

Preflight Checklist

Avoid Printing and Finishing Delays With a Preflight Checklist

Failure to include all items required by your service provider or failure to properly prepare digital files or camera ready artwork can result in both time delays and create additional costs. Use of a comprehensive preflight checklist can save time, money, and frustration.

Preflight Checklist Items for File Prep

1. _____ Printing Setup

Check placement of crop marks and bleed allowances. 1/8" for bleeds is typical but could vary by printer.

2. _____ Font Styles

Use only the actual fonts for bold, italic, and other font styles.

True vs. Fake Italics | True vs. Fake Bold

3. _____ RIP

Avoid problems that keep files from printing by cropping images before placing in document, simplifying blends, avoiding nested graphics.

Ripping | RIP Errors / Fixes

4. _____ Trapping

Find out in advance who will do trapping on the files and submit accordingly.

Avoid the Need for Trapping

5. _____ Imposition

Find out in advance whether file is to be submitted in reader spreads or printer spreads.

6. _____ Extraneous Elements

Remove references to unused fonts and colors. Remove non-printing items from the pasteboard.

Preflight Checklist Items for File Submissions

7. _____ Digital File / Camera Ready Artwork

Use a digital format preferred and accepted by your printer. Verify software version and platform, PostScript or PDF requirements. If supplying camera ready artwork, prepare it in accordance with the service provider's requirements.

Sending Files to Your Service Provider

Composite vs. Pre-Separated PostScript or PDF

Delivering your files to your service provider

8. _____ Fonts

Send both screen and printer fonts for Type 1 fonts. Send the same format (Type 1, TrueType, OpenType) as used in the document. Send all the fonts used, including fonts in EPS graphics (or, convert fonts in graphics to outlines before placing in page layout application).

Sending Fonts to Your Service Provider

9. _____ Graphics

Send all graphics used, in the right format as required by the service provider and at the proper resolution for the output device. Convert graphics from RGB to CMYK. Supply original source files for graphics. If providing images for scanning, mark them for cropping, include required size and placement information. Include FPO placeholders.

10. _____ Media / Transfer Protocol

Label disks with your name, address, phone number, and any job number supplied by the service provider. When sending files on disk, use a type of media supported by the service provider, properly formatted for their platform, and using a supported compression method. Include only the most current version of the document to be printed and no unneeded or alternate versions of text files, fonts, or images on the disk. Verify preferred compression method (ZIP, etc.) when transferring files electronically.

11. _____ Backup Copies

Never send your only copy of a file to your service provider. Make backups. Keep copies of all application files, fonts, images, PostScript, and PDF files.

Preflight Checklist Items for Hard copy

12. _____ Job Sheet

Include a filled out job sheet (your own or one supplied by the printer) that includes your name, company name, address, phone number, job number, directories and file names and descriptions of everything on the disk, name and version of software used, font names, and printing instructions.

13. _____ Proofs

Include composite laser or color proof printed after ALL changes and corrections. Check proofs to ensure they accurately reflect the graphics, fonts, bleeds and include crop marks if required. Note on proof if it is not a 100% size representation of final product. Label all proofs with your contact information.

Contract Proofs | Digital Proofs

14. _____ Color Separation Proofs

Check that all colors separate properly. Indicate on separation proofs which color/plate it is. Label all proofs with your contact information.

15. _____ Dummy

Indicate folds, diecuts, etc. Dummy vs. Comp

Most service providers will charge extra for such things as converting RGB images to CMYK, outputting laser proofs, creating bleeds, and other corrections. Refer to this preflight checklist before submitting files to your service provider in order to avoid printing and finishing delays and added expenses.

There is also preflight software which helps to automate the preflight process. However, it should never be used as a substitute for manually checking your files and submissions.