

Using the machine torch

Since the Powermax with a machine torch can be used with a wide variety of cutting tables, track burners, pipe bevelers, and so on, you will need to refer to the manufacturer's instructions for specifics on operating the machine torch in your configuration. However, the information in the following sections will help you optimize cut quality and maximize consumable life.

Setting up the torch and table

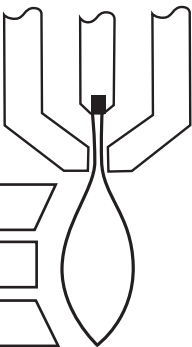
- Use a square to align the torch at right angles to the workpiece in two dimensions.
- The torch may travel more smoothly if you clean, check and “tune” the cutting table's rails and drive system. Unsteady machine motion can cause a regular, wavy pattern on the cut surface.
- Ensure that the torch does not touch the workpiece during cutting. Contact with the workpiece can damage the shield and nozzle and affect the cut surface.

Understand and optimize cut quality

There are several factors to consider in cut quality:

- Cut angle — The degree of angularity of the cut edge.
- Dross — The molten material that solidifies on the top or bottom of the workpiece.
- Straightness of the cut surface — The cut surface can be concave or convex.

The following sections explain how these factors can affect cut quality.

Problem Negative cut angle Square cut Positive cut angle		Cause The torch is too low. The torch is too high.	Solution Raise the torch; or if you are using a torch height control, increase the arc voltage. Lower the torch; or if you are using a torch height control, decrease the arc voltage.
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Cut or bevel angle

- A positive cut angle, or bevel, results when more material is removed from the top of the cut than from the bottom.
- A negative cut angle results when more material is removed from the bottom of the cut.

Note: The squarest cut angle will be on the *right* side with respect to the forward motion of the torch. The left side will always have some degree of bevel.

To determine whether a cut-angle problem is being caused by the plasma system or the drive system, make a test cut and measure the angle of each side. Next, rotate the torch 90° in its holder and repeat the process. If the angles are the same in both tests, the problem is in the drive system.

If a cut-angle problem persists after “mechanical causes” have been eliminated (see page 7-8 *Setting up the torch and table*), check the torch-to-work distance, especially if the cut angles are all positive or all negative. Also consider the material being cut: if the metal is magnetized or hardened, you are more likely to experience cut angle problems.

Dross

Some amount of dross will always be present when cutting with air plasma. However, you can minimize the amount and type of dross by adjusting your system correctly for your application.

Excess dross appears on the top edge of both pieces of the plate when the torch is too low (or voltage is too low when using a torch height control). Adjust the torch or adjust the voltage in small increments (5 volts or less) until the dross is reduced.

Low-speed dross forms when the torch’s cutting speed is too slow and the arc angles ahead. It forms as a heavy, bubbly deposit at the bottom of the cut and can be removed easily. Increase the speed to reduce this type of dross.

High-speed dross forms when the cutting speed is too fast and the arc angles behind. It forms as a thin, linear bead of solid metal attached very close to the cut. It is more firmly attached to the bottom of the cut than at low speed and is difficult to remove. To reduce high-speed dross:

Decrease the cutting speed.

Decrease the torch-to-work distance.

Piercing a workpiece using the machine torch

As with the hand torch, you can start a cut with the machine torch at the edge of the workpiece or by piercing the workpiece. Piercing may result in a shorter consumable life than with edge starts.

The cut charts include a column for the recommended torch height when starting a pierce. For the Powermax105, the pierce height is generally 2.5 times the cutting height. Refer to the cut charts for specifics.

The pierce delay must be long enough that the arc can pierce the material before the torch moves, but not so long that the arc “wanders” while trying to find the edge of a large hole. As consumables wear, this delay time may need to be increased. Pierce delay times given in the cut charts are based on average delay times throughout the life of the consumables.

When piercing materials close to the maximum thickness for a specific process, consider the following important factors:

- Allow a lead-in distance approximately equal to the thickness of the material being pierced. For example, 20 mm (3/4 in) material requires a 20 mm lead-in.
- To avoid damage to the shield from the buildup of molten material created by the pierce, do not allow the torch to descend to cut height until it has cleared the puddle of molten material.
- Different material chemistries can have an adverse effect on the pierce capability of the system. In particular, high-strength steel with a high manganese or silicon content can reduce the maximum pierce capability. Hypertherm derives mild steel parameters using certified A-36 plate.

Common machine-cutting faults

The torch's pilot arc will initiate, but will not transfer. Causes can be:

- The work cable is not making good contact with the cutting table or the cutting table is not making good contact with the workpiece.
- The torch-to-work distance is too large.

The workpiece is not totally penetrated, and there is excessive sparking on the top of the workpiece. Causes can be:

- The metal surface is not clean of rust or paint.
- The consumables are worn and need to be replaced. For optimized performance in a mechanized application, replace the nozzle and the electrode together.
- The work cable is not making good contact with the cutting table or the cutting table is not making good contact with the workpiece.
- The current (amperage) is set too low. See the *Machine Torch Setup* section.
- The cut speed is too high. See the cut charts in the *Machine Torch Setup* section.
- The metal being cut exceeds the maximum capacity for the selected amperage. See the *Specifications* section.

Dross forms on the bottom of the cut. Causes can be:

- The gas setting is incorrect.
- The consumables are worn and need to be replaced. For optimized performance in a mechanized application, replace the nozzle and the electrode together.
- The cutting speed is not correct. See the cut charts in the *Machine Torch Setup* section.
- The current (amperage) is set too low. See the cut charts in the *Machine Torch Setup* section.

The cut angle is not square. Causes can be:

- The torch is not square to the work piece.
- The gas setting is incorrect.
- The consumables are worn and need to be replaced. For optimized performance in a mechanized application, replace the nozzle and the electrode together.
- The direction of the torch travel is incorrect. The high-quality cut is always on the right with respect to the forward motion of the torch.
- The distance between the torch and the workpiece is not correct.
- The cutting speed is not correct. See the cut charts in the *Machine Torch Setup* section.

The consumable life is shortened. Causes can be:

- The gas setting is incorrect.
- The arc current, arc voltage, travel speed, and other variables are not set as recommended in the cut charts.
- Firing the arc in the air (beginning or ending the cut off of the plate surface). Starting at the edge is acceptable as long as the arc makes contact with the workpiece when started.
- Starting a pierce with an incorrect torch height. Refer to the cut charts for the specific initial pierce height.
- The pierce time is incorrect.
- The air quality is poor (oil or water in the air).
- There might be a faulty pilot arc IGBT which can shorten nozzle life (refer to the troubleshooting sections in this manual, or call Technical Service).