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TROUBLESHOOTING GUIDE

Zebra ZD621 troubleshooting guide: errors, faults and fixes

Updated 21 October 2026 · By TIMCOD maintenance technicians · Source: official Zebra documentation, ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (ZD421 and ZD621 Series Desktop Printers User Guide) (list at the end of the page)

TIMCOD PRODUCT PAGE (IN FRENCH)

See the Zebra ZD621 product page →

In brief. The Zebra ZD621 is a desktop thermal label printer, available in thermal transfer (ZD621t) or direct thermal (ZD621d), with a Healthcare version and an RFID version (ZD621R). Zebra documents it in a user guide shared with the ZD421; this guide keeps what applies to the ZD621, notably the colour touch display offered as a factory option, the built-in Ethernet and serial ports and the display menus. The causes the manufacturer cites most often are running out of labels or ribbon, a cover that is not properly latched, printhead temperature and a media sensor that is badly positioned or badly calibrated. Here you will find the alerts and lights, the SmartCal procedure, cleaning the printhead and platen roller, resetting and communication problems. Click a question to open its entry.

- **A message appears or the display turns yellow or red** (Media Out, Ribbon Out, Printhead Open...): find it in the [lookup table](#) and open the matching entry.

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- **No message, but labels are misaligned or print quality is poor:** start with [SmartCal calibration](#), then [printhead cleaning](#) and the [platen roller](#).
- **The problem keeps coming back:** the [preventive maintenance](#) section explains how it reduces this type of fault.

What error is my Zebra ZD621 showing? Lookup by message and by lights

The ZD621 reports its errors through five lights (STATUS, PAUSE, DATA, SUPPLIES, NETWORK) and, on models fitted with the colour touch display, through a message shown on a yellow or red background. The table links each message or light state to its cause and to the troubleshooting entry.

Message or state	Lights (Zebra guide)	Likely cause	Entry
Printhead Open	● STATUS solid red	Cover not properly latched or head-open switch needing repair	Printhead Open
Media Out	● ● STATUS solid red, SUPPLIES solid red	Media not detected: empty roll, missing label or unsuitable continuous / non-continuous setting	Media Out
Ribbon Out	● SUPPLIES flashing red	End of ribbon (ZD621t, thermal transfer)	Ribbon Out
Cutter Error	● STATUS solid red	Cutter blade jammed	Cutter Error

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Message or state	Lights (Zebra guide)	Likely cause	Entry
Printhead Over Temp	● STATUS solid orange	Printhead too hot: cooling pause	<u>Printhead Over Temp</u>
STATUS and PAUSE flashing red	● ● STATUS flashing red, PAUSE flashing red	Printhead overheating: the printer must cool down and then be restarted	<u>Printhead Shutdown</u>
Printhead Shutdown	—	Printhead overheating: switch off, let it cool, switch back on	<u>Printhead Shutdown</u>
Printhead Under Temp	● STATUS flashing orange	Printhead too cold (room too cold or faulty thermistor)	<u>Printhead Under Temp</u>
Out of Memory	● ● DATA flashing amber, STATUS solid amber	Not enough memory for a format, graphic or font	<u>Out of Memory</u>
Unauthorized Printhead Error	● STATUS solid red	Printhead that is not a genuine Zebra printhead (authentication failure)	<u>Printhead not recognise d</u>
Printhead Resolution Error	—	Printhead resolution unreadable: printhead incorrectly installed or not a Zebra printhead	<u>Printhead not recognise d</u>
Yellow or red home screen	—	Alert or error in progress (colour touch display models)	<u>Yellow or red screen</u>

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Message or state	Lights (Zebra guide)	Likely cause	Entry
DATA off after sending a job	○ DATA off	Incorrect communication settings	<u>No data received</u>
DATA flashing, nothing prints	● DATA flashing green	Format not recognised: wrong ZPL prefix, communication or format	<u>Data received but nothing printed</u>
NETWORK solid red	● NETWORK solid red	Ethernet or Wi-Fi fault	<u>NETWORK light</u>
NETWORK flashing	●●● NETWORK flashing red, amber or green	Wi-Fi associating or authenticating, or weak signal	<u>NETWORK light</u>
Battery health light red	● Battery: health solid red or flashing red	Internal error or charging error on the optional battery	<u>Battery light red</u>

The light states come from the “Standard Interface Controls” page and the “Status – Typical Operating Conditions” and “Status – Printhead Operation” tables in the ZD421 / ZD621 user guide; the battery light state comes from the battery light table in the same guide (PDF version). Orange corresponds to “amber” in the Zebra guide. A dash means that the page consulted does not specify the light states.

Zebra ZD621 error messages: causes and solutions

Eight ZD621 alerts are described here based on the Zebra user guide, including the signal specific to the colour touch display. For each one: the short answer, the cause, the steps to follow and, where the guide provides for it, the point at which you should hand over to a technician.

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Why does my Zebra ZD621 show “Printhead Open” when the cover is closed?

Message: Printhead Open · Lights: STATUS solid red.

Short answer: According to Zebra, the ZD621's cover, which carries the printhead, is not latched, or the head-open switch needs repair. Close the cover by pressing down on its two front corners until the latches click; if the alert is still displayed, call in a technician.

LIKELY CAUSE

The Zebra guide describes this alert when the printer receives a print command or a press of FEED while the cover is open or not properly closed. Second cause cited: the head-open switch needs servicing.

WHAT TO DO

1. Close the cover by pressing down on its two front corners, on the top.
2. Check that you hear and feel the latches click: the cover is then locked for printing.
3. If the alert persists even though the cover is properly latched, the head-open switch is at fault: do not keep trying.

When to call a technician: if the alert persists with the cover latched, Zebra states that the head-open switch must be repaired by a technician.

