

Things to Consider Before Purchasing a Dryer

Oven section lengths vary and are an important factor in determining which model is suited for your business. It is important to have a realistic projection of how many garments per hour your shop can produce before you purchase a textile dryer. Bigger is not always better, and you don't want to end up buying more oven than you actually need. At the same time, you don't want to purchase a dryer with an oven section that is too short to handle your production needs.

Remember that a garment needs to be in the drying chamber for approximately one minute to achieve a full cure. (Always follow your ink manufacturer's ink curing guidelines.) Speeding up the belt to handle faster printing times can get you in trouble, unless you have a long enough oven tunnel to allow the garment to stay under the heat elements for the full minute. A small manual print shop can usually get by with a short oven length (4-foot to 6-foot), depending on shop conditions.

HIX BG-4820 is a gas convection air conveyor dryer system. Built for high-volume production, this 48-inch model also is available in 60-inch and 72-inch configurations. All sizes feature an efficient 300,00 BTU burner in conjunction with fresh air combustion to recirculate oven chamber heat. Features include an analog belt speed controller, digital temperature controller, safety switches for temperature, combustion recirculation and exhaust.

Shops running automatic presses will need a long oven in their production lines — usually 8- to 12-feet long.

It is important to note that any conveyor dryer is only as good as its operator in terms of getting drying times correct and properly curing the ink deposit. Always follow the ink manufacturer's curing guidelines and monitor your dryer temperature on a consistent basis with tools that work with your equipment. If you use a "ray gun"-type thermometer, be sure to hold the barrel of the ray gun well into the exit end of the drying tunnel and aim the sensor at a large area of ink.

Remember that the actual ink temperature will reach its highest temperature about three-fourths of the way through the oven, and the garment will begin to cool down rapidly in the last one to two feet of travel. This occurs when it exits the oven and begins to mix with cooler, ambient air. Also, temperature tapes are great tools for checking the ink temperatures, and so are digital temperature probe devices.

When checking your dryer temperature, be sure to use reliable temperature testing tools, and remember the best safeguard is to always do periodic wash tests to ensure your dryer settings are correct. Investing in a good reliable textile dryer will be the best move your business can make.