GRAPHTEC

Cutting Plotter Controller

USER'S MANUAL

OPS664

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Cutting Plotter Controller is automatically installed when you perform setup for your cutting plotter in a Windows 2000/Windows XP or Windows Vista environment.

1.1 About the Controller

The Cutting Plotter Controller is a software program that lets you perform settings at your computer instead of having to make them at the plotter's control panel. In particular, frequently-used cutting condition settings and complicated registration mark reading procedures can be easily performed. Using the Controller together with the driver further improves overall operating efficiency.

Note: The Cutting Plotter Controller was designed on the premise that it would be used for cutting text, print & cut applications, and so forth. It is not suitable for manufacturing-industry purposes such as outputting multiple cutting conditions in a single cutting output operation.

Note: The Cutting Master 2 plug-in provided with your cutting plotter has the same functions as this Controller. Moreover, since the plug-in enables data created in Illustrator/Corel Draw to be sent directly to the plotter for output, even more intuitive operation is enabled. If you are outputting data from Illustrator/Corel Draw, we recommend that you use the plug-in instead of this Controller.

1.2 Operating Environment

The minimum system requirements to enable operation of this software are as follows:

• OS: Windows 2000/Windows XP or Windows Vista

• CPU: Pentium III 600 MHz or better

• Memory: 128 MB minimum (256 MB recommended)

• Monitor: Must be capable of 1024 x 768 High Color display (True Color recommended)

• Mouse

• CD-ROM drive

• Craft ROBOPro2, Craft ROBOPro, CE5000, FC7000

• USB connection

Note: The Cutting Plotter Controller will not operate if it is connected via a printer or serial port.

2 USING THE CONTROLLER

2.1 Launching the Controller

There are two ways of launching the Controller, either from the Windows Start menu or from the Print menu. Select either "Launch from the Start menu" or "Launch from the Print menu".

(1) First of all, use the CD-ROM provided with your cutting plotter to set up your cutting plotter.

   Note: For details on how to perform setup, please refer to the Quick Start Manual.

(2) Connect the cutting plotter to your computer via the USB connection, and load a medium.

(3) Launch the Controller.

   Using the Start menu to launch the Controller
   The Cutting Plotter Controller can be launched from the Windows Start menu. The registered location is: [Start] → [All Programs] → [Graphtec Cutting Plotter Controller] → [Cutting Plotter Controller].

   Note: If the Controller is launched from the Start menu, only the test cutting and cross-cutting operations can be performed.

   Using the Print menu to launch the Controller
   If you use the driver to send a print job from the application to the cutting plotter, the driver will automatically launch the Cutting Plotter Controller. The following window is displayed when the Controller has been launched.


Note: If the Controller is launched from the Start menu, a [Close] button replaces the [Cancel] and [Cut] buttons.

Note: The screen above is the screen that is displayed when an FC7000 Series cutting plotter has been connected.

2.2 Setting the Various Parameters

The functions of the Cutting Plotter Controller are explained according to each parameter. When the Controller is launched, the following screen appears.
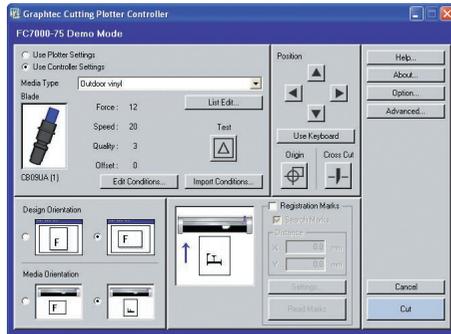
Note: **The screen above is the screen that is displayed when an FC7000 Series cutting plotter has been connected.**

Use Plotter Settings/Use Controller Settings

............Selects whether to use the settings made at the plotter or to use the Controller settings for the cutting conditions (Blade (Pen Type), Force, Speed, Quality, Offset).

If "Use Controller Settings" is selected
COND. No. [9] is displayed on the plotter's LCD. The Controller settings will be made according to the conditions specified for COND. No. [9].

If "Use Plotter Settings" is selected
The Controller's cutting condition settings will become invalid.

Note: **If ROBO Master-Pro was used to launch the Controller, the setting is fixed to "Use Controller Settings" and cannot be changed.**

Media Type ...... To enable easy specification of cutting conditions, the most suitable cutting conditions for each media type are stored in the Cutting Plotter Controller as separate files, with the media type used as the file name.

