



Q Local™ Frequent Asked Questions Scanning Data and Maintaining the Scanner

OpScan® Scanner Calibration Recommendations

Scanner Operation

OpScan scanners internally test the read heads during scanning. This test checks to make sure that the scanner is reading paper and dark marks at the correct levels. If either of the tests fail, the scanner will report a Light Check or Dark Check error.

Scanner calibration is only recommended if thorough cleaning of the scanner and read heads doesn't eliminate a Light Check or Dark Check error.

It is not recommended to calibrate daily to ensure the scanner is reading properly. Frequent calibration of the scanner increases the risk of getting a marginal calibration. This can be caused because the scanner hasn't been powered up long enough for the scanner and read head components to have had a chance to warm up to their normal operating temperature. The use of damaged or dirty Calibration Packs also increases the chances of getting a marginal calibration.

A user may want to calibrate a scanner if it hasn't been used for an extended period of time, just before a large scanning run, or on a scheduled basis, as long as the calibration requirements are diligently adhered to.

Calibration Requirements

To ensure maximum data integrity, the following steps must be taken before an OpScan scanner is calibrated.

1. The scanner must be powered up for at least 30 minutes before it is calibrated.
2. The scanner and read heads must be thoroughly cleaned.
3. The Calibration Packs must not be damaged or dirty.
 - a. If any sheet in a Calibration Pack becomes damaged or dirty, the whole pack has to be discarded.
 - b. To verify that you have a Certified Calibration Pack, check to make sure that the QA numbers printed in red down the Timing Track area of sheets 2 through 5 are identical.

An effective alternative to frequently calibrating a scanner is to run the Top Head Check test on a single read head scanner or to run the Top Head Check and Bottom Head Check tests on a dual read head scanner using the same Calibration Pack used to calibrate the scanner. These tests can be found in the background Diagnostics Menu of the scanner. Again, Pearson stresses the importance of following the same requirements to calibrate a scanner. If the requirements are not followed, the scanner could report false Head Check errors.