Print file guide

Everything you need to send a file we can print without going back and forth. Templates (AI · PDF) for every size are in Downloads.

1. Start here

1 Get the template

Download the template for your size from Downloads or from the quote screen and design on top of it.

2 Accepted files

PDF (best), AI, EPS, PSD, JPG, PNG, TIFF, ZIP — under 50MB each, up to 5 files with your quote request. Each file is checked automatically as you upload it.

3 No file or not sure?

Choose “Design it for me” in the quote and just send us the content.

4 We check first

We check size, colour and resolution before printing and tell you about any issue first.

2. Printing methods

Offset

Printed from plates. The more you print, the cheaper each piece and the more even the colour. Most cards, flyers and booklets.

Digital

Printed straight from the file with no plates. Best for small runs, fast turnaround and variable data. The “Digital printing” products use it.

UV

Ink is cured instantly with UV light. Used for synthetic paper, PET cards and clear materials that don't absorb ink.

Gang-run printing

Many orders share one large sheet. It's cheaper, but colour can't be tuned per order, and a reprint of the same file can come out slightly different. Most cards and gang-run flyers.

Dedicated run

Your order runs alone. It costs more, but colour can be matched — we need a printed sample as the reference.

Colour tolerance

Even from the same file, colour can vary by up to about 10% between runs.

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3. Choosing paper

Paper weight is given in g (grams per m^2). The same weight can differ in thickness: smooth art paper is thinnest, then snow (matte), then uncoated (e.g. 300g art ≈0.29mm, 300g snow ≈0.30mm). Each product's papers and photos are in the quote screen.

Paper	Weight	Feel
Art paper	80~300g	Smooth, light sheen, the most vivid photos
Snow (matte) paper	219~400g	Low sheen, calm look, easy to write on
Uncoated / matte	70~260g	No sheen, the best for writing
Vent Nouveau	122~350g	Uncoated premium stock with a refined feel
Textured (linen, laid…)	120~350g	Pressed textures and patterns
Pearl & metallic	120~300g	Pearl shimmer or metallic shine
Coloured stock	90~216g · 600µm	Colour through the sheet — great with foil; dark ones can't be written on
Premium white	100~310g	Clean white with a soft touch
Synthetic (Yupo)	250g	Tear- and water-resistant; can't be written on
Tracing paper	175~200g	Translucent

Paper	Weight	Feel
PET / PP cards	188g · 188µm	Plastic cards — clear, frosted or pearl
Film stickers	50~300g	Water-resistant film — clear, gold/silver, holographic
Paper sticker stock	80~90g	Strong adhesive / removable
Board (manila, CCP)	175~400g	Thick, stiff board for packaging
Kraft	57g	Brown, natural look

If people will write on it

Choose uncoated, snow or plain paper. Gloss coating, synthetic, film and dark coloured stock don't take ballpoint well.

Water & outdoors

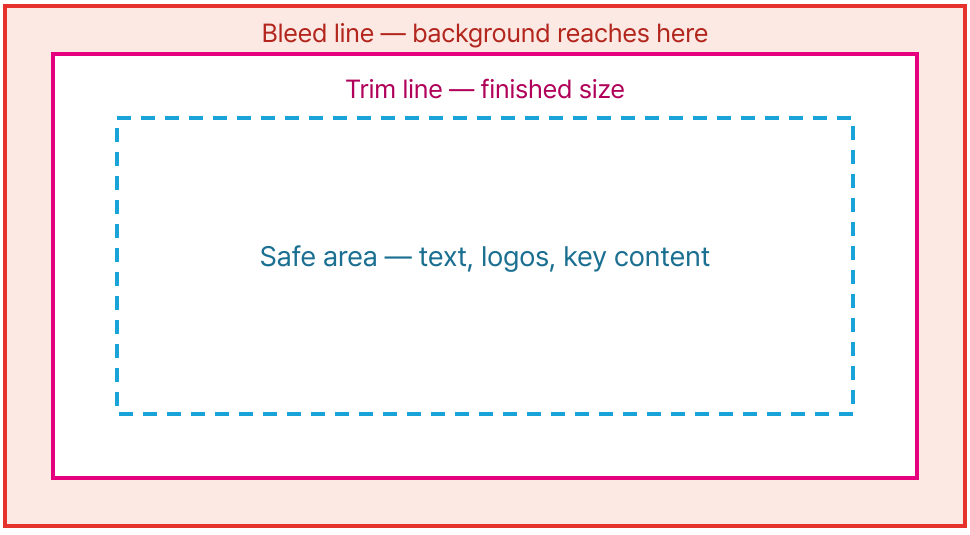
For wet or outdoor use pick synthetic stock (Yupo, PVC, film) or add lamination.

Folding heavy paper

Over 150g, add scoring so the fold doesn't crack.

4. Size, bleed and safe area

Prints are cut from larger sheets and the blade can shift 1–2mm, so files are made slightly larger than the finished size and important content stays a little inside.



