

Tech Tip 117

Plate Masking:

3040/3048 Non-PanelMate®

The ability to hold fine detail in a printing plate is directly related to the relief in that plate. Finer detail can be achieved in the plate when relief height is reduced. Enhancing this ability to hold fine detail can be achieved with a process known as plate masking. Plate masking allows the reduction of the relief height in only those areas with fine detail, thereby allowing maximum relief in all other areas of the plate.

MAKING A MASK

A single mask can be made for one negative and then can be stored with that negative for future usage. Masks can be made from any material that will block the transmission of UV light. Place the platemaking negative on a light table and cover it with any UV opaque material. Mark the image areas of the negative on the mask and remove those areas.

USING THE MASK

The normal exposure cycle is completed including upper and lower light exposures. The lower vacuum is left on.

- 1) The upper frame is raised and the mask is taped into position. Ensure all areas not being exposed are covered.
- 2) Place a shim, thicker than the overlay masks (15-20 mils will do), on the outside shims and tape it in place.
- 3) Set the upper frame timer (T1) to the desired mask time. Set lower frame timer (T2) to zero. Lower upper frame.
- 4) Depress manual exposure button.
- 5) Once the cycle is completed, raise the frame and process the plate. Remember to reset timers to normal again.

