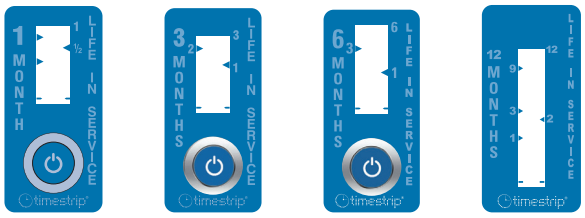
timestrip®

the smart way to measure time & temperature

Timestrip® Time Indicators FAQ



What is a Timestrip®?

Timestrip® is a patented, single use disposable timer in a convenient label format that can be stuck directly onto a product or device. Each Timestrip® acts as a simple visual reminder to replace an expired product or carry out a task, like maintaining a machine or checking results from a test. Timestrips® can be produced for any elapsed time period between 5 minutes and 2 years.

How does it work?

A tinted liquid gradually moves through a white viewing window at a pre-calibrated rate. You can read how long the Timestrip® has been active by seeing how far the colour has progressed along the time markers that are printed by the window. When the colour reaches the end of the window, the full time has elapsed and this is the signal to carry out your task or replace a product.

When you want to start monitoring elapsed time, activate the Timestrip® by fully squeezing the button between a thumb and finger. An activation line will appear to show that the Timestrip® is working. This line typically appears in a few seconds but can be up to a few minutes in Timestrips® that measure in months and years. Stick the Timestrip® on or near to the product or device it is monitoring and look at it occasionally so you can see when time is up.

Dispose of the Timestrip® once the colour has reached the end of the window and activate a new Timestrip® to start monitoring the next product or device.

Are Timestrips® available as stock products?

Yes. 1, 3, 6, and 12 month Timestrips® are the most popular currently and these can be ordered from stock. The activation button for the 12 month product is on the back.

It is possible to customise most elements of Timestrip® subject to volumes, technical minimums and additional charges (See Customising Timestrip® FAQ).

What are the stock product specifications?

A 19mm x 40mm rectangle is our standard shape.

The progress of the liquid dye against the time markers is calibrated for use in a room temperature environment (average 22°C/72°F). Under isothermal conditions the accuracy of the progression is +/- 15%. The liquid dye will run faster than expected if exposed to higher temperatures and slower if exposed to lower temperatures.

How do I know if I activated the Timestrip®?

After squeezing the button flat a line will emerge in the window to show that the Timestrip® is activated. If the activation line is already present before you activate it, then discard that indicator and take another.

Does orientation matter?

Orientation has no impact on the way it works.

Is the liquid dye safe?

Yes. Please see our MSDS for further information. In the unlikely event that the liquid leaks from the Timestrip® and comes into contact with skin, simply wash with soap and water. If the liquid comes into contact with eyes, rinse immediately with plenty of water and seek medical advice.

Are they waterproof?

Timestrips® should not be submerged in water, but they are splash-proof.

Can you use different coloured liquids?

Our Timestrip® colourant is red for indicators that monitor days to years, and blue for Timestrips® that monitor minutes to hours.

Will a Timestrip® tell me when a product is no longer fresh or usable?

Timestrip® only records the passage of time after it is activated. It can be used as a reminder for you to check quality or fitness of purpose of a good or material but it does not monitor anything other than the progress of time.

Is accuracy affected by temperature or altitude?

Timestrips® are accurate to within +/- 15% depending on the model, provided they are used in line with the stated average temperature. If the product is stored at a higher than intended temperature the colour will advance at a faster rate than expected, and for lower than intended temperatures at a slower rate. For detailed technical information please contact us.

Altitude does not affect accuracy.

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What is the shelf life?

Timestrips® can be stored for 3 years after shipping and require no special storage conditions. Cool dark, room temperature conditions with 20-80% humidity are ideal.

What are your Acceptable Quality Limits?

The Accepted Failure Rate is based on ANSI/ASQC Z1.4 (formally MIL-STD-105E) Level II Normal Inspection. For Timestrips® the AQL is 0.65%. Packs are over shipped by 5 units per 500 to cover this AQL.

Timestrips® go through extensive quality checks before they are shipped. Central to this process are tests against defined specifications for; run-time accuracy (how quickly the dye progresses through the membrane) and environment sensitivity (high heat and vacuum tests to check resilience to harsh conditions during shipping). A full pack of release reports is provided with each shipment. Further details are available on request.

What if I find an indicator in my pack that is already showing the dye progressing against the time-markers?

If stored under the correct conditions, there is very little risk of auto-activation. If this happens, discard the indicator and select another. There is no need to contact us, as we ship a few extra products per hundred anyway.

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Customising Timestrip® FAQs

Can I have a fully customised timestrip?