• File name: Fluorescent film A (The following settings are stored under the file name [Fluorescent film A])

• Blade Selection (Pen Type) : CB09UA

• Force : 20   • Speed : 10   • Quality : 1   • Offset : 0

Files with the most standard settings are installed together with the Cutting Plotter Controller. The settings file name selected from the pull-down list is displayed for "Media Type", and the contents of that file

are displayed underneath the selected file name. If you change your selection, the displayed settings will also change. The plotter settings will also be changed at the same time.

List Edit............ Click this button to display the [Edit Condition List] window that enables you to edit and manage settings files.
In this window you can create new files, change file contents, and use the delete and copy functions.

Note: **For further details on the [Edit Condition List] window, refer to Section 2.3, "Edit Condition List".**

Test.................. Performs test cutting using the currently displayed cutting conditions in order to check the cutting quality.
Move the cutter pen to the position where you wish to perform test cutting, and then click the [Test] button to cut a 1 cm x 1 cm test pattern.

Note: **Check the cutting results. If the film is cut cleanly, and there are faint traces on the backing sheet, the cutting conditions are correct. If cutting has not been performed correctly (the backing sheet has been cut through or uncut areas of film remain), adjust the blade length, or change the force, speed and other parameters.**

Note: **The quality of the cutting results will vary, depending on the type of media to be cut and on other factors. If you plan to cut media that you have never used before, always be sure to perform test cutting first.**

Note: **The F8 function key on your keyboard can also be used to perform this operation.**

Edit Conditions

.... Enables the currently selected cutting conditions to be edited directly. An [Edit cutting conditions] window for the selected file is displayed, and, after the parameters have been changed, test cutting and cutting force tests can be performed. The corrected parameters are saved as a settings file, and the plotter settings are also updated accordingly.

Note: **For further details, refer to Section 2.4, "Cutting Conditions".**

Import Conditions

.... Imports the cutting condition settings made at the plotter into the Controller.
Click the [Import Conditions] button to display the cutting conditions displayed on the plotter's LCD in the Controller's [Edit cutting conditions] window. If [OK] is clicked, these parameters are saved as the cutting conditions for the currently displayed [Media Type].

Position .... These keys move the cutter pen in the ▲ direction printed on the selected key.
If a Position key is used together with the keyboard's [Shift] key, the cutter pen moves slowly. If a Position key is used together with the keyboard's [Ctrl] key, the cutter pen moves quickly.

Note: **This function can only be used when the plotter is in the Ready status.**

Use Keyboard .. Enables the cutter pen to be moved when one of the arrow keys (← ↑ ↓ →) on the keyboard is pressed. If an arrow key is pressed together with the keyboard's [Shift] key, the cutter pen moves slowly.
If an arrow key is pressed together with the keyboard's [Ctrl] key, the cutter pen moves quickly. If a horizontal direction arrow key and a vertical direction arrow key (for example (← ↑) or (↓ →) are pressed at the same time, the cutter pen moves in the corresponding diagonal direction.

> **Note:** **If both the horizontal direction keys or both the vertical direction keys are pressed at the same time, the cutter pen will not move.**
> **Note:** **This function can only be used when the plotter is in the Ready status.**
> **Note:** **The F6 function key on your keyboard can also be used to perform this setting.**

Origin .... Use this button to specify the origin point.
Move the cutter pen to the position where you wish to set the origin, and then press the [Origin] button to specify that position as the origin point.

> **Note:** **The F5 function key on your keyboard can also be used to perform this setting.**

Cross Cut......... Cuts the medium laterally at the current point.
If you wish to perform cutting at another position, use the (s) or (t) POSITION keys to feed the medium to that position.

> **Note:** **If a cut sheet is loaded in the cutting plotter, the "LOAD MEDIA" message will be displayed on the plotter's LCD.**
> **Note:** **This function can only be used with the FC7000 Series plotters.**

Design Orientation
.... Specifies the orientation of the medium that was set in the application software used for the cutting operation.
If the medium is used horizontally (Landscape) for the design, select the right-hand image. If the medium is used vertically (Portrait) for the design, select the left-hand image.