Sources: [Alert: Printhead Open](#) · [Standard Interface Controls](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

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Why does my Zebra ZD621 show “Media Out” when labels are loaded?

Message: **Media Out** · Lights: STATUS solid red, SUPPLIES solid red.

Short answer: The ZD621 does not detect any media in the media path: empty roll, missing label at the end of the roll, or printer set for labels while continuous media is loaded. Reload the roll, close the cover then press FEED or PAUSE; after changing the media type, run a new SmartCal calibration.

LIKELY CAUSE

According to Zebra, the alert appears when a print is requested, FEED is pressed or a job is in progress and the printer does not detect any media. The guide cites four causes: no roll loaded; a missing label which, with some manufacturers, marks the end of the roll; a printer set for non-continuous media (gap or black mark) while continuous media is loaded; media that can no longer be detected (corrupted memory or failed component).

WHAT TO DO

1. Empty roll: load media, close the printer, then press FEED or PAUSE if necessary to resume printing.
2. Missing label at the end of the roll: open the printer, replace the empty roll and resume printing. Leave the printer switched on during the operation, otherwise the current job is lost.
3. Continuous media loaded while the printer expects labels: check that the movable media sensor is in its default centre position, then run a new SmartCal calibration if needed (see [the calibration entry](#)).
4. Media still not detected: reload the printer firmware.

When to call a technician: if the media is still not detected after reloading the firmware, Zebra says to call a technician.

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Sources: [Alert: Media Out](#) · [Standard Interface Controls](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

Why does my Zebra ZD621t show “Ribbon Out” during printing?

Message: **Ribbon Out** · Lights: SUPPLIES flashing red (thermal transfer mode).

Short answer: The ZD621t has reached the end of the ribbon: genuine Zebra ribbons end with a reflective leader that the printer reads as the end of the ribbon. Remove the used ribbon, install a new roll, close the cover then press FEED once, or PAUSE, to resume.

LIKELY CAUSE

Zebra states that the printer stops mid-job, or reports the alert as soon as a job is sent, when it detects the end of the ribbon. The SUPPLIES light only reports this ribbon-out condition in thermal transfer mode: in direct thermal (ZD621d), no ribbon is used.

WHAT TO DO

1. Open the cover and remove the used ribbon.
2. Install a new roll of ribbon, then close the printer.
3. Press FEED once, or PAUSE, to resume printing.

The other causes on the Zebra page (ribbon cartridge missing or not recognised) only concern the cartridge-based ZD421, not the ZD621.

Sources: [Alert: Ribbon Out](#) · [Standard Interface Controls](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

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Why does my Zebra ZD621 stop with the “Printhead Over Temp” alert?

Message: Printhead over temp · Lights: STATUS solid orange.

Short answer: The printhead has overheated and the ZD621 pauses to let it cool down. After a large print job, there is nothing to do: printing resumes on its own. If the room is too hot or the printer is exposed to the sun, move it.

LIKELY CAUSE

Zebra cites two causes: a large job with a lot of printing, or an ambient temperature above the printer's operating range. Direct sunlight can raise the temperature inside the printer.

Caution: The printhead can be hot enough to cause severe burns: let it cool before touching it.

WHAT TO DO

1. Leave the printer paused: printing resumes automatically once the head has cooled down.
2. If the alert keeps coming back, move the printer to a cooler place, out of the sun, or lower the room temperature.

If STATUS and PAUSE are both flashing red, the guide states that the printer must cool down and then be restarted (see [Printhead Shutdown](#)).

Sources: [Alert: Printhead Over Temp](#) · [Status – Printhead Operation](#) · [Standard Interface Controls](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

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What should I do when my Zebra ZD621 shows “Printhead Shutdown”?

Message: **Printhead Shutdown** · Lights: not specified by the page consulted.

Short answer: The ZD621's printhead has overheated. Zebra says to switch off the printer, wait several minutes for it to cool completely, then switch it back on.

LIKELY CAUSE

According to the “Status – Printhead Operation” table in the Zebra guide, this state indicates an overheating printhead.

Caution: The printhead can be hot enough to cause severe burns: let it cool before touching it.

WHAT TO DO

1. Switch the printer off.
2. Wait several minutes for the printhead to cool completely.
3. Switch the printer back on.

The Zebra page does not link this message to a light state. The light table does, however, state that STATUS and PAUSE flashing red indicate printhead overheating, which requires letting the printer cool down and then restarting it.

Sources: [Status – Printhead Operation](#) · [Standard Interface Controls](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

Why does my Zebra ZD621 show “Printhead Under Temp”?

Message: **Printhead under temp** · Lights: STATUS flashing orange.

Short answer: The printhead is colder than the temperature needed to print correctly, most often because the room is too cold. Switch off the ZD621, move it to

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a warmer place and let it warm up gradually.

LIKELY CAUSE

Zebra cites two causes: an ambient temperature below the printer's operating range, or a faulty printhead thermistor (the sensor that measures its temperature).

Caution: Zebra warns that a rapid change in temperature can cause condensation in and on the printer.

WHAT TO DO

1. Switch off the printer and move it to a warmer room.
2. Let it warm up gradually, without sudden heating.
3. If the room is already at the right temperature, switch off the printer by holding the POWER button for 5 seconds, wait for it to shut down completely, then switch it back on.

When to call a technician: if the alert persists after restarting in a room at the right temperature, the printhead thermistor is probably faulty: Zebra says to call a technician.

Sources: [Alert: Printhead Under Temp](#) · [Standard Interface Controls](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

Why does my Zebra ZD621 show “Out of Memory”?

Message: **Out of Memory** · Lights: DATA flashing orange, STATUS solid orange.