Yes! Our stock products take advantage of lower unit costs and lead times but if your requirements exceed 100,000 units per order we can work with you to create a fully customised product.

Most elements of Timestrip® can be adapted to suit your needs: different shapes, sizes, customer colours and logos; elapsed time periods from 5 minutes to several years; adapted for a different average temperature environment; supplied with a wide range of perm-peel or permanent adhesives or without adhesive; supplied in a key chain, on a roll, loose, in poly bags or custom packs; on a carrying card.

We can work with your product design teams to explore how custom products can be integrated into products, replacement parts or devices with or without auto-activation. Integration encourages compliance with recommended replacement cycles and thus increases purchase frequency.

A small Timestrip® logo appears on all our Stock and Custom products.

What about graphic design elements?

We have our own design facility so creating the surface graphics, working on design layouts and finalising artwork is all part of the service. We'll need your logo artwork in a vector file format like .ai or .eps, (not a .jpg or bitmap) and any brand guidelines or draft layouts you can provide. If you need to match production inks to brand colours we can send you a swatch book to specify the closest colour match. You'll be pleased to know we never go to full print and production without clients approving digital proofs first.

What is the process for getting a custom Timestrip®?

If the Timestrip® is not being integrated into the product itself, and is being used as a 'label', then it is very straightforward. We need to know:

- Duration of the Timestrip® (from 5 minutes to several years) and the temperature environment it will be calibrated for, such as room temperature or refrigerator.
- Graphic concepts, layout and branding guides
- Adhesive requirements. (What will it be stuck to? Do you need adhesive? Will you use a carrying card? Do you want a key chain?)

If the Timestrip® is being integrated into the product itself, the first step is for us to look at the actual product or CAD design. We are happy to supply a Non-Disclosure Agreement to maintain confidentiality. We will then propose a feasible design for the Timestrip®.

What shapes are available?

This depends on the duration of the Timestrip®, but our standard format is 19 x 40mm. Subject to the life of the Timestrip® we also have 19 X 30 or 80mm, 16 x 30 or 33mm, 12mm x 30 or 33mm, and even a round 23mm version. At 500,000+ units, we can tool-up to create completely new shapes for you, subject to technical limitations.

What is the lead time for a custom Timestrip®?

12 weeks from receipt of order, down payment, and sign-off of graphics. Depending on how quickly your organisation can work, it can take several months on a complicated custom design to get to graphics sign off.

Why is there a down payment?

We have to organise and pay for the tooling and set up of custom products and the resulting products cannot be used by other customers.

Are there any printing constraints?

Timestrips® are printed by using a masking effect over the timer so we have to use special colours. This means that we work better with darker colours and cannot achieve pure whites and yellows. A good guideline is to use colours with 10% black equivalent to them.

If your project is for 500,000 units or more, we may be able to use a different type of print process, which enables more options on the lighter colours.

Can we receive custom made samples?

Due to the manufacturing processes involved it is not possible to supply custom made, fully functioning samples in small quantities. We provide digital proofs, showing 'before' and 'after' read-outs so you can see what an active Timestrip® will look like and we can also send you a variety of existing products with artwork, if you need to show functionality and check dimensions.

If actual samples of your finished product are absolutely necessary, we would have to do a proper production run with associated costs and lead times.

How much does customising a Timestrip® cost?

This depends on how many elements are customised and to what extent. For example, using a stock 3 month Timestrip® as the basic product and changing only the graphic print will be less additional cost than a bespoke shape, graphic and elapsed time. Each project is quoted according to volume, specification and lead time requirements.

A one off set-up cost will cover tooling and development and on-going production costs will depend on the complexity of the specification.

Is there anything you can't do?

Timestrip® is a flexible technology but there are some minimum technical requirements. We work with our customers to find solutions.

Can you supply private label for us?

Yes, but please be aware that in addition to printing your logo and messaging, a small Timestrip® logo will also be placed on the product. We proudly co-brand with some of the best and most recognised brands in the world.

Further Information FAQ

Do you make temperature indicators?

Yes, we have a full range of indicators called Timestrip® PLUS. They not only indicate when temperature excursions have occurred but also record the cumulative elapsed time of all excursions. Our lowest temperature product is -20°C/-4°F and our highest is 38°C/100°F and we have many products in between. The most popular temperature thresholds can be ordered from stock and the rest can be ordered subject to minimum volumes. We also make temperature indicators specifically designed for blood bags, seafood, food and vaccines. Please see our website or contact us for more information.

How can I find out more?

A full range of technical documents is available for each of our products including; a general information sheet with instructions for use, a test protocol, a specification and an MSDS. All these documents are available on our website.

Who do I contact to place a stock or custom order?

Many of our products are sold through distributors. Please contact us for more information.