Media Orientation
.... **When the Registration Marks function has not been enabled**
Specifies the direction of plotting/cutting with respect to the medium.
If the right-hand image is selected, the lower-right position when you are facing the plotter becomes the origin point. Plotting/cutting is performed in the media feed direction towards the back of the plotter. If you are cutting text that is longer than the width of the roll being used, select this orientation.
If the left-hand image is selected, the lower-left position when you are facing the plotter becomes the origin point. When viewed from the front of the plotter, cutting is performed in the same direction as it was designed in the software, and so operation is more intuitive.

When the Registration Marks function has been enabled
Specifies the direction according to how the printed design should be loaded in the plotter.
If the design should be loaded from the right-hand edge, select the right-hand image. If the design should be loaded from the top edge, select the left-hand image.
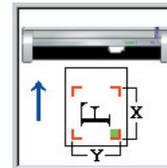
Registration Marks
.... Click the checkbox to enable this function when you want to perform cutting on top on a design that was printed out on a printer. Registration marks for the reading operation must be printed together with the design.

Search Marks .. IIf the checkbox has been clicked to enable the Search Marks function, auto detection of the registration marks is performed at the start of the cutting operation.
If the marks are detected correctly, the plotter starts cutting. The plotter uses this function to search for registration marks within the specified area by moving from the current pen position towards the center of the loaded medium. If there are no registration marks in the immediate vicinity, the search function may not operate correctly. If this happens, click the Search Marks checkbox once again to deselect it, move the pen to the first registration mark position, and then click the [Read Marks] button to perform registration mark reading.

> **Note:** **The first registration mark position is the area shaded in green in the drawing of the plotter that is displayed on the Controller screen.**

> **Note:** **Registration marks are reference marks that are used to align the plotter's cutting positions with images that were printed out on a printer. These registration marks are printed around the edges of the design. The plotter uses a registration mark sensor to read the positions of the registration marks and to correct any discrepancies in the positioning or size. Registration marks are shaped like one corner of a square, and are positioned around the edges of the printed image.**
> **Note:** **When using registration marks, try to avoid printing any images near or within the registration mark areas.**
> **Note:** **When using registration marks, we recommend that you use an inkjet printer. If a laser printer is used for output, the printed image may become distorted due to paper skew, and may cause misalignment of the cutting position.**

Distance........... Input the horizontal distance (X) and the vertical distance (Y) between registration marks.
Check the distances when creating registration marks.

> **Note: If ROBO Master-Pro was used to launch the Controller, the distance settings are made automatically.**

Vertical distance (Y) between registration marks

Horizontal distance (X) between registration marks

Origin
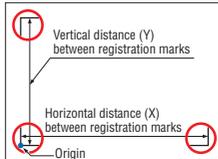
Settings............ Displays a window for setting the number of registration marks, the mark length, and other parameters that need to be set for registration mark reading.

> **Note: For further details on the [Registration Mark Settings] window, refer to Section 2.5, "Registration Mark Settings".**

Read Marks ..... Used when the Search Marks function has not been enabled.
Move the pen to the first registration mark position and then click the [Read Marks] button to start registration mark reading.

Help .... Click this button to display a Quick Help menu for simple explanations of the Controller's various functions.

About... .... Displays the version information of the Controller currently in use.

Option .... Click this button to display the optional Controller function(s) for setting.

Advanced......... Displays the [Advanced Settings] window to enable advanced settings to be specified for the plotter.

> **Note: For further details, refer to Section 2.6, "Advanced Settings".**
> **Note: This parameter is not displayed when the plotter is a Craft ROBO Pro 2 model.**

Cut... .... This button is only displayed when the Controller is launched via the Print menu.
Cutting starts when the Controller is closed. When Search Marks has been specified, the registration marks are read first. When they have been read successfully, cutting starts.

Cancel .... This button is only displayed when the Controller is launched via the Print menu.
If this button is clicked, the Controller is closed without any cutting being performed.

Close .... This button is only displayed when the Controller is launched via the Start menu.
Click this button to close the Controller.

2.3 Edit Condition List

Use this list to manage the cutting conditions files.

List Display ...... Media names and the cutting conditions saved for each media name are displayed in list format.
The settings files initially displayed in the list after setup are provided as an approximate guide for your reference only. The settings displayed here are not guaranteed to be the optimal settings. Determine the optimal settings by using a function such as the test cutting function, and then modify or add to the existing cutting conditions in the list.