Short answer: The ZD621 does not have enough free memory to store a graphic, a format, a bitmap image or a font. Delete items that are no longer used or reduce the print area of the label format.

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LIKELY CAUSE

According to Zebra, the printer cannot store the data in the requested memory location. The second line of the message shows the operation that failed for lack of space.

WHAT TO DO

1. Read the second line of the message to find out which operation is short of memory.
2. Free up memory by changing the label format or the printer settings to reduce the print area.
3. Delete graphics, fonts or formats that are no longer used.
4. Check that the data is not being sent to a storage device that is missing or unavailable.

Sources: [Alert: Out of Memory](#) · [Standard Interface Controls](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

Why does the touch display on my Zebra ZD621 turn yellow or red?

Symptoms: home screen background yellow or red, alert message displayed.

Short answer: On a ZD621 fitted with the colour touch display, a yellow or red home screen background indicates that the printer is in an alert or error state. Read the message displayed, then open the matching entry in the lookup table.

LIKELY CAUSE

The Zebra guide states that the colour touch display, offered as a factory option on the ZD621, shows operator alert and error messages, and that the home screen background turns yellow or red when the printer is in an alert or error state.

WHAT TO DO

1. Read the message shown on the display (for example Media Out, Ribbon Out or Printhead Open).
2. Find this message in the [lookup table](#) and apply the matching entry.

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3. ZD621 printers with a touch display keep the five STATUS, PAUSE, DATA, SUPPLIES and NETWORK lights: their state confirms the type of alert.

The home screen also gives access to the menus, the Wizards and the shortcuts; the image of the printer can be rotated through 360 degrees there.

Source: [ZD421 and ZD621 Series Desktop Printers User Guide \(P1123730-05EN\)](#), “Controls and Indicators” and “Color Touch Display and Controls” chapters [↗](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (PDF) (official documentation).

Calibration problems: my Zebra ZD621 skips labels or does not detect them

SmartCal calibration, manual calibration from the touch display and the automatic actions at power-up or when the cover is closed, as Zebra describes them for the ZD621.

How do I calibrate a Zebra ZD621 with SmartCal?

Symptoms: skipped labels, offset printing or media badly detected after changing the roll.

Short answer: On the ZD621, SmartCal calibration is started from the ready state by holding PAUSE and CANCEL down together for two seconds. The printer feeds and measures a few labels, sets its detection levels, then the STATUS light returns to solid green.

LIKELY CAUSE

Zebra explains that SmartCal automatically determines the media type (gap / notch, black mark or continuous) and measures its characteristics. A new calibration is useful when you change media type; a roll of the same type, from the same supplier and the same batch does not need one, as the printer adapts on its own to small variations.



OFFICIAL SMARTCAL CALIBRATION PROCEDURE

1. Load the media correctly and, for thermal transfer (ZD621t), the ribbon. Close the cover.
2. Switch the printer on with POWER and wait for the ready state: STATUS light solid green.
3. Hold PAUSE and CANCEL down together for two seconds, then release.
4. The printer feeds and measures a few labels, then adjusts its detection levels. At the end, the STATUS light is solid green.
5. For a new roll from the same batch, one or two presses of FEED are enough to synchronise the labels.

If SmartCal does not recognise the media or calibrates it incorrectly, Zebra refers you to manual calibration. On a ZD621 with a touch display, it is in the Print > Sensors > Manual Calibration menu.

Sources: [Running a SmartCal Media Calibration](#)  · [Issue: Labels Are Distorted in Size or Print Area Start Position Varies](#)  – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

Why does my Zebra ZD621 skip labels or print out of position?

Symptoms: distorted labels, print start position that varies, image jumping from one label to the next.

Short answer: Zebra calls this a registration fault: media sensor badly positioned, sensors not calibrated for the media in use, platen roller slipping or a communication problem. Check the movable sensor, run a SmartCal calibration, then a manual calibration from the display if the skipping continues.

LIKELY CAUSE

The guide cites four causes: media badly loaded or movable media sensor badly adjusted; sensors not calibrated for the length, properties or sensing type of the media (gap / notch, continuous or mark); platen roller slipping or damaged, as rollers wear over time; communication cables or settings.

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WHAT TO DO

1. Check that the movable media sensor is positioned for your media type and its sensing mark.
2. Run a SmartCal calibration (see [the calibration entry](#)).
3. If labels are still being skipped, perform a manual calibration from the Print > Sensors > Manual Calibration menu on the touch display.
4. Clean or replace the platen roller if it slips (see [the platen roller entry](#)).
5. Check the communication cables and settings (see [the serial link entry](#)).

Source: [Issue: Labels Are Distorted in Size or Print Area Start Position Varies](#)  – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

Why does my Zebra ZD621 feed or calibrate labels at power-up or when the cover is closed?

Symptoms: media feed or automatic calibration at start-up or when the printhead is closed.

Short answer: This is the behaviour selected in the ZD621's Power Up Action (power-up) and Head Close Action (printhead closing) settings. Depending on the option, the printer calibrates, measures the label length, feeds to the first registration mark or does not move.

LIKELY CAUSE

The Zebra guide describes five options common to both settings. CALIBRATE adjusts the sensor levels and thresholds, determines the label length and feeds to the next label. SHORT CAL sets the thresholds without adjusting the sensor gain, determines the length and feeds. LENGTH determines the length using the current sensor values, then feeds. FEED feeds to the first registration mark. NO MOTION does not move the media: you must position it yourself or press FEED.

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WHAT TO DO

1. On the touch display, open System > Settings > Power Up Action for the power-up behaviour.
2. Open System > Settings > Head Close Action for the behaviour when the printhead is closed.
3. Choose the appropriate option from CALIBRATE, SHORT CAL, LENGTH, FEED and NO MOTION.

