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HP Storage Media usage and handling





Usage and handling

Tapes are sensitive to hostile environments and the conditions in which you operate and store media will have a major impact on how long the data can be guaranteed 100% readable.

Follow manufacturer recommendations

Recommended operation and storage temperatures and humidity are listed in the documentation that comes with the media you want to use.

Run your tapes in the right conditions

The first time you use any media, and whenever you need to use cartridges outside recommended limits, you should acclimatise them first by leaving the media to stand for at least 24 hours before using it. Generally, if you find the environment comfortable to work in, so will your media.

Avoid condensation

Condensation is an occupational hazard for tapes, where a thin tape is constantly being passed over a rapidly spinning drum. As well as using and storing cartridges correctly, you should also:

Place the drive where the temperature is relatively stable – away from open windows, radiators and other heat sources, and doorways.

Avoid reading from and writing to cartridges when the temperature is fluctuating by more than 10°C an hour.

If you bring a cold tape drive or cartridge into a warm room, allow it to reach room temperature before using it. This could take up to 24 hours if there is a big difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures.

Pay attention to your TapeAlert™

HP DDS and DLT drives have advanced error correction circuitry and use a recording format that can correct most 'soft' errors. Tape drives signal when these errors are encountered, including any that are corrected. When a data cartridge is nearing the end of its life, an increasing number of errors will crop up. A cartridge that keeps flagging up soft errors via TapeAlert should be retired before unreadable hard errors occur.

Keep your media out of harm's way

When stored in the proper conditions, data can be successfully stored on and recovered from HP DDS cartridges for up to ten years. HP DLT cartridges have a life expectancy of at least 20 years. For SDLT and Ultrium, it's 30 years and MO/UDO disks will provide decades of permanent storage.

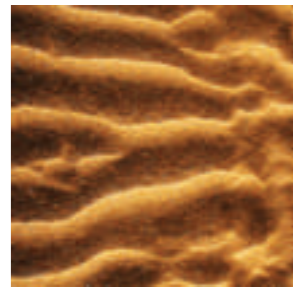
Tapes and disks should be removed from the drive as soon as they are used. They should be stored on edge, in the recommended magazines, containers and racks, and in an area where the temperature and humidity is more or less constant.

HP data cartridges and disks will continue to work well after being subjected to the roughest treatment. But since nothing is indestructible, you should always handle media with care:

- Do not drop or try to open the cartridge.
- Never touch the surface of the media or try to clean cartridge components, such as the tape path or tape guides.



Cold
Humidity
Heat



- Always store media in a clean environment, away from copiers and printers to avoid contamination by toner and paper dust.
- Do not expose the media to extreme heat, cold or humidity, anywhere near fire extinguishers, windows, doorways, magnetic fields and heat sources.
- Do not smoke, eat or drink where media is used or stored.
- Make sure labels stay within the label area.
- Always use the write-protect switch to prevent media from being accidentally overwritten, say, when you are reading archive tapes.

Make cleaning part of the routine

Many read and write errors are temporary and can be corrected by cleaning the drive or re-tensioning the tape. Regular drive cleaning is essential to ensure long-term reliability and data integrity and should be built into your backup schedule, according to manufacturer's recommendations, and also carried out whenever the drive requests it.