> **Note: The actual optimal settings differ with the make, type, and purpose of use of the media used. The hardness of olefin-based media changes according to the temperature. The settings also change due to abrasion of the cutter blade and other changing conditions.**

New .... Displays the [Edit cutting conditions] window. Click [OK] to exit the [Edit cutting conditions] window.
A new settings file is then created.

> **Note: You cannot use an existing media name from the list to create a new settings file.**
> **Note: For further details on the [Edit cutting conditions] window, see Section 2.4, "Cutting Conditions".**

Edit .... Clicking this button after selecting a settings file from the list opens the [Edit cutting conditions] window, using the settings for the file selected.

> **Note: For further details on the [Edit cutting conditions] window, see Section 2.4, "Cutting Conditions".**

Delete .... Deletes the settings file selected from the list.

Copy .... Clicking this button after selecting a settings file from the list opens the [Edit cutting conditions] window, using the settings for the file selected.
Change the media name in the [Edit cutting conditions] window and save it. A new settings file is then created.

> **Note: For further details on the [Edit cutting conditions] window, see Section 2.4, "Cutting Conditions".**

2.4 Cutting Conditions

Cutting conditions can be created and changed in the [Edit cutting conditions] window.
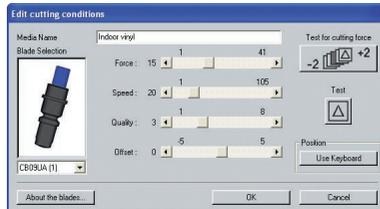
Media Name .... The media name for the current cutting conditions is displayed here. Any desired media name can be specified.

> Note: **Media names of up to 27 characters (single-byte characters) can be entered.**

Blade Selection
.... Specifies the blade name or pen type.

Force .... Specifies the force applied to the pen for cutting or plotting. The optimal setting will depend on the media type and the blade or pen used.

Speed .... Specifies the pen speed on the medium for cutting or plotting. The optimal setting will depend on the media type and the blade or pen used.

Quality .... Specifies the pen acceleration for cutting or plotting. Specifying a lower value increases the quality. The optimal setting will vary depending on the media type and the blade or pen used.

> Note: **The Quality setting cannot be changed for the Craft ROBOPro2 model.**

Offset .... Performs fine adjustment of the basic offset value determined for each blade type.

> Note: **For details on how to adjust the offset, refer to the user's manual for your cutting plotter.**

Test for cutting force
.... Performs five test cuts in succession using the conditions currently displayed in the [Edit cutting conditions] window. The cutting force is changed for each test cut, in the range -2 to +2. If the displayed force is 10, for example, test cuts will be performed at the 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 cutting force values.

> Note: **The F9 function key on your keyboard can also be used to perform this operation.**

Test .... Performs test cutting using the currently displayed cutting conditions in order to check the cutting quality. Move the cutter pen to the position where you wish to perform test cutting, and then click the [Test] button to cut a 1 cm x 1 cm test pattern.

> Note: **Check the cutting results. If the film is cut cleanly, and there are faint traces on the backing sheet, the cutting conditions are correct. If cutting has not been performed correctly (the backing sheet has been cut through or uncut areas of film remain), adjust the blade length, or change the force, speed and other parameters.**

> Note: **The quality of the cutting results will vary, depending on the type of media to be cut and on other factors. If you plan to cut media that you have never used before, always be sure to perform test cutting first.**

> Note: **The F8 function key on your keyboard can also be used to perform this operation.**

Use Keyboard
.... Enables the cutter pen to be moved when one of the arrow keys (← ↑ ↓ →) on the keyboard is pressed. If an arrow key is pressed together with the keyboard's [Shift] key, the cutter pen moves slowly. If an arrow key is pressed together with the keyboard's [Ctrl] key, the cutter pen moves quickly. If a horizontal direction arrow key and a vertical direction arrow key (for example (← ↑) or (↓ →)) are pressed at the same time, the cutter pen moves in the corresponding diagonal direction.

> Note: **If both the horizontal direction keys or both the vertical direction keys are pressed at the same time, the cutter pen will not move.**

> Note: **This function can only be used when the plotter is in the Ready status.**

> Note: **The F6 function key on your keyboard can also be used to perform this setting.**

About the Blade
.... Displays a table showing the compatible cutter blades and plungers when the Controller is selected.