Source: [ZD421 and ZD621 Series Desktop Printers User Guide \(P1123730-05EN\)](#), “System Menu” chapter (Power Up Action, Head Close Action) [↗](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (PDF) (official documentation).

Label feed on the Zebra ZD621: the media slips, sticks or jams

When the media slips or sticks, Zebra points to the platen roller and describes how to clean and replace it.

Why do labels slip or stick in my Zebra ZD621?

Symptoms: media slipping, sticking or jamming, drop in print quality.

Short answer: According to Zebra, a platen roller fouled with adhesive, dust or oils makes the media slip or stick. Remove the roller, clean it with isopropyl alcohol and let it dry for one minute; if the media still sticks or jams, replace it.

LIKELY CAUSE

The platen acts both as the print surface and as the drive roller. Zebra asks you to remove deposits promptly (adhesive, dirt, dust, oils), as they can damage the printhead or make the media slip and stick. A platen that keeps sticking or causing jams after cleaning must be replaced.

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Caution: The swab or cloth must be barely damp, never soaked. Never wash or rub a linerless roller: Zebra states that this damages it permanently.

OFFICIAL ROLLER CLEANING PROCEDURE

1. Open the cover, and the label dispenser door if one is installed, then remove all media from the roller area.
2. On both sides, pull the bearing locking tabs towards the front of the printer, then rotate them upwards.
3. Lift the roller out of the frame, then slide the gear and both bearings off the shaft.
4. Standard roller: clean it from the centre outwards with a swab or lint-free cloth barely moistened with 99.7% isopropyl alcohol. Change swabs until the whole surface is clean, and go over it once more if there is heavy adhesive build-up.
5. Roller for linerless media: use no alcohol and do not rub; dab the surface with the adhesive side of a piece of linerless media.
6. Put the bearings and gear back on the shaft, refit the roller with the gear on the left, then fold the tabs back towards the rear until they click.
7. Let it dry for one minute before closing the printer or loading labels.

Zebra identifies the rollers by colour: standard black (203 dpi) or grey (300 dpi), linerless reddish-brown (203 dpi) or brown (300 dpi).

Sources: [Cleaning and Replacing the Platen](#) · [Recommended Cleaning Schedule](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

Several of these faults involve the ribbon or labels used. TIMCOD, [Zebra reseller](#), supplies [labels](#), [thermal transfer ribbons](#) and [printheads](#) for thermal printers (pages in French).

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Zebra ZD621 print quality: faded, blurred or smudged print

Printhead cleaning, choosing the darkness and matching the ribbon to the media: the procedures in the Zebra guide for getting sharp print again.

How do I clean the printhead on my Zebra ZD621, and how often?

Maintenance: with every new roll of labels, according to Zebra.

Short answer: Zebra recommends cleaning the ZD621's printhead every time you load a new roll, with a new cleaning pen. Remove the ribbon if there is one, wipe the dark area of the printhead from the centre outwards, then wait one minute before closing.

LIKELY CAUSE

Adhesive and dirt left by the media build up on the printhead. Zebra states that cleaning with every new roll promotes optimal operation; the maintenance schedule in the same guide sets a minimum of one cleaning every five rolls.

Caution: The printhead gets hot during printing: do not touch it, to avoid damaging it and injuring yourself. Follow antistatic precautions when working on the printhead or the electronics under the cover: an electrostatic discharge can damage or destroy them.

OFFICIAL PRINTHEAD CLEANING PROCEDURE

1. If a transfer ribbon is installed (ZD621t), remove it.
2. Use a new cleaning pen: a pen that has already been used can damage the printhead with contaminants from its previous use.
3. Wipe the dark area of the printhead from the centre outwards, to push the adhesive left by the edges of the media out of the media path.
4. Wait one minute for everything to dry before closing the printer or reloading the ribbon.

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On recent ZD621 Healthcare printers, the plastics withstand UV and disinfectants, and the sealed controls are cleaned along with the outside of the printer. Zebra refers you to its disinfecting and cleaning guide for Healthcare printers for the approved products.

Sources: [Cleaning the Printhead](#) · [Cleaning the Printhead – ZD421/ZD621 Thermal Transfer Printers](#) · [Recommended Cleaning Schedule](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

How do I find the right darkness setting on my Zebra ZD621?

Symptoms: print too light or too dark, barcodes out of specification.

Short answer: Zebra offers the print quality report (FEED self test): the ZD621 prints a series of labels at several darkness settings and two speeds. Keep the setting that gives the best barcodes at the speed you use, as each media can require a different darkness.

LIKELY CAUSE

According to Zebra, each media type can require a different darkness setting. The test is used to find the one that produces barcodes that meet the specification.

WHAT TO DO

1. Run the print quality report (FEED self test) described in the Zebra user guide.
2. The printer prints two series of seven labels, one at low speed and the other at high speed, with a relative darkness ranging from -3 to +3 around the current setting.
3. The test speeds are 51 mm/s (2 ips) and 152 mm/s (6 ips) at 203 dpi, and 51 mm/s (2 ips) and 102 mm/s (4 ips) at 300 dpi.
4. Each label shows its relative darkness and speed: compare the barcodes (or their ANSI grade if you verify them) and keep the darkness that gives the best result at your print speed.
5. Apply this darkness setting to the printer.

If the print is still faded with the right darkness, clean the printhead (see [the cleaning entry](#)).

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Source: [Printing a Print Quality Report \(FEED Self Test\)](#)  – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

Why is the print from my Zebra ZD621t blurred or smudged with the ribbon?

Symptoms: in thermal transfer, blurred print, smears, voids or holes with no regular pattern.

