting for this ribbon allows you to print full-colour single-sided ID cards with black text or images only.

The Inhibitor Panel (I) prevents the design from being printed on specific parts of the cards, such as a signature panel or RFID chip, ensuring they work properly.

