Digital Art Requirements

Please read the following art specifications carefully. If you have any questions, please call us at **800.800.7741** and we will be happy to **assist you.**

Programs: We accept art from these programs in the following file formats:

Illustrator .ai | InDesign .indd | Photoshop .psd | Acrobat .pdf

{ Artwork created in **Microsoft Office** programs such as Power Point, Publisher, Excel or Word will **NOT** be accepted. }
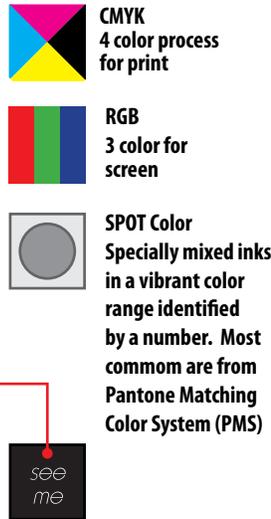
1
Layout / Bleeds:
A .125" bleed is necessary for all inside and outside die cuts. Images and text that don't bleed should be .125" inside die cuts.

live area= .125"
die cut
bleed edge= .125"
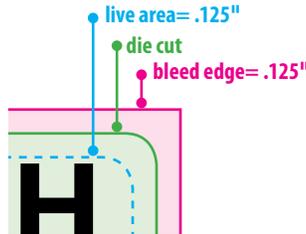
2
Color:
Specify whether jobs are to be printed in spot or process color. Provide all artwork in **CMYK** format. Any **RGB** files will be converted to **CMYK** prior to printing and can have unexpected results.

NOTE: When using "white" text against black or very dark backgrounds, avoid using very small text or "thin" style fonts due to registration imperfections. If very small white text is required, choose a "bold" font style.

CMYK
4 color process
for print

RGB
3 color for
screen

SPOT Color
Specially mixed inks in a vibrant color range identified by a number. Most commom are from Pantone Matching Color System (PMS)

see me

3
Images/Graphics:
Scans, Images and Photos: Must be at least 300dpi at actual size.
Save as CMYK TIFF or EPS format. Provide a layered PSD file in addition to any flattened TIFF or EPS files used in the layout. Any rotation, skewing or distortion of files should be done in Photoshop to expedite postscript output.

All images should be **"LINKED"** rather than **"EMBEDDED"** so needed adjustments can be made. Send linked files when artwork is submitted.

Variable Images: For jobs with variable images, image file name and name in data file MUST match. Failure to so this will delay production of the job.

Variable image file format: JPEG, TIFF, EPS, or PDF **only**

4
Fonts:
We prefer **Open Type** or **True Type** fonts but will accept Post Script. Include all type fonts (screen and printer fonts) when you send the job. Or, convert all type in the document to outlines (note that converting type to outlines renders the documents type uneditable.)

Card Text: Text for card backs should be editable text built in one of the above programs or text that has been converted to outlines. Please avoid providing text as raster images unless special effects are being used. *See page 2 for more about rasterized type.*

5
Print Ready Files:
Package art files in a folder that includes **ALL** of the following:
- Native document (.ai, .indd, .psd etc)
- All linked image and graphic files used in document
- All fonts used in document (screen & printer fonts)
- Low res PDF to compare to output

PDF: Card artwork often needs to be edited, which necessitates having the original art (the file the PDF would be created from). For example: if the original art file was created in Illustrator or InDesign, it is more efficient to edit those files rather than a PDF.

Press ready PDF files need to be saved for high resolution printing. Use the Adobe PDF preset "PRINT READY" which contains all of the correct settings for our printing requirements.

Save Adobe PDF
Adobe PDF Preset: PRINT READY

If a PDF is the only means you have of providing art and/or the art file contains no variables or only mailing variables, convert all fonts to outlines and specify when spot color printing is desired.

