

THERMAL TITO TICKETS

How to avoid using a non-approved product



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The Australian gaming market has recently seen an influx of non-approved ticket in, ticket out (TITO) paper. The use of these non-approved tickets can result in significant problems for venues and customers, including damage to thermal print heads, poor printed image quality and errors when scanning barcodes.

For this reason, it is vital that venues only use IGT-approved top coated thermal papers in electronic gaming machines.

Background

TITO was developed by IGT, originally under the name 'EZ Pay® system', to facilitate cashless gaming.

IGT developed a standard for the production of TITO tickets, including a list of approved papers. IGT has approved a number of suppliers to produce paper for TITO tickets under their specification (PN 83500400) to ensure ticket quality. The specification lists requirements for outlined dimensions, paper thickness, material properties, perforation strength and optical characteristics.

Approved TITO paper manufacturers

Currently there are only three manufacturers approved by IGT to produce paper for TITO tickets. They are all based in the USA.

The strict controls ensure that the paper is of an acceptable quality to meet the requirements of equipment providers, gaming venues and players. The manufacturers have an in-depth knowledge of IGT specifications and they have the specialist machinery required to maintain quality control.

All paper used for TITO tickets must be sourced from one of these three manufacturers to be IGT-compliant.

Top coated thermal paper

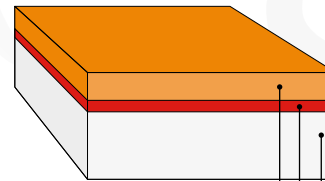
Top coated thermal papers differ from standard, non-top coated papers in that they have an extra layer of coating applied on top of the thermal coating.

IGT and the three major manufacturers of TITO printers – JCM, Transact and Nanoptix – all specify that only top coated paper be used in their printers.

Top coated paper offers three main advantages:

- superior print quality
- increased print head longevity
- protection of the printed image from external influences.

Non Top coated

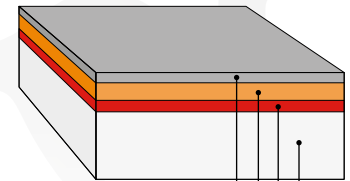


Thermal Coat

Undercoat

Base Paper

Top coated



Top Coat

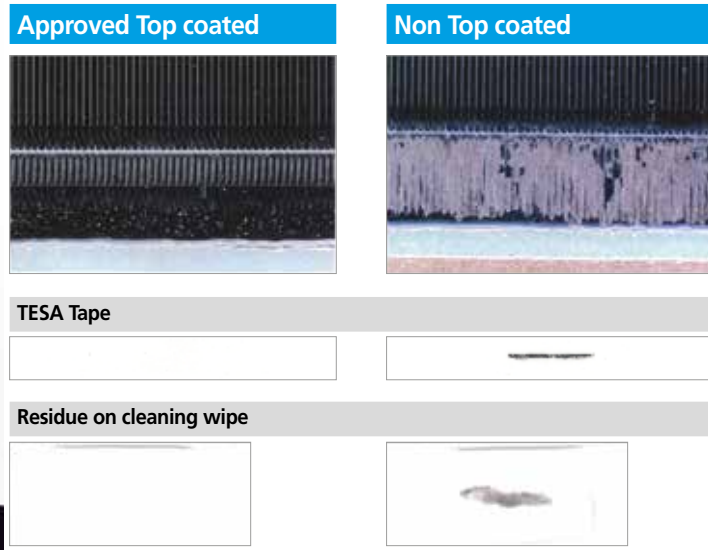
Thermal Coat

Undercoat

Base Paper

Print-head longevity

During the thermal printing process, the paper is in constant contact with the thermal print head. Since non-approved paper is less smooth, it can significantly reduce the lifespan of the print head. The absence of a top coat can also lead to mechanical abrasion of the print head and result in residue deposits (see image Head Residue Test). Indicators of damaged print heads include missing areas in the printed image (visible as white vertical lines) and low image density, reducing the readability of the barcode.



Print quality

The extremely smooth nature of top coated paper allows the thermal print head to perform at its optimum. In turn, it delivers a superior image, which is critical for barcode readability. Top coated paper provides a sharper image at the optimal print density.

Protection against environmental influences

The extra layer of coating added to the thermal paper also acts as a barrier against environmental influences and protects the thermal image. In a gaming environment, TITO tickets can be exposed to a range of potentially damaging influences such as water, alcohol, oils and plasticisers (e.g. hand cream, bank cards). For non-approved papers, exposure to these influences can affect the readability of the barcode on the TITO tickets.

Water



Exposure to water inhibits ability to read barcode.



Hand Sanitiser



Exposure to hand sanitiser results in failure or minimal success to read the barcode.



Lotion



Exposure to lotion inhibits ability to read barcode



How to test for genuine top coated paper

The quickest and cheapest way to test for genuine top coated paper is by using a top coat test pen.

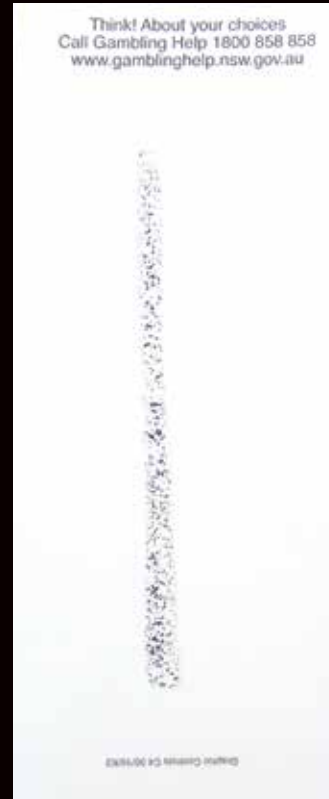
Simply use the pen to draw a line on the thermal coated side of a TITO ticket. The two images on the right show the difference between top coated and non-top coated paper once the pen has been applied.

Image A is an example of what happens when the top coat test pen is applied to the thermal print side of a top coated ticket. The top coat acts as a barrier to the substance of the pen, resulting in a line that is unclear and ill-defined.

Image B is an example of when the pen is applied to a non top coated ticket. Without a top coat to act as a barrier there is nothing to stop the substance of the pen reacting with the thermal coating, resulting in a dark line.

Sample TITO tickets may be sent to Charters Paper for testing to determine if they are made from a genuine top coated paper product.

A) Top coated



B) Non Top coated



Charters Paper - hit the jackpot

With over 20 years' experience, Charters Paper is Australia's leading supplier of thermal paper products to the gaming, lottery, banking and retail industries.

Our extensive technical expertise and product knowledge enables us to assist clients in matching their thermal printing applications with the correct thermal paper.

Our partnership with Graphic Controls, the world's largest manufacturer of TITO tickets, makes Charters Paper a key player in the Australian TITO market.

Benefit from our partnership with Graphic Controls, the world's largest and most successful supplier of TITO Tickets – giving you direct access to superior quality, service and pricing.



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