2.5 Registration Mark Settings

Use this window to specify parameters such as the number of reading points and the registration mark type.
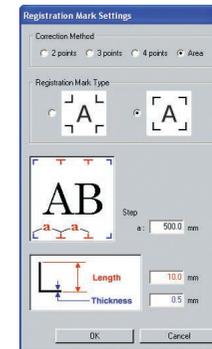
Using Registration Marks to Perform Correction

The plotter reads registration marks in order to align the origin points and the coordinate axes. Moreover, depending on the number of points selected, correction is performed as follows.

- **Correction Method: 2 points (Correction of the horizontal distance and axial tilt)**
  Scales the coordinate system on the plotter up or down so that the distance that was read between the lower left and lower right registration marks matches the Controller's "X Distance", and corrects any axial tilt.

- **Correction Method: 3 points (Correction of the vertical and horizontal distances and axial tilt)**
  Scales the coordinate system on the plotter up or down so that the distance that was read between the lower left and lower right registration marks matches the Controller's "X Distance", and the distance that was read between the lower left and upper left registration marks matches the Controller's "Y Distance". Any axial tilt is also corrected.

- **Correction Method: 4 points (Correction at four points)**
  Corrects all of the positions that were read (lower left, lower right, upper left and upper right) so that they match the positions (lower left, lower right, upper left and upper right) in the data that was calculated based on the X Distance and the Y Distance values, while taking into account any distortion of the coordinates within the range.

- **Correction Method: Area**
  This setting is effective when cutting a design that is extremely long in the media feed direction (as a guideline, a design that is longer than 2 m). Intermediate registration marks are used as boundary points for dividing the design up into multiple areas. 4-point correction is then performed for each area. This function enables even more accurate correction of media skew or other alignment problems that occurred when the design was printed.

 Note: The "Correction Method: Area" parameter cannot be specified when the plotter is a Craft ROBOPro2 model.

 Note: Load the design in the plotter so that the intermediate registration marks are in the plotter's media feed direction. Intermediate registration marks in the cutter movement direction will not be read.

Correction Method
.... Specifies the number of registration mark reading points.
    Select [Area] when using intermediate registration points to perform segment area correction.

Registration Mark Type
.... Selects whether the registration marks face inward or outward.

Step .... Specifies the interval at which the intermediate registration marks are placed.
    This setting is effective when performing segment area correction.

Length.............. Specifies the length from the corner of each registration mark.

Thickness .... Specifies the thickness of the registration mark lines.

 Note: **Unlike drafting units such as plotters, few printer types guarantee precision in the printing position and in the dimensions. Distance correction and 4-point correction are operations that adjust the coordinate system of the plotter according to the printed results so that the printing positions and cutting positions are as closely aligned as possible. These operations usually improve the cutting positions. To ensure higher precision when adjusting the cutting positions, it is recommended that you use a precision-guaranteed inkjet plotter or suchlike instead of a printer.**

 Note: **Generally, laser printers are less precise than inkjet printers. In particular, distortion may occur when using sheet paper with a laser printer due to paper skew. Accordingly, it is difficult to obtain good results when using such a device for print & cut applications.**

2.6 Advanced Settings

Use this window to perform advanced settings for your cutting plotter.

Note: The Advanced Settings parameters cannot be used when the plotter is a Craft ROBOPro2 model.
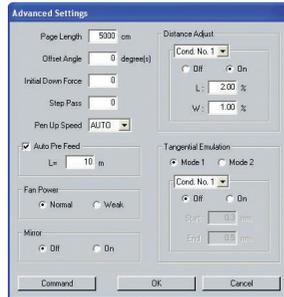
Note: The screen above is the screen that is displayed when an FC7000 Series cutting plotter has been connected.

Page Length .... Specifies the length of one page when roll media is used.

Offset Angle..... Specifies the reference angle that determines whether or not blade tip angle control is applied.
Blade tip offset control is performed for angles larger than the specified value. Specifying a large reference angle will shorten the overall cutting time by reducing the time required for blade tip control, but specifying an excessively large angle may produce cutting results that fail to reproduce the intended image.

