

2. Blanket Washes

Regular and correct use of blanket washes is essential for maintaining the condition of the printing blanket and prolonging its working life.

Blanket washes are formulated to cleanse the pores of the blankets and leave them free of gum glaze and deeply embedded ink. This ensures that the blankets remain resilient and receptive to ink.

Water miscible blanket washes are based essentially on organic solvents but contain small amounts of additives to facilitate and improve miscibility with water.

It is important to avoid the possibility of blanket wash working back into the fount system as any contamination will interfere with the effective functioning of the fount solution, and may in extreme circumstances give rise to stable foam formation.

Foam Formation

A foam is a dispersion of a gas (usually air) in a liquid medium. However a gas and a pure liquid alone will not produce a stable foam, a third component is necessary which must be absorbed into the liquid surface to impart a degree of "elasticity" to the surface film. This surface film prevents the gas bubbles from coalescing, and can lead to the formation of stable foams.

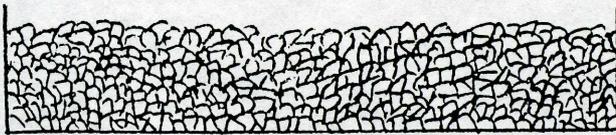
The major factor that differentiates between foam types is the stability of the structure.

Foams can be transient as observed, say, a glass of champagne or of a more persistent shaving cream type.

Stability is a function of several parameters.

(i) **Surface area**

The greater the surface area of the foam, the more stable is that foam.



High surface area - stable



Low surface area - unstable