Short answer: According to Zebra, the ribbon material (wax, wax-resin or resin) may not suit the media (paper, coated paper or synthetic). Use a ribbon suited to your labels and do not exceed the maximum print speed recommended for that ribbon.

LIKELY CAUSE

Zebra links these defects to an incompatibility between the ribbon and the media, and to a print speed that is too high for the ribbon in use.

WHAT TO DO

1. Check that the ribbon type (wax, wax-resin or resin) suits your media (paper, coated paper or synthetic).
2. Replace the ribbon with one that is compatible with this media.
3. Set the print speed no higher than the maximum speed recommended for the ribbon.

The Zebra page gives the speed instruction for the ZD421's ribbon cartridge; the ZD621t uses roll ribbon, whose maximum speed is given by the ribbon manufacturer.

Source: [Issue: General Print Quality Issues](#)  – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

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Zebra ZD621 printhead: printhead not recognised after replacement

The messages the ZD621 displays when it does not recognise the installed printhead.

Why does my Zebra ZD621 show “Unauthorized Printhead Error” or “Printhead Resolution Error” after a printhead change?

Messages: `Unauthorized Printhead Error`, `Printhead Resolution Error` · Lights: STATUS solid red if printhead authentication fails.

Short answer: The ZD621 does not recognise the installed printhead: either it is not a genuine Zebra printhead, or it is incorrectly installed and the printer cannot read its resolution (dpi). Install a genuine Zebra printhead, correctly fitted.

LIKELY CAUSE

According to the “Status – Printhead Operation” table in the Zebra guide, “Printhead Resolution Error” means that the printer cannot read the printhead's resolution type, because it is incorrectly installed or has been replaced by a non-Zebra printhead. “Unauthorized Printhead Error” means that the installed printhead is not a genuine Zebra printhead.

Caution: Let the printhead cool before handling it: Zebra warns of a risk of severe burns. Also follow antistatic precautions, as an electrostatic discharge can destroy the printhead.

WHAT TO DO

1. If the printhead has just been replaced, check that it is fitted correctly by following the replacement procedure in the Zebra user guide.
2. If the printhead is not a genuine Zebra part, install a genuine Zebra printhead to be able to print.



Sources: [Status – Printhead Operation](#) · [Standard Interface Controls](#) · [Cleaning the Printhead](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

TIMCOD supplies [printheads for thermal printers](#) (page in French).

Zebra ZD621 connection problems: network, serial link, nothing prints

NETWORK light, data that does not arrive, data received but not printed and skipped labels over a serial link: the causes Zebra gives for the ZD621.

Why is the NETWORK light on my Zebra ZD621 red or flashing?

Light: NETWORK solid red (fault), or flashing red, orange or green (Wi-Fi connection in progress or weak signal).

Short answer: On the ZD621, a solid red NETWORK light indicates an Ethernet or Wi-Fi fault; flashing red, a Wi-Fi association in progress; flashing orange, a Wi-Fi authentication in progress; flashing green, a weak Wi-Fi signal. Print the network configuration label (FEED and CANCEL for two seconds in the ready state) to check the settings.

LIKELY CAUSE

The Zebra guide details the NETWORK light: solid orange for a 10Base Ethernet link, solid green for a 10/100 Ethernet link or a strong Wi-Fi signal, solid red for an Ethernet or Wi-Fi fault.

WHAT TO DO

1. Note the state of the NETWORK light and compare it with the states described above.

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2. Print the network configuration label: hold FEED and CANCEL for two seconds in the ready state, or CANCEL for two seconds during power-up. On the touch display, use Connection > Networks > Print: Network Info.
3. After changing the network settings, reset the print server with Connection > Networks > Reset Network: Zebra states that this reset is required for the changes to take effect.

Unlike the ZD421, the ZD621 has a factory-installed Ethernet port and serial port, according to the Zebra guide.

Sources: [Standard Interface Controls](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide · [ZD421 and ZD621 Series Desktop Printers User Guide \(P1123730-05EN\)](#), [Ethernet and Wi-Fi light tables](#) and [“Connection Menu” chapter](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (PDF) (official documentation).

Why does my Zebra ZD621 receive nothing when I send a label (DATA light off)?

Symptoms: job sent, DATA light does not flash, nothing prints.

Short answer: The label format is not recognised and the DATA light does not flash: Zebra points to the communication settings. Check the driver or software settings and, over a serial link, that the port settings match and the condition of the cable.

LIKELY CAUSE

Zebra cites three causes: incorrect communication settings in the driver or software; over a serial link, a flow control protocol (handshake) or port settings that differ between the printer and the computer; again over a serial link, a cable that is not a standard DTE or DCE type, that is damaged or that is too long for the RS-232 limits.

WHAT TO DO

1. Check the communication settings of the printer driver or software, if they apply to your setup.



2. Over a serial link, compare the printer's flow control protocol and port settings with those of the computer.
3. Over a serial link, check that the cable is a standard DTE or DCE type, in good condition and within the RS-232 length limits.

Source: [Issue: Label Job Sent, No Data Transfer](#)  – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

Why is the DATA light on my Zebra ZD621 flashing when nothing prints?

Symptoms: DATA light flashing green, nothing prints.

Short answer: The ZD621 receives the data but does not recognise the format. Zebra cites ZPL prefix and delimiter characters that differ between the printer and the format, communication settings that differ, or an incorrect label format.

LIKELY CAUSE

According to Zebra, three causes prevent the printer from interpreting a received format: the ZPL command prefix (COMMAND CHAR) and delimiter (DELIM./CHAR) set on the printer do not match those of the format; the computer's communication settings do not match those of the printer; the label format contains errors.