Initial Down Force
.... Specifies the cutting force used for Tangential Emulation immediately after the pen is lowered.
The initial down force value is added to the Tangential Emulation cutting force value. If the cutting force is 25 and the initial down force is 4, for example, the cutting force applied immediately after the pen is lowered will be 29.

Step Pass .... Uses the specified value as the unit for performing blade tip control. Blade tip control is not performed for data with a value below the specified value. Specifying a small value increases image quality by enabling smooth blade tip control when arcs are cut. If the value is too high, the cutting results may fail to reproduce the intended image. Normally, the Step Pass value should be set to "0".

Pen Up Speed.. Specifies the traveling speed of the pen in the raised status.
Setting the pen-up speed to a fast speed reduces the overall cutting time.

Auto Pre Feed.. If the checkbox has been clicked to enable the Auto Pre Feed function, the loaded medium is automatically fed forward and backward by the preset length when data is received.
This operation leaves traces of the grit rollers on the medium and prevents it from slipping during a cutting or plotting operation. Similarly, if a roll medium is used, the medium is automatically pulled out by the cutting plotter.

Fan Power........ Specifies the suction force, either Normal or Weak, that is used to affix media to the plotter.

Note: The "Fan Power" parameter can only be specified when the plotter is an FC7000 Series model.

Mirror .... If "On" is selected, the origin point and coordinate data are reversed to enable a mirror image of the original data to be cut.

Distance Adjust
.... Corrects any deviation in the length of cut or plotted line segments, which occurs depending on the type and thickness of the media being used. The adjustment value for the deviation is specified as a percentage of the total distance. For example, a setting of 0.05% adjusts a distance of 2 m (2,000 mm) by +1 mm (2000 x 0.05% = 1 mm), to become 2,001 mm. The Distance Adjust function can be specified individually for each of the nine cutter-pen condition setting areas.

Tangential Emulation
.... This function is effective when cutting thick media (more than 0.3 mm in thickness), and when the cutter blade sinks into the media and is not able to rotate properly, resulting in gaps between the start and end points and the inability to cut sharp corners.
This function can be specified individually for each of the nine cutter-pen condition setting areas.

Mode 1:
Overcuts the start and end points and acute-angle corners to eliminate uncut sections. In addition, when the blade is rotated significantly during a cutting operation, it is moved on the surface of the medium, thereby ensuring sharp cutting unaffected by the hardness or thickness of the media.

Mode 2:
Overcuts the start and end points only. In addition, the cutter blade is rotated on the medium surface for the start cutting position only. Mode 2 uses simpler cutter control than Mode 1, and provides a shorter cutting time.

Command........Displays the [Command Setting] window for selecting the command mode to be used. Select the command mode, either GP-GL or HP-GL, to match the command mode setting of your software application. Moreover, when [OK] is clicked, the window will only close if the plotter is in the status where it is ready to receive commands.

> **Note: If the Controller is activated via the driver, the command mode is fixed to GP-GL and cannot be changed.**

Note: For further details on the Advanced Settings, refer to the user's manual for your cutting plotter.

3 ERROR MESSAGES

• **The USB port is currently in use. Please wait several seconds, and then try again.**
• **Cannot communicate with the plotter. Check that the USB cable is connected correctly, and then check that the plotter is switched on.**
• **Communication error with the plotter. Turn the plotter's power switch off, and then turn it on again.**
  ⇨ Follow the instructions in the message.

• **GITKUSBP2.DLL could not be found, and so the Controller could not be started. Please reboot your computer or re-install the Controller.**
• **The GITKUSBP2.DLL functions could not be found, and so the Controller could not be started. Please reboot your computer or re-install the Controller.**
  ⇨ Follow the instructions in the message.
    To install the software again, first uninstall the Controller that is currently installed.

• **Registration mark reading failure.**
• **Are the distances between the registration marks correct?**
• **Is the registration mark pattern correct?**
• **Has the medium been loaded correctly?**
• **Please check the above, and make any changes required.**
  ⇨ Follow the instructions in the message.

• **The registration marks were not read.**
• **The print and cut positions may not be aligned correctly.**
• **Cut anyway?**
  ⇨ The [Registration Marks] function is set to ON. If you want to read the registration marks on the print and then perform contour cutting, read the registration marks first and then perform cutting. If you want to perform a normal cutting operation, set the registration mark reading function to OFF.

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The specifications, etc., in this manual are
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