6
File Transport:
**Send your art files in a zipped (.zip) folder via:**

FTP *(speak to your customer service rep. for FTP instructions)*
E-Mail *(compress and make sure the file size is below 20Mb.)*

Modifications of provided artwork will result in an hourly charge of $90.00/hr.

VECTOR

A vector file is composed of points and lines. This type of rendering style produces a much cleaner image with a much smaller file size. This is a good file type for logos and trademarks. Some popular software programs that produce vector files are Adobe Illustrator and CorelDraw.
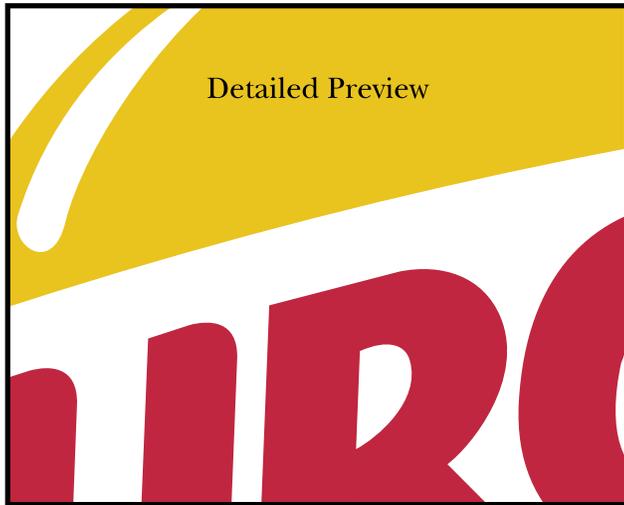
RASTER

Raster files are composed of pixels, or small colored squares. This is the file type most digital photography is composed of Vector files are not capable of producing the generous number of colors that help to create depth and shading. A popular software program for producing raster files is Adobe Photoshop.

Detailed Preview

Detailed Preview
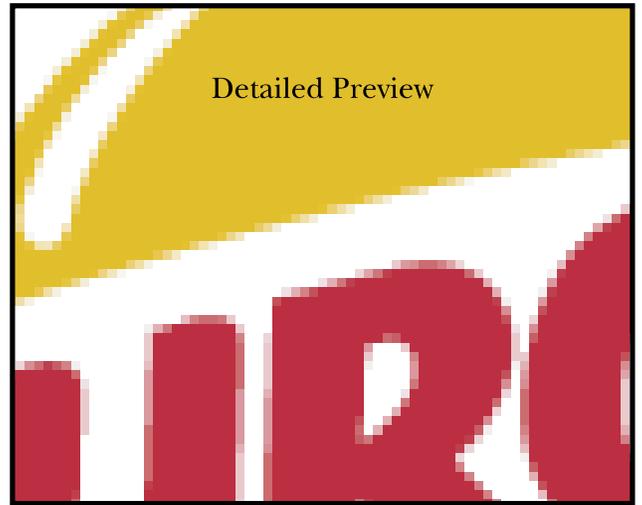
A little about type in Photoshop

Photoshop is a wonderful program that in the last few years has expanded the capabilities of the designer tremendously. But it is not the place to set type. When working with type the objective is to have clear crisp letters that the audience will be able to easily read. Unfortunately Photoshop is incapable of producing this kind of lettering. The only exception to this should be when you are applying effects to DISPLAY type in Photoshop, such as bevelling, embossing, inner glows etc. These effects should not be applied to regular body copy.

Hello
Hello
Hello

As we explained above Photoshop renders files as small squares of color. When type is set in Photoshop it too is rendered of those same small squares.

When that file is then sent to the printing press it is converted to small dots of black and white. These dots will cause the type to look fuzzy and gray.

It is best to set type in a page layout program like Quark or InDesign where it will be sent to the press as vector information. Adobe Illustrator too is an acceptable program for setting type.