Product	Bleed (each side)	Safe area (inside trim)
Cards, tags, magnets, campaign cards	1mm	3mm
Flyers, posters, stickers, booklets, envelopes…	2mm	3mm (5mm over 200mm)
Very small stickers (under 30mm)	2mm	2mm
Banners & large format (300mm+)	None (finished size)	10mm (20mm from 600mm)
Tote bags & apparel	None (print area size)	10mm

> Our templates already have these three lines on a “Guide” layer — delete just that layer before sending.

> Thin borders can look uneven after cutting. Keep borders 4mm+ thick inside the safe area, or skip them.

5. Colour (CMYK and black)

CMYK

Print uses four inks (cyan, magenta, yellow, black). We convert RGB files, but bright screen colours get softer — please start in CMYK, and convert spot (Pantone) colours to CMYK too.

Small text & fine lines = K100

Use pure C0 M0 Y0 K100 for black text. Four-colour black on small text blurs if plates shift. K100 on top overprints automatically, so whatever is underneath shows through slightly.

Large black areas = rich black

Large K100 areas look greyish. For big backgrounds use C20 M20 Y0 K100 — but not for small text or PET / clear stock, where K100 alone is right.

Total ink 250% or less

Over 250% total ink dries slowly and can transfer, scuff or crack when cut. Avoid C100 M100 Y100 K100 (400%).

Light tints & background patterns

Tints under 5% may vanish — use 8% or more. A pattern on a background needs at least a 30% difference in value to show.

If colour matters

For brand colours write the CMYK values in your notes. Screen colour and print colour can never match exactly.

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6. Resolution and images

300dpi or more

Images need 300dpi or more at actual print size (350 for photos, 600 for text-heavy images, 1200 for black line art). Photos from websites or chat apps are usually 72dpi and print blurry.

Don’t upscale

Enlarging a small image only changes the number, not the sharpness. Find the original.

Banners & large prints

100–150dpi at full size is enough for things seen from a distance.

Logos as vectors

Logos and icons print far cleaner as vectors (AI, SVG, PDF) than as JPGs.

Embed images

Linked images go missing on our side — embed them in Illustrator or send a PDF. Embedded images lose the X mark.

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7. Fonts and line weight

Outline fonts

If we don’t have your font it gets replaced. Outline all text (rasterise in Photoshop) or embed fonts in the PDF. Outlined text can’t be edited, so keep your original.

Smallest text

6pt (about 2mm) or larger; 7pt+ for white text on dark backgrounds, and avoid hairline fonts.

Thinnest line

0.5pt (about 0.18mm) or thicker — finer lines break up or disappear.

QR codes

15×15mm or larger, K100 only, 2mm quiet zone. Test it with a phone before sending.

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8. Overprint, transparency, effects

Turn overprint off

White objects set to overprint vanish in print. Check Window → Attributes in Illustrator. We don't fix overprint settings — for a see-through look use the Multiply blend mode instead.

Transparency, shadows, blur

Saving as PDF/X-1a flattens effects automatically. To do it yourself use Object → Flatten Transparency with the raster/vector balance at 100. Otherwise colours can shift or white lines appear.

Patterns & gradients

Expand complex patterns. End gradients at 2%+ rather than 0% to reduce banding.

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9. White ink and clear stock

On clear, kraft or coloured stock, white ink goes down first so colours show. White must be prepared separately from "nothing".

White plate

Fill the white-ink area in K100 on a "White" layer, or on a second artboard of the same size, exactly aligned with the artwork.

Choke slightly

Make the white 0.1–0.2mm smaller than the art so no white edge shows.

White text

On white paper, white means no ink. On clear stock put white text on the white plate.

Clear & frosted cards

Frosted cards get a full white underlay; clear cards can’t take white ink. Use K100 alone for black on clear cards.

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10. Preparing finishing files

Finishing is added after printing — chosen in the quote screen or arranged in chat, depending on the product. Prepare files like this; example files are in Downloads.

Foil (gold, silver, holographic...)

Draw only the foil parts as K100 vectors on the “Foil / emboss” layer (or on a second artboard of the same size). Keep 5mm inside the trim, lines 1pt (≈0.35mm) and text 8pt or larger. Foil can sit 1–2mm off the print, so avoid designs that must line up exactly.

Embossing / debossing

Same rules as foil, K100 vectors on their own layer. Pressing over printed ink can crack it, so lamination is recommended.

Raised clear / raised foil

Draw only the raised parts in K100 on their own layer. 3mm inside the trim, lines 1pt and text 12pt or larger, not over folds; may sit 1–2mm off the print.

Spot UV

Put only the glossy area in K100 on a separate layer over the artwork. Same 3mm / 1pt / 12pt rules as raised clear; not over folds.

Kiss-cut / die-cut stickers

Draw the cut as one closed M100 stroke (no fill) on a “Cutline” layer. Background 2mm past the line, text 3mm inside. Cuts can shift 1–3mm.