WHAT TO DO

1. Check the ZPL command prefix and delimiter on the printer, compare them with those of the label format and correct whichever is wrong.
2. Check that the computer's communication settings match those of the printer.
3. Review the label format using the Zebra ZPL programming guide.
4. To go further, turn on communications diagnostics mode: in the ready state, hold PAUSE and FEED for two seconds, or use System > Program Language > Diagnostic Mode on the touch display. The printer then prints all the data it receives; the ZPL command ~JE turns this mode off.

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Sources: [Issue: Label Job Sent, Data Transfers, But No Print](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide · [ZD421 and ZD621 Series Desktop Printers User Guide \(P1123730-05EN\)](#), “System Menu” chapter (Diagnostic Mode) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (PDF) (official documentation).

Why does my Zebra ZD621 print the first labels correctly, then skip labels or print the wrong content?

Symptoms: first labels correct, then labels skipped, misplaced, missing or a distorted image.

Short answer: Zebra attributes this symptom to serial communication settings that differ between the printer and the computer. Check that the flow control and the other serial link settings are identical on both sides.

LIKELY CAUSE

According to Zebra, the printer's serial communication settings do not match those of the host system.

WHAT TO DO

1. Open the communication settings of the printer driver or software, if they are accessible.
2. Check that the flow control matches that of the host system.
3. Check that the other serial link settings also match.

The ZD621 has a factory-installed serial port; this case concerns setups that use it.

Source: [Issue: Label Job Sent, Skips Labels or Prints Bad Content](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

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Zebra ZD621 cutter: cut error

The cutter is an option on the ZD621; Zebra states that it contains no user-serviceable parts.

Why does my Zebra ZD621 show “Cutter Error” and no longer cut?

Message: **Cutter Error** · Lights: STATUS solid red.

Short answer: The blade of the optional cutter is jammed and no longer moves correctly, because of media, adhesive or a foreign object. Switch off the ZD621 by holding POWER for 5 seconds, wait for it to shut down completely, then switch it back on; if the error persists, call a technician.

LIKELY CAUSE

Zebra states that media, adhesive or a foreign object is preventing the cutter blade from moving. The status table calls it “Cut Error (Binding)”.

Caution: Zebra specifies: never remove the cutter cover (bezel) and never insert objects or fingers into the mechanism. Do not use unapproved tools, cotton buds or solvents (including alcohol): they can damage the cutter, shorten its service life or jam it.

WHAT TO DO

1. Hold down the POWER button for 5 seconds to switch off the printer.
2. Wait for the printer to shut down completely.
3. Turn it back on.

When to call a technician: if the cut error persists after restarting, Zebra says to call a technician: the cutter contains no user-serviceable parts.

Sources: [Alert: Cutter Error](#) · [Status – Typical Operating Conditions](#) · [Standard Interface Controls](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

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Zebra ZD621 battery: red light on the battery base

The ZD621 can take an optional battery base; the Zebra guide explains its lights and faults.

Why is there a red light on the battery of my Zebra ZD621?

Light: battery health solid red (internal error) or flashing red (charging error).

Short answer: According to Zebra, the optional battery is reporting a fault: temperature out of range, end of life or a failed component. Let it return to room temperature, then check its charge; if the fault persists, replace it.

LIKELY CAUSE

Zebra cites three causes: battery too hot or too cold, battery at the end of its life, or a component failure. The battery light table distinguishes solid red (internal error) from flashing red (charging error).

WHAT TO DO

1. Let the battery return to room temperature, then check its charge again.
2. If the light stays red, remove the battery from the printer and check its condition by putting it on charge.
3. If the fault persists, replace the battery.

The battery fits in the ZD621's optional battery base. According to the Zebra table, when no charge bars light up, the battery needs recharging and the printer cannot be switched on using the battery.

Sources: [Issue: Battery Displays a Red Indicator](#) ↗ – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide · [ZD421 and ZD621 Series Desktop Printers User Guide \(P1123730-05EN\)](#), [battery light table](#) ↗ – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (PDF) (official documentation).

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Zebra ZD621 settings: lost settings and restoring factory defaults

Why settings are not retained, and how to restore factory defaults from the touch display or the buttons.

Why does my Zebra ZD621 lose or ignore its settings?

Symptoms: incorrect settings, settings lost after switching off or ignored.

Short answer: Most often, the changed settings have not been saved (ZPL command ^JU not sent before switching off) or a command in the label format overwrites them. Switch the printer off and on again to check that they are kept, and check the commands being sent.

LIKELY CAUSE

Zebra cites four causes: changes not saved; syntax errors or commands that disable a setting or reset it to its default value; control, command or delimiter characters that differ between the printer and the format; a problem with the main logic board, such as corrupted firmware.

WHAT TO DO

1. Switch the printer off and on again and check that the settings have been kept.
2. Check the command syntax and usage in the Zebra ZPL programming guide.
3. Print a configuration report, or look at the System > Language menu on the touch display, to check the control, command and delimiter characters, then compare them with your format.
4. If nothing works, restore the factory defaults (see [the reset entry](#)), then reload the printer firmware.

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When to call a technician: if the printer does not return to normal operation after restoring factory defaults and reloading the firmware, Zebra says to contact a technician: the main logic board is not user-serviceable.

Source: [Issue: Settings are Lost or Ignored](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

How do I reset a Zebra ZD621 to factory defaults?

Applies to: printer settings, print server settings or the last saved configuration.

Short answer: On a ZD621 with a touch display, open System > Settings > Restore Defaults and choose PRINTER (printer settings other than network), NETWORK (print server) or LAST SAVED (last save). From the buttons, hold FEED and PAUSE down during power-up to reset the printer settings to factory defaults.

LIKELY CAUSE

Zebra specifies that loading the defaults erases manual changes: you will need to reconfigure the printer afterwards.

