

A practical one-page review of the four variables that most often drive cost per part

Use this checklist to spot where time, air, media, rework, or poor control may be increasing blasting cost without anyone noticing.

Tick each point honestly. The aim is not to prove the process is fine. The aim is to identify where performance may be drifting.

STEP 1: Time per part

Question: Is blasting taking longer than it should?

- Cycle time is stable on repeat work
- Blasting time has not drifted up over recent weeks or months
- Operators are not having to spend longer on the same finish
- Parts are being completed in one pass, without repeated blasting
- Difficult areas, edges, or profiles are not slowing the process more than expected
- Visibility inside the cabinet or room is good enough to work efficiently
- Operator technique is consistent across shifts and jobs

Warning signs to watch for: Longer blast times, more operator compensation, reduced visibility, slower repeat jobs.

STEP 2: Air

Question: Is compressed air helping the process, or quietly holding it back?

- Nozzle size is matched to the air actually available at the nozzle
- Pressure is stable during blasting
- Hoses, couplings, gaskets, and seals are in good condition
- There are no obvious leaks, restrictions, or pressure losses in the system
- Air quality is being checked and managed properly
- Moisture or contamination in the line is not affecting performance
- Compressor supply is adequate for the blasting setup in use

Warning signs to watch for: Pressure drop, inconsistent blasting, poor finish, slow cutting action, operator frustration.

STEP 3: Media

Question: Is the abrasive doing productive work, or are you losing money through poor choice or poor control?

- The abrasive is right for the substrate, finish, and job requirement
- Media feed is controlled and repeatable
- Abrasive consumption is stable and understood
- Media is not being overfed to compensate for another problem
- Recovery and separation are working properly where applicable
- Dust extraction is supporting the process, not disrupting it
- Contamination, breakdown, or poor media condition is not affecting performance

Warning signs to watch for: Rising media usage, inconsistent finish, overfeeding, contaminated media, poor recovery.

STEP 4: Rework

Question: Are parts being completed right first time?

- Parts are consistently meeting the required standard first time
- Touch-up is the exception, not part of the normal process
- Re-blasting is not becoming routine
- Surface finish and profile are consistent
- Operators are not using workarounds to get acceptable results
- Poor visibility or unstable settings are not creating avoidable defects
- Inspection failures are not sending work back through the system

Warning signs to watch for: Touch-up, re-blasting, inconsistent finish, inspection failure, variable results between operators.

STEP 5: Maintenance and control

Question: Is the process being actively controlled, or just kept running?

- Nozzles are checked routinely for wear
- Metering valves and fittings are inspected for wear or leaks
- Hoses, couplings, and blast components are checked as part of a planned routine
- Preventive maintenance is scheduled and recorded
- Settings are standardised for repeat jobs where possible
- Operators understand what good performance looks like
- Training gaps are not contributing to poor consistency or waste
- Small issues are being corrected before they affect output or quality

Warning signs to watch for: Worn nozzles, drifting settings, reactive maintenance, avoidable downtime, inconsistent operator practice.

Final review

If you ticked any of the warning signs above, your blasting cost per part may be rising for reasons that do not show up in abrasive price alone.

The next step is to review the process as a whole:

- time per part
- air
- media
- rework
- maintenance and control

Small losses in each area can combine into a significant cost problem.

Need a second opinion on your blasting process?

SurfacePrep helps teams review equipment, air, abrasives, servicing, and process control to reduce waste, improve consistency, and protect uptime.

Contact us to discuss how our engineers can support your blasting system.

