Tape Eject Procedures for IBM LTO Tape Drives

Tapes can appear to be 'stuck' within the tape drive for a variety of reasons. A common reason is that the Backup/Recovery package has ordered the drive to not eject the tape from the button via a command called "prevent media removal". This is done to prevent accidental ejects while a backup is in process. As such, any time the user thinks a tape is 'stuck', they should follow these steps:

1. First, make sure the tape is not in use. If the green LED is flashing on the front of the tape drive, the tape is moving.
2. Via the Backup/Recovery package, do a dismount or eject command. Sometimes it is a simple menu command, but, often, this is a right-click option on the media or the drive.
3. Should this not eject the tape, try using the front panel on the Library. This function is in the Operation sub menu, as "unload drive". If the Backup/Recovery package has set "prevent media removal", this will also not work.
4. The next step to try is to open the library door, then press the eject button on the tape drive. If the green LED is flashing, you may need to wait up to ten minutes for the tape eject operation to complete.
5. Before continuing, take a drive dump via IBM ITDT. Send this dump to Qualstar for analysis by IBM. A link to ITDT is at Qualstar.com under the Support tab.
6. Should the tape drive still fail to eject the cartridge, then press and hold the eject button on the tape drive for 10 seconds. This resets the drive, so you will need to wait for the power-on self test (POST) to complete, and then see if the green LED is flashing. If the drive green LED is still flashing, then the drive is still rewinding the tape, which could take up to ten minutes. Once that is completed, then press the eject button again to eject the tape.
7. Should the above steps fail to eject the tape, the next step is to power cycle the library. **DO NOT power cycle the library if other tapes are being written**. Make sure all of the other drives have finished their operations and, best case, have ejected their tapes and returned them to their slot. If the library is powered off while a drive is writing, data being written will be lost and must be recovered by the Backup/Recovery package—something they normally do, but it is better to be safe than sorry. You will usually also need to stop the Backup/Recovery package and stop its services before the power cycle, or it may re-do the "prevent media removal".
8. After the power cycle has completed and the library has completed its inventory, press the eject button. The tape should eject, but may take up to 10 minutes to rewind, if the green LED is flashing.
9. If the above sequence of operations does not eject the tape, you may repeat steps 5 and 6 with either the backup services stopped, the server shut down, or the SCSI/FC cable removed. Often, the backup package continuously sets prevent media removal.
10. If the above steps fail to eject the tape, then a true "stuck tape" condition exists. Contact Qualstar for an RMA, so you can return the drive to Qualstar for further action.
11. **Note 1:** Make sure you let Qualstar know if you need that "stuck" tape back, and whether the data on that tape is critical. Sometimes, the tape is damaged and data recovery is impossible. If the data is critical to you, every effort will be made to save the cartridge and the tape within it, for a future data recovery effort at your site.
12. **Note 2:** The most common cause of real stuck tapes is dropped cartridges. When a cartridge is dropped, sometimes the leader pin gets dislodged and the drive cannot connect with it. Make sure procedures are followed to check the leader pin anytime a cartridge is accidentally dropped.