

A guide to PDF file supply.



Printer Graphics Ltd operates a PDF workflow. This guide aims to assist in the process of creating print-ready files, and can be used as a basic checklist whilst preparing yours. Key points to check are listed below.

Page size/file consistency.

All page files should be supplied to the correct final trimmed page size, with all elements in correct and consistent positions. Please supply single pages to view rather than spreads. It is important that consistent settings and clear file names are used when creating all individual files that make up a particular job. This avoids issues when imposing files.

Trims and bleeds.

We require a minimum 3mm bleed for all elements that print to any trimmed page edge (e.g. tabs, or images). Trim marks should be offset by at least 3mm to ensure they appear outside the bleed area. If a job has NO bleed elements throughout, pdf files can be written to the final trimmed page size with no trim marks included.

Use Acrobat 4 (pdf 1.3) format (or PDFX/1a) when writing files.

Acrobat 4 format (also known as pdf version 1.3) is a tried and tested pdf format which was also adopted as the base format for the PDFX file standard. Acrobat 4 format does not allow for transparent elements to be embedded within a file - instead it forces all transparent elements to be flattened when the pdf file is written. Transparent elements within pdf files can be difficult to process, or can behave unpredictably when processed through different RIP/output devices. Flattening transparencies natively at source avoids such issues.

All fonts embedded.

We cannot use pdf files with unembedded fonts as this can lead to font substitution or omission. If you receive any error messages regarding font embedding or font substitution when creating pdf files this is an indication that there are font(s) that are either not loaded properly, are corrupt or are not available within your software - or it may be that your PDF settings are incorrect. Any such issue will need to be identified and addressed before writing and submitting your final files for print.

High resolution images and graphics.

Photographic / continuous tone image and graphics should be supplied at 300dpi (180dpi minimum). Solid line art / text elements should be supplied at 1200dpi (600dpi minimum).

Correct colour content.

Print ready files should not include RGB or LAB colour elements - they should be supplied with all colours separating as they are to intended to print - either CMYK values, or as Pantone spot colours:

The following colour file guidelines are important:

4 COLOUR (CMYK) TITLES

Files should be CMYK only with all black text and graphics appearing on the black plate only at the required values (i.e. 100% solid text plus any tints etc as required). Black text and graphic elements should be set to overprint as required.

If converting or saving files to CMYK, please use the correct colour profile. In most instances (jobs printing on flat sheet, coated paper stocks), this should be **FOGRA39**.

TITLES TO PRINT USING SPOT COLOURS

Spot colours are used in a variety of different print jobs, and should be saved in the PDF using the correct Pantone reference wherever possible:

SINGLE COLOUR TITLES that are to print in ink colour other than black can also be supplied as black/greyscale, as the ink colour is only relevant once plates are run and the relevant ink is loaded on the press.

TWO COLOUR titles tend to be black plus a spot colour (but in theory could be any two spot colours). Files for two colour titles require careful attention - it is important to ensure that files are supplied with all black and second colour elements separating as required with no stray CMYK or RGB elements within the files. In addition to this all black elements must be set to overprint any underlying second colour tint areas or graphics wherever applicable, in order to ensure best fit and reduce mis-registration (particularly when printing on a web press). All 2-colour pdf files should be checked for correct 2-colour separation prior to submitting files.

Cover files.

In addition to the general print-ready file requirements noted above covers should ideally be supplied with 6mm bleeds with all trim marks offset outside the bleed area. Covers should be supplied complete with spines included (i.e. one outer cover file and one inner cover file). Spine widths must be set to the required measurement supplied by your Printer Graphics contact.

In the case of spiral or wiro bound titles covers should normally be supplied with a dummy spine of 15mm (unless specified otherwise) with a 3mm bleed allowance into the spine area for any elements that run off the back (spine) edges. Fold and trim marks indicating cover spine areas are helpful.

Binding methods.

The final binding method needs to be taken into consideration both when designing page layouts and producing final files. For example, you can expect to visually lose approximately 5mm in the bind area of a spread layout of a PUR bound product - this would need to be allowed for wherever your layout runs across both pages of a spread.

All text elements and graphic should be positioned at least 3mm away from all trimmed edges of a page and minimum of 10mm from the spine edge due to fold and bind tolerances - however, more space should be allowed for any job that is going to be Wiro bound or drilled, for example.

If you have any concerns regarding the design of your job in relation to binding or any other file queries, please speak to your Printer Graphics account holder for further advice.