

How to Create

Print Ready Files

for digital output at

WePrintDirectForLess.com



How to Create Print Ready Files Using Adobe Illustrator or Macromedia FreeHand

Whether you are using Illustrator or FreeHand to create your files, specs are basically the same. One exception is number of pages. When using FreeHand, limit files to one page. (Illustrator can only make single page files.) The applications we use to get your files to press work on a single page basis. If you have an existing multi-page document, please copy and paste each page into a new, separate document for each page. This will keep file sizes to a minimum, reducing your upload and printing times, as well as reducing the chance for your file to cause errors and crashes when imaging.

File Size: Create a document size that includes the bleed, which is .25" larger than the trim size. This allows for .125" on each side. (Example: If your design will have a bleed and the trim is 5.5" x 4.25", create your file in your drawing program to be 5.75: x 4.5".) Do not create a letter size file and place a business card in the center. Please create correctly sized files.

In Illustrator, create a new layer and draw a box the size of the document including the bleeds. set it to a fill and border of none. Use this box to create a mask that contains all the elements within the bleed size.

In FreeHand, create a similar box, but copy and paste your elements inside the box to create the mask.

This masking step allows us to correctly center your file when trimming.

Color Space: Make sure you are working in the CMYK color space. In either program, be sure all the colors in your color palette are set to process or cmyk colors.

WePrintDirectForLess.com To check this in Illustrator, double click on a color in the colors palette. The pop up window will tell you if the color is process. You also need to go to file, document color mode, and make sure CMYK is checked.

To check this in FreeHand, look for italicized color names in your color palette. If they are not italicized, select the color/colors and then make process or cmyk from the options button in the colors palette.

File Format: When you are done creating your document, save it in the native file format (.ai or .fh) with all type still in text format. Then convert all your fonts to paths and embed all placed CMYK images. These two steps will eliminate the need for you to send any fonts or placed images used in your document.

In Illustrator, to embed images go to your links palette and click on an image. Click on the pop-up menu arrow in the palette and choose embed image. You must do this for each image you want to embed.

To convert fonts to paths in Illustrator, select your text, go to Type, Create Outlines from the menu bar. You must do this with each separate group of text in your file.

To embed images in FreeHand, go to Edit, Links and select each image and click on the embed button.

To convert fonts to paths in FreeHand, select your text and go to Text, Convert to Paths from the menu bar. You must do this with each separate group of text in your file.

You can now resave your file in eps or pdf format.

Illustrator Saves: To save in EPS format, choose File, Save as EPS. In the options window, choose Compatibility or v9.x or lower; preview as a TIFF (8-bit color), transparent; Options check cmyk postscript level 2. If applicable, check Include Linked Files. Also check Include document fonts just in case you missed converting a font to outlines.

To save as PDF, choose File, save as Adobe PDF. In the options set, choose IG PDF settings. You can get this settings file by clicking here (download IG PDF settings) or by using the link on the My PDFL welcome page. Click on the General button - file compatibility Acrobat 4.0; options - embed all fonts, subset fonts less than 100%. Compression button - uncheck all boxes, no compression.

FreeHand Saves: To save as EPS: choose File, Export. Format Macintosh EPS (Mac) or EPS w/Tiff Preview (Win). Export each page by itself, one at a time. In Setup, Include FreeHand document, Include Fonts in EPS, convert colors to CMYK.

To save as PDF: choose File, Export PDF. In the Export PDF window, click on Settings and use the following: Pages - All; Image Compression - None; Convert Colors to - CMYK; Compatibility - Acrobat 4, and check embed fonts only.