OFFICIAL PROCEDURE FOR RESTORING FACTORY SETTINGS

1. On the touch display, open System > Settings > Restore Defaults.
2. Choose PRINTER to reset all printer settings except the network (ZPL command ^JUF).
3. Choose NETWORK to reset the wired or wireless print server (^JUN); a Wi-Fi printer then re-associates with its network.
4. Choose LAST SAVED to reload the settings from the last permanent save (^JUR).
5. Without using the display: hold FEED and PAUSE down during power-up to reset the printer settings to factory defaults.
6. Another option cited by Zebra: the “Load printer defaults” action in Printer Tools in Zebra Setup Utility.

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If Protected Mode is enabled, this setting cannot be changed from the front panel; Zebra refers you to its Link-OS PrintSecure administration guide.

Sources: [System > Settings > Restore Defaults](#) · [Issue: Settings are Lost or Ignored](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (official documentation).

Zebra ZD621R RFID: configuring and testing encoding

The ZD621R comes with factory-installed RFID support and the colour touch display; here is what the Zebra guide says about it.

How do I configure and test RFID encoding on my Zebra ZD621R?

Applies to: ZD621R (thermal transfer, factory-installed RFID).

Short answer: According to the Zebra guide, the ZD621R ships with factory-installed RFID support and the colour touch display. The RFID wizard on the display configures the RFID subsystem, and the RFID menu gives access to RFID status, RFID test and calibration, and read and write power.

LIKELY CAUSE

The RFID antenna is located between the platen roller and the movable media sensor slide. The guide describes a dedicated RFID menu: RFID Status, RFID Test, RFID Calibrate, Read Power, Write Power, RFID Antenna, valid and void label counters (RFID Valid Count, RFID Void Count), RFID Program Position and Read RFID Data.

WHAT TO DO

1. From the home screen, open Wizards then the RFID wizard, which configures how the RFID subsystem operates.
2. Do not send any data from the computer while using the wizards, as Zebra instructs.

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3. Then use the RFID menu to view the RFID status, run an RFID test or calibration and monitor the valid and void label counters.

The ZD421 / ZD621 user guide has a chapter on the RFID menu (“RFID Menu”); refer to it for details of each setting.

Source: [ZD421 and ZD621 Series Desktop Printers User Guide \(P1123730-05EN\)](#), “Introduction”, “Printer Features” and “Color Touch Display and Controls” chapters (Printer Wizards) [↗](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (PDF) (official documentation).

Other Zebra ZD621 problems: touch display not responding properly

Recalibrating the colour touch display, specific to ZD621 printers fitted with one.

What should I do if the touch display on my Zebra ZD621 does not respond properly to taps?

Symptoms: taps not registering properly on the colour touch display.

Short answer: The Zebra guide provides for recalibrating the touch display: open System > Settings > Screen Calibration, then touch each cross-shaped target displayed.

LIKELY CAUSE

The Screen Calibration setting recalibrates the touch display. It does not replace media calibration, which is done with SmartCal.

WHAT TO DO

1. Open System > Settings > Screen Calibration.
2. Touch each cross-shaped target shown on the display.
3. To calibrate labels, use the SmartCal procedure (see [the calibration entry](#)).

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Source: [ZD421 and ZD621 Series Desktop Printers User Guide \(P1123730-05EN\)](#), “System Menu” chapter ([Screen Calibration](#)) [↗](#) – ZD421 / ZD621 user guide (PDF) (official documentation).

When should you call a technician for a Zebra ZD621?

The entries above first suggest restarting, reloading, cleaning or calibrating. In the following cases, the Zebra guide refers you to a technician:

- **“Printhead Open” persisting with the cover latched:** head-open switch to be repaired.
- **“Media Out” persists after reloading the firmware:** media still not detected, failed component.
- **“Printhead Under Temp” persisting in a room at the right temperature:** printhead thermistor probably faulty.
- **“Cutter Error” persisting after a restart:** the cutter has no user-serviceable parts.
- **Settings still lost after a factory reset and firmware reload:** main logic board not user-serviceable.

Avoiding recurring faults on the Zebra ZD621: preventive maintenance

Several entries in this guide point to sensors that are badly positioned or dirty, a printhead or platen roller that needs cleaning, or unsuitable settings or consumables. These are exactly the points a preventive maintenance visit checks before they cause a breakdown.

TIMCOD preventive maintenance is part of the [through-life maintenance \(MCO\)](#) TIMCOD provides for your fleet (page in French): scheduled preventive visits by certified technicians, with a detailed report. What it brings to a ZD621 fleet:

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Fewer breakdowns, less downtime

Fewer production interruptions caused by label printers.

Worn parts detected in time

Printhead, platen roller, sensors: spotted before they cause a breakdown.

Regular cleaning and checks

Printhead, rollers and sensors cleaned and checked at every visit.

Longer service life

A well-maintained, properly adjusted printer lasts longer.

Print quality maintained

Legible barcodes, with darkness and printhead pressure suited to your consumables.

Fewer emergency call-outs

Incidents are handled during scheduled visits rather than as emergency repairs.

Controlled maintenance costs

A predictable budget instead of unplanned repairs.

Specialist Zebra technicians

Support from teams who know your equipment.

In addition, TIMCOD corrective maintenance includes phone support (hotline), repair to working order, express exchange and, as an option, SWAP. Maintenance contracts come in three levels (Essentiel, Confort, Premium).

Zebra ZD621 troubleshooting: frequently asked questions

How do I calibrate a Zebra ZD621?