Shaped cutting (shaped cards, boards)

Cutline in M100. Smallest shape 20×20mm, curves at least 5mm round, 5mm between cutlines. In Photoshop draw the cutline as a path.

Laser-cut cards

Cut areas in K100. Remaining paper and bridges 0.8mm or wider; add bridges to shapes whose middle would fall out. AI, EPS or PDF only.

Laser marking

Only the marked parts in M100, in one file. Text under 10pt is clearer drawn as paths; delete stray points and overlapping lines.

Scoring (fold lines)

Paper 150g or heavier must be scored before folding. Mark fold positions with a dashed line on the guide layer; unmarked folds go in the centre.

Folding (half, tri-fold, Z-fold...)

For tri-folds make the inner flap 1–2mm narrower. Keep text off the fold lines.

Perforation

Mark the tear line with a dash. It must run edge to edge (no lines stopping mid-sheet), 5mm between perforations, no text within 3mm.

Hole punching

Mark each hole as a 1mm dot on the guide layer. Diameter 3–8mm, 5mm between holes, no text within 3mm.

Rounded corners

Tell us which corners, seen from the front (for portrait cards, by text direction). Keep a 4mm safe area near corners.

Lamination (gloss, matte)

Film or UV coating, each gloss or matte. No extra file needed; colours may look slightly richer.

Binding (saddle, perfect, spiral)

Saddle-stitch needs a multiple of 4 pages. Perfect and spiral need 10mm+ inner margin. Send one PDF in page order.

Numbering

Box the number position on the guide layer and write the start/end numbers in your notes. Numbers print in a standard font in red.

Eyelets (banners)

Banners get eyelets near the edges — keep important content 20mm in.

Variable data

Send one design plus a spreadsheet of the changing fields.

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11. Saving by program

Illustrator

1. Artboard = work size (open our template and keep it)
2. Document colour mode CMYK
3. Object → Unlock All, then select all text → Create Outlines
4. Expand envelopes, patterns and graphs before outlining their text
5. Embed images (not linked); don’t place AI or PDF files inside
6. Don’t save down to old versions (colours can change)
7. Delete the guide layer → save as PDF/X-1a:2001 or AI

Photoshop

1. Canvas = work size, CMYK, 300dpi+ (350 photos, 600 text-heavy, 1200 line art)
2. Separate files for front and back
3. Rasterise text — keep your layered original separately
4. Flatten and save as PDF or TIFF (JPG at max quality)

CorelDRAW

1. Page size = work size, CMYK
2. Select all text → Convert to Curves (Ctrl+Q); Text Statistics should show 0
3. Convert drop shadows, lenses and PowerClips to bitmaps
4. Check Overprint Fill is off → export PDF/X-1a

InDesign

1. Document setup bleed = our bleed (1mm cards, 2mm others)
2. Export PDF/X-1a with “Use document bleed settings” on
3. Single pages in order (not spreads)

PowerPoint · Word · Canva · HWP

1. Set the page size to the work size in mm
2. Export PDF (print / high quality) with fonts embedded
3. These apps work in RGB; we convert to CMYK, so bright colours may print a little softer.

Any PDF

1. PDF page = work size (trim + bleed)
2. No password or security settings
3. Don’t rotate pages — keep the design orientation
4. Front then back; for several designs, front/back for each in turn (wrong order isn’t grounds for a remake)

> Whatever the program, one PDF/X-1a file is fastest and safest. Front and back as pages 1 and 2 of one PDF.

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12. Pre-flight checklist

- [ ] Document = work size (trim + bleed)
- [ ] Background and photos reach the red bleed line
- [ ] Text and logos inside the safe line (blue dash)
- [ ] CMYK, total ink 250% or less
- [ ] Photos 300dpi (banners 100dpi+)
- [ ] Fonts outlined or embedded
- [ ] Images embedded, not linked
- [ ] Overprint off — especially on white
- [ ] Foil, raised and white in K100; cutlines and marking in M100 — each on its own layer
- [ ] Guide layer deleted
- [ ] Front/back or page order right · no PDF security
- [ ] Spelling, phone numbers and addresses double-checked

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13. Colour and remake policy

Colour variation

Colour varies (within about 10%) between screen and print, between papers and between runs; gang-run reprints of the same file can differ slightly. This is not grounds for a remake.

Cutting & finishing tolerance

Cuts can shift 1–2mm, foil and raised effects 1–2mm, die-cuts 1–3mm. Files that respect the safe area won’t lose content.

Printed as supplied

Spelling, numbers, image quality and page order are printed as supplied; remakes for these are charged.

If it’s our mistake

If the print differs from the file or the quantity is short, we remake it. Tell us via My page → chat within 7 days of delivery, with photos.

After production starts

Once printing starts, orders can’t be cancelled or refunded. Please check before confirming your file.