

Making Print Ready Documents Using

Adobe Illustrator

SETTING UP YOUR FILE

Size the Document

In the New Document window, set the width & height of your file to the final size of the product you are creating.

Set the Color Mode

In the New Document window, set the color mode of your file to CMYK.

Set the Resolution

After creating the New Document, go to EFFECT > DOCUMENT RASTER EFFECTS SETTING and set the resolution of your file to 300 ppi.

Set the Margins

Set your margins to .0625. The cutting process for printed materials has a mechanical tolerance of about .0625 or 1/16 of an inch, so it is important that no text or essential parts of your artwork come within 1/8" of the trim line. This will prevent any objects from being cut off or appearing too close to the edge

Set the Bleed Area

If you want an element in your design to print to the edge of the paper, set the bleed to 1/4" (0.25) on all four side of your page. This will allow an extra 1/4" (0.25") on each side of the page, which will be trimmed after the job is printed. If your page is blank on all four sides of the page, then you do not need to include bleeds.

Borders

When using a border in your artwork, it is essential that your border is designed with at least .125 or 1/8 of an inch safe space between the border and the cut line. Keep your border within the safe area so it will maintain a symmetrical appearance.

Using Rich Black

If you want to have an area of solid black within your document, using 100% Black as the fill color does not result in a dark, saturated black. To obtain the best results, use a rich black color, represented by the following CMYK values: C: 60% M: 40% Y: 40% K: 100%

Resolution

For the best printing results, any images used must be 300 DPI (dots per inch), also known as Pixels Per Inch (PPI) at the final output size. Please do not attempt to change a low resolution image to a higher one by changing the DPI with an imaging software, doing so will result in a blurred output. You do not need to use more than 300 DPI; doing so will cause your file to be unnecessarily large.

Colors

When choosing colors in Illustrator, use the CMYK color mode for print reproduction. Certain colors are not reproducible using CMYK and if the color you've selected is not, it is indicated by an exclamation point in the Color Picker window. Clicking on the exclamation point will automatically select the closest CMYK color.

After you finish your design, convert your text to outlines

Converting text to outlines will guarantee your job will not encounter delays due to missing fonts.

1. First unlock all text layers before selecting, to ensure they're included.
2. From the Select menu, choose All
3. From the Type menu, choose Create Outlines

*Always save the outlined artwork with a new filename, this will ensure you do not overwrite your original source file.

Save your File

Choose File > Save As...

When the Save As box appears:

1. Enter a filename for your design
2. Select Illustrator EPS (*.eps) as your file type
3. Click Save

When the EPS Options window appears:

1. Select the highest EPS version your application will export
2. Set the Format to Macintosh (8-bit Color)
3. Check the Include CMYK PostScript for RGB files box
4. Set the Adobe PostScript to Language Level 3
5. Click OK and you're done

Always check your file carefully before submitting.