In the ready state (STATUS light solid green), hold PAUSE and CANCEL down together for two seconds, then release. The ZD621 feeds and measures a few labels, adjusts its detection levels, then the STATUS light returns to solid green. If SmartCal does not

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recognise the media, Zebra refers you to manual calibration in the Print, Sensors, Manual Calibration menu on the touch display. [See the detailed entry.](#)

Why does my Zebra ZD621 show Media Out when there are still labels left?

The ZD621 does not detect any media: missing label at the end of the roll, or printer set for labels while continuous media is loaded. Replace the roll or check that the movable media sensor is in the centre position, then run a new SmartCal calibration. If the media is still not detected after reloading the firmware, Zebra says to call a technician. [See the detailed entry.](#)

What does a yellow or red display mean on a Zebra ZD621?

On a ZD621 fitted with the colour touch display, a yellow or red home screen background indicates that the printer is in an alert or error state. The message displayed (Media Out, Ribbon Out, Printhead Open...) gives the cause, and the five lights remain active to confirm it. [See the detailed entry.](#)

How do I restore a Zebra ZD621 to its factory configuration?

On the touch display, open System, Settings, Restore Defaults and choose PRINTER, NETWORK or LAST SAVED. Without using the display, hold FEED and PAUSE down during power-up to reset the printer settings to factory defaults. Zebra specifies that manual changes are then erased. [See the detailed entry.](#)

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How often should I clean the printhead on a Zebra ZD621?

Zebra recommends cleaning the printhead every time you load a new roll, and at least every five rolls according to the maintenance schedule in the guide. Use a new cleaning pen, wipe the dark area of the printhead from the centre outwards, then wait one minute before closing. [See the detailed entry.](#)

What should I do when a Zebra ZD621 shows Printhead Over Temp?

The printhead has overheated and the ZD621 pauses to let it cool down; after a large job, printing resumes on its own. If the room is too hot or the printer is exposed to the sun, move it. If STATUS and PAUSE are flashing red, switch off the printer, let it cool for several minutes, then switch it back on. [See the detailed entry.](#)

How do I print the network configuration of a Zebra ZD621?

In the ready state, hold FEED and CANCEL down for two seconds, or CANCEL for two seconds at power-up. On the touch display, the Connection, Networks, Print: Network Info menu prints the same network configuration label. [See the detailed entry.](#)

Why does my Zebra ZD621t show Ribbon Out?

The ZD621t has reached the end of the ribbon, indicated by the reflective leader on genuine Zebra ribbons. Remove the used ribbon, install a new roll, close the cover, then press FEED once, or PAUSE, to resume printing. [See the detailed entry.](#)

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Sources consulted

All the causes, procedures and messages in this guide come from the pages below of the official Zebra documentation (shared ZD421 / ZD621 user guide, online and in PDF), consulted on 20 October 2026.

- [Alert: Media Out](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Alert: Printhead Open](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Alert: Ribbon Out](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Alert: Cutter Error](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Alert: Printhead Over Temp](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Alert: Printhead Under Temp](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Alert: Out of Memory](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Status – Typical Operating Conditions](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Status – Printhead Operation](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Standard Interface Controls](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Running a SmartCal Media Calibration](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Issue: Labels Are Distorted in Size or Print Area Start Position Varies](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Issue: General Print Quality Issues](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Cleaning the Printhead](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Cleaning the Printhead – ZD421/ZD621 Thermal Transfer Printers](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Recommended Cleaning Schedule](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Cleaning and Replacing the Platen](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Printing a Print Quality Report \(FEED Self Test\)](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Issue: Label Job Sent, No Data Transfer](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Issue: Label Job Sent, Skips Labels or Prints Bad Content](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Issue: Label Job Sent, Data Transfers, But No Print](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**

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- [Issue: Settings are Lost or Ignored](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [Issue: Battery Displays a Red Indicator](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [System > Settings > Restore Defaults](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Desktop Printers User Guide **official**
- [ZD421 and ZD621 Series Desktop Printers User Guide \(P1123730-05EN Rev A, PDF\)](#)  – ZD421 and ZD621 Series Desktop Printers User Guide **official**

The following pages were not consulted for this guide: “Alert: Printhead Shutdown”, “Resolving Alerts and Errors” (index), “Issue: No Print on the Label”, “Printer Connectivity Issues”, “Color Touch Display and Controls” (HTML page), “Cleaning the Printhead – ZD421/ZD621 Direct Thermal Printers”, the manual calibration page (Manual Media Calibration) and the HTML pages for the RFID menu in the ZD421 / ZD621 user guide. They are not cited. If the fault falls under these documents, refer to the manufacturer's documentation or ask the TIMCOD technicians.

See also

- Product pages on timcod.fr (in French): [Zebra ZD621](#), [Zebra ZD621 Healthcare](#), [Zebra ZD611R](#) and [ZD621R](#)
- All Zebra printer troubleshooting guides (ZT230, ZT410, ZT421, ZT420, ZT411, S4M, GK420, ZD421, GX420, QLn420, ZQ630, ZQ511, ZQ610 Plus, ZQ510, ZC100 and ZC300, ZD410, ZD411, ZD420, ZD500R, ZD510-HC, ZD611, ZD620, ZQ310 Plus, ZQ320 Plus, ZQ620 Plus, ZT231, ZT510, ZT610 and ZT620, ZXP Series 7)
- [Maintenance and repair of Zebra printers](#)
- [All printer troubleshooting guides, all brands](#)
- [Through-life maintenance \(MCO\): preventive and corrective maintenance](#) (in French)
- [TIMCOD, Zebra reseller](#) (in French)
- [Zebra labels and consumables for thermal printers](#) (in French)
- [RFID labels and RFID printers](#) (in French)
- [Printer cleaning kits](#) (in French)

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PDF version of the page <https://www.timcod.fr/repair/en/printer-troubleshooting/zebra/zd621>, updated on 21 October 2026.

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