Bleeds, Buffers & Die Lines

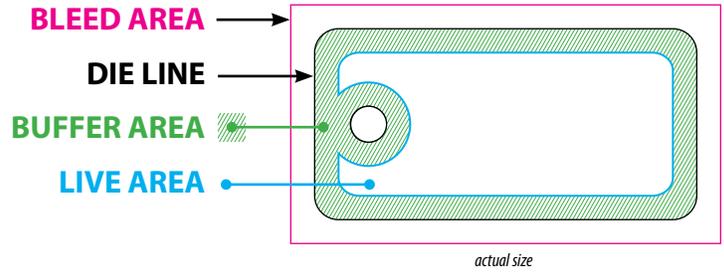**When laying out artwork for plastic cards, it is important to keep in mind how the cards are produced**

Files are sent to an offset printing press where they are printed onto a plastic substrate such as Teslin.

After the printed sheets are laminated, they are cut to the finished shape and size. Slight shifting may occur during die cutting so it is important to include a:

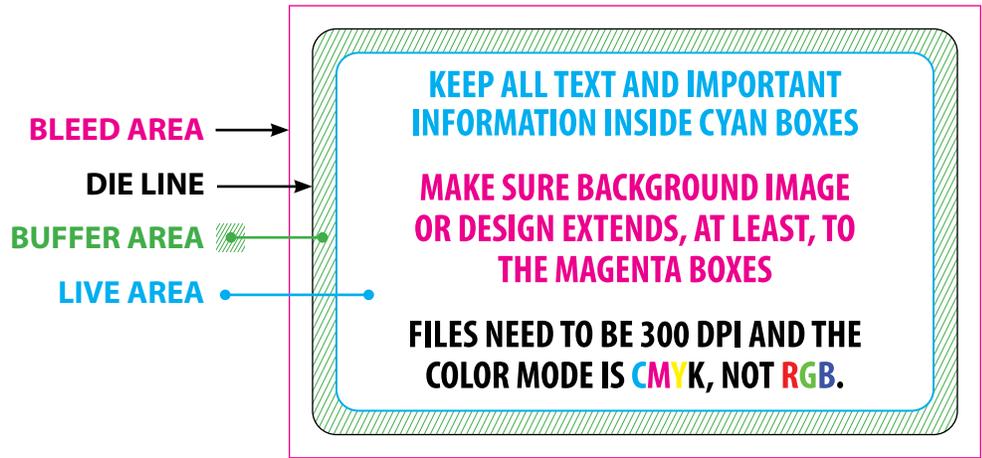**0.125" (1/8 inch) BLEED**-background art that extends beyond the die line

