

ARTech Laboratory, Inc.

Photograph Policy

The most common source of frustration for you, your patients and us is the frequent color corrections needed due to inaccurate photos and color selections on the ARTech Work Orders. Along with fully completing all information on the Work Order, the following information should remedy most of this problem.

Rather than photos by e-mail, or even those sent on CDs, we would like prints approved and initialed by the patient. Most of your offices have a digital camera already. A decent color printer is only around \$100.00. Photos could be taken, printed, and then compared to the patient's skin tone while they are present in the office. There is usually a CVS or Walgreens drug store close to all locations. Digital photos could be printed out in a matter of minutes while the patient waits at your location. The other alternative would be to send the patient to a professional photographer, who will be responsible for providing accurate photos which the patient has approved, in writing, as acceptable in color. The added expense of the professional photographer might be insignificant to the patient when compared to the expense of returning the prosthesis to ARTech for correction, not to mention the inconvenience for you and your patient. Regardless as to who takes the photo, true color is the most important factor.

In the future, ARTech can only guarantee a color match if we are provided with patient approved photo prints for our artists to match. This requirement will remove much of the guesswork for you and us. However, you and your patient must understand that the skin color of most people changes, sometimes dramatically, throughout the day due to temperature, medications taken, even after eating certain foods, not to mention tanning from the sun or lightening from lack of sun. Because of this, matching the photo does not necessarily mean that the prosthesis will always match the patient exactly. As an example, have the patient hold one hand above their head for ten seconds, then compare it with the other hand.

We need photos of both the "sound" side and the affected side if an "affected" side is possible. We need to match the transition of the skin to the prosthesis. Sometimes the color on the affected side is slightly different.

Ideally the photos should be made on our color chart background so the color can be adjusted if the artist has any questions. For hands, we need a dorsal view, a palmar view and a close of the fingernails without polish. Also a photo of hands placed palms together (praying hands) with elbows resting evenly on a flat surface, from all four angles. This will help us determine finger length & wrist position, if there is any question. For feet, we need both top and bottom and a close of the nails without polish. Take one photo after the patient has been sitting for 20 minutes and another after they have walked around for two or three minutes. This will also demonstrate how your foot changes color. For feet and toes, a photo of both feet, heels against a wall, will help with length. Ears and nose photos are a little more difficult. Hold the color chart with the closest matching colors next to the patient's amputation and take photos from both sides and head on for the nose and from both sides for an ear. We do not recommend photos be taken outside or under fluorescent lights. Photos taken with a flash in a room with a window is best. Take some photos close and some about four to five feet away with a zoom lens. Please angle the camera in such a way that there is no glare on the photo background and fill up the frame with the subject instead of taking them from a distance. We need to see as much detail as possible.

After the photo has been printed, hold it next to the patient's skin and circle the closest match. One or two prints from different distances, positions and angles will be sufficient if the color is correct.

We will accept digital photos if taken on our color background. We now have a new photo program that allows us to adjust colors if the photos are on our color background sheet. We have had better success with this method than previously.

Model Policy

In our fabrication process, the model of the amputation site is modified to create the most intimate fit possible with the highest degree of flexibility our silicone offers. Therefore, the socket will have the exact position as the model sent. If the fingers on the model are too extended or flexed, the prosthesis will be also. Impressions for fingers should be casted through mid-palm. The best position for a passive hand or finger is the shape when holding a tennis ball. Hand and feet impressions should be casted approximately four to five inches past the desired trim line. The best position for a myo is when holding an egg. Foot models need to be in the weight bearing condition with leg vertical, making sure foot is not touching the sides of the container the alginate is in. Foot impressions should be made four to five inches above the desired trim line. Making shape adjustments to prostheses which have already been molded has cost us a large amount of time and money, but more importantly, it eliminates our ability to keep a timely schedule for all our clients. If your patient has had a previous prosthesis and would like the new one to be exact or very similar, please send along the old prosthesis for the sculpting process.

Our success in achieving the satisfactory fit of any prosthesis depends greatly on the model position and accuracy. Please pour your impression while the patient is still at your facility so you can check for accuracy and quality. We can no longer begin fabrication for a prosthesis if the models are not adequate. Also, it is essential that the affected side models (BK and AK prostheses should have an accurate tracing) are poured in hard stone such as dental stone (9,000 psi min). Our molding process requires a stone denser than lab plaster. If we are required to use a model of lab plaster, there will be an additional fee for model duplication added to the invoice. The sound side model may be out of lab plaster, since it is used mainly as a model for sculpting.

Please see "How to Work With ARTech", printed on the back of our color chart or printed separately in the information package sent to you, for more detailed instructions in making the cast. Refer to the "Checklist" for the specific things we need for each type prostheses.

Work Order Profile

It will help us, and eliminate some re-makes, if you will mark on the work order where you want the trim line. Or, you may mark on the actual stone model where the trim line should be. Sometimes it is obvious, but sometimes it is not. This will save us from having to "guess" the length.