



Digital Prepress Guidelines



SOFTWARE

There are many different software programs on the market catering to page layout and image manipulation. However, only a small number of programs offer the prepress controls needed for high resolution and high quality printing.

We accept the following **FILE FORMATS** for output purposes:

PC or MAC Platform

QuarkXpress®

Adobe InDesign®

Adobe Photoshop®

Adobe Illustrator®

as well as graphics from any program that can be exported in .tif or .eps format or .ai format, such as Corel Draw

PDF files are also acceptable, although they must be high resolution, have bleeds included (if needed) and with all the fonts embedded. Please contact our prepress department if you are unsure what settings should be used to make your PDF.



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DESIGN TIPS:

The most important factor in a successful printing job is the file preparation. Whatever the specifications that are embedded in the file determines how the job comes out. Here are some key steps to guide you in a successful file preparation:

FONTS

Send all fonts used in your files. We may have a copy of your particular font in our font library, however, many different companies make fonts of the same name and they do differ. PostScript Type 1 fonts are preferred. Be aware that Type 1 fonts consist of two parts, a screen font and a printer font. Both must be sent with the files to print accurately. Avoid using “applied” type styles – do not use the Control or Measurements palettes in QuarkXpress to make the type bold or italic. Always pick your bold or italic font from the font list.

BLEEDS

Any element that extends to the final edge of the paper needs to be extended further to .125” beyond the final trimmed edge of the piece - this is called bleed. Remember, images created in Photoshop or drawing programs such as Illustrator should have adequate image area to bleed properly off the page.

UNUSED ITEMS

Delete all unused items from outside of the document layout before exporting. This prevents confusion resulting from missing graphics or fonts that aren’t used in the printed area, and it also reduces errors at the RIP.

RULES

Don’t use hairline rules. On a 300 dpi laser printer hairline rules are clearly visible. But on high-resolution imagesetters they are almost invisibly thin. Make your thinnest lines at least .2 points wide and your thinnest dotted rules at least .4 points wide.

IMPOSITION

Our technicians use software to impose your job into the best format for our printing presses. You do not need to concern yourself with this matter. For example if you are sending a business card set it up on a 3.5 x 2 page one up (not several up on an 8.5 x 11) and use as many pages as names you have for business cards.

- In general, it is best to submit books as single pages, beginning with page 1 (or the front cover). It is acceptable to submit books in reader spreads where two separate pages form the reader spread if you use elements (photos, headlines) that cross from one page to the other (use facing pages 2 single pages placed beside each other).
- Do not submit books created in reader spreads where the two “pages” are placed on one double-sized page in your document (for example use facing pages of 8.5 x 11 and *not* one 11 x 17). This type of document cannot be easily arranged to print on the press.



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COLOR:

Choose colors from swatch books rather than from your monitor. All monitors display color differently, so the color you see on your monitor will probably not look the same on ours. Remember, you are seeing an RGB rendering of a CMYK color, not the actual color. For best results, pick your colors from swatch books rather than from what you see on your monitor. The Pantone Matching System (PMS) is recommended for this purpose.

- Save all color photos and vector artwork as CMYK if your job is 4-color.
- **Never use RGB, HSL, Trumatch, Toyo, Lab or any other non-standard color models.** Use only Pantone and CMYK colors.
- Let us know what colors are to be generated as spot and what colors will be 4-color process. Also, if the piece will spot varnish, please indicate on your laser the varnish treatments you desire.
- If you have provided a color laser proof, be aware that the colors it represents may vary widely from the actual printed colors.
- Limit the number of colors in the color palette to the total number of colors in the document. Delete unused colors before saving and/or exporting – this reduces unnecessary data in the final PostScript file.
- Make sure colors that are the same are also named the same. PMS 185 is a separate color from Pantone 185 CV, which in turn is separate from Pantone 185 CVC, etc. Unfortunately, the default setting is inconsistent between applications, so it is necessary to manually change the name in the originating application.
- In a four-color job, printing large black areas as 100% black generally makes a poor-looking and dull black because it will print too light. For a deep, rich black, consider 75 percent cyan, 50 percent magenta, 25 percent yellow and 100 percent black.



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GRAPHICS AND SCANS:

- **Please include all your linked graphic files.** All your graphics should be in **eps** or **tiff** format. (EPS is required for duotones or files with clipping paths.) Avoid PICT and Windows BMP files.
- Save vector images (Illustrator) as EPS files (.ai files are suitable if using InDesign).
- Scan all photos, whether grayscale or color, at no less than 300 dpi and at slightly larger dimensions than what will eventually be used. Dominion Printers, Inc. uses line screens of 175 lpi and higher. Avoid sending scans at 72 dpi – although suitable for viewing onscreen and for web pages, this resolution is too low for quality offset printing.
- Crop scans in Photoshop to be slightly larger (both in pixel-area and in resolution) than their final size, and resize and crop using the picture window in your layout application. This leaves some “room” in case photo later needs to be shifted in window. Avoid, however, excessive image resizing in page layout programs. Enlarging an image more than 20% of its original size will degrade the quality, while excessive reducing (less than 75% of original size) unnecessarily increases the file size and may slow down or crash the RIP.
- Avoid rotating images in page layout programs. Rather, do this in Photoshop and resave the image for import.
- When scanning line art (black images with no gray on a white background), scan at the highest resolution your equipment can produce (1200 dpi if possible) and save in bitmap format (rather than grayscale) whenever possible.