0.125" (1/8 inch) BUFFER. The buffer is the space between the die line and the **LIVE** area. Important text or logos should not encroach on the **BUFFER** area because they run the risk of being cut into during die cutting.
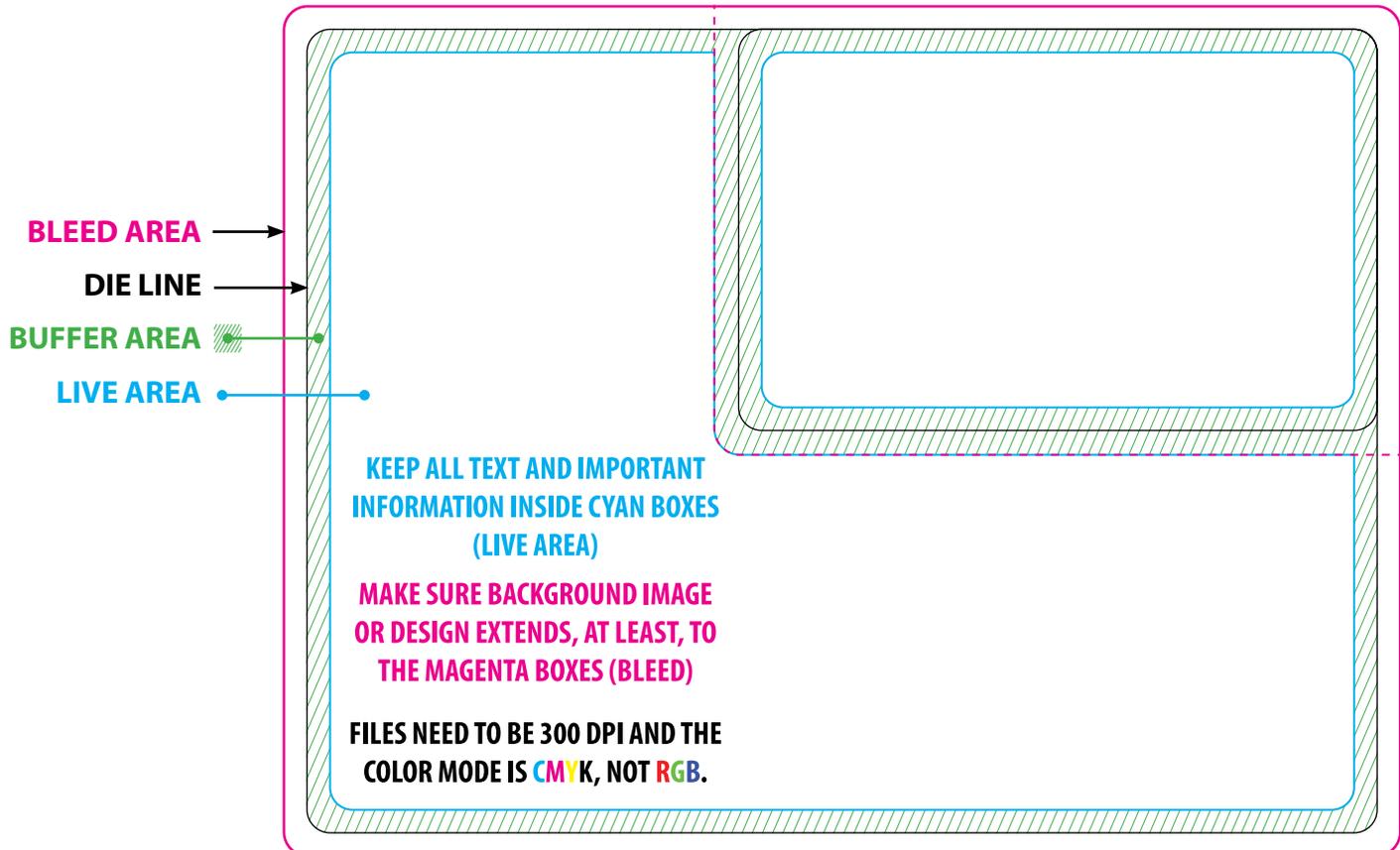
EXAMPLE OF A KEYTAG

BLEED AREA →
DIE LINE →
BUFFER AREA →
LIVE AREA →

actual size

EXAMPLE OF A CREDIT CARD SIZE CARD

BLEED AREA →
DIE LINE →
BUFFER AREA →
LIVE AREA →

KEEP ALL TEXT AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION INSIDE CYAN BOXES

MAKE SURE BACKGROUND IMAGE OR DESIGN EXTENDS, AT LEAST, TO THE MAGENTA BOXES

FILES NEED TO BE 300 DPI AND THE COLOR MODE IS CMYK, NOT RGB.

actual size

EXAMPLE OF A POSTCARD

BLEED AREA →
DIE LINE →
BUFFER AREA →
LIVE AREA →

KEEP ALL TEXT AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION INSIDE CYAN BOXES (LIVE AREA)

MAKE SURE BACKGROUND IMAGE OR DESIGN EXTENDS, AT LEAST, TO THE MAGENTA BOXES (BLEED)

FILES NEED TO BE 300 DPI AND THE COLOR MODE IS CMYK, NOT RGB.

actual size

CORRECT

INCORRECT

Please note that we do not print the die lines so make sure die lines remain on the die line layer in the template.