How to Prepare Digital Art Files for Printing

Pre Print Guide

The following pages are designed to help you set up your artwork for the most successful print. Please refer to this document before sending art files to ensure proper setup and a smooth approval process.

Clearguard ARMOR™
Clearly Protects

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HYDROPHOBIC CERAMIC COATING

5+ Year 9H Nano Ceramic Coating

Non-toxic
Super Glossy UV Resistant

Clean surface of all wax, silicone & oils. Dry. Add 6 drops to applicator, wipe over 2'x2' area until evenly coated.

Wait 1 minute use (slight haze) micro-fiber cloth to lightly wipe off. Hand buff after vehicle is complete.

FORMULATED & BOTTLED
U. S. A.

Scratch & Chemical Resistant.

CX5
SUPER GRADE
PROFESSIONAL

9H Ceramic

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USE PRO
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HANDLING

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1. File Format

Graphic Designers often use Adobe® Illustrator® (Ai) and Adobe® InDesign® (Id) to produce beautiful vector artwork. Adobe® Photoshop® (Ps) can support vector art, but does not offer a reliable vector export option. Photoshop is mainly used as an image editor for raster images.

LABEL

We recommend:
- Vector format file (.pdf, .eps, or .ai)
  Files created using a vector application will yield the best results.

We accept:
- Adobe InDesign (.indd)
  Remember to include all fonts and support files.

- Raster format file (.jpg, .tif, and .psd)
  If image resolution is appropriate this format should be fine, but edits are often difficult.

Resources:
InDesign: Packaging files for handoff

2. Image Resolution

Combining raster (photography) with vector artwork to your label is a great way to maximize visual impact, but you need to make sure the image is high-quality when the file is saved. Adobe Illustrator allows you to do this through its Raster Effects feature where image resolution can be set.

These settings can be found in Adobe Illustrator's Effect drop down menu.

We do dot recommend using raster elements for silk print projects.

LABEL

We recommend:
- 300 Effective PPI (aka: Dots Per Inch - DPI)
  Remember that an image's resolution will change when scaled within your layout.

- Color Mode (CMYK or Grayscale)
  The appropriate color mode should be used for the desired effect.

- Cropping Images
  Images should be cropped close to the size they're used to help reduce the file.

We accept:
- Images higher than 300 Effective PPI
  Excessive resolution does not result in a higher quality image.

3. Screens and Gradients

If your artwork uses screens and gradients, it's important to consider how they will reproduce on your container.

LABEL

If steeping occurs in Adobe Photoshop we recommend:
- Add a slight "Noise" *(Ps: Filter> Noise> Add Noise)* to color gradients
  This will help eliminate screen stepping in blends.

If steeping occurs in Adobe Illustrator we recommend:
- Add a slight "Film Grain" *(Ai: Effect> Artistic> Film Grain)* to color gradients
  This will help eliminate screen stepping in blends.

4. Dot Gain and Ink Spread

Dot Gain and Ink Spread can be avoided if you set up your labels correctly.

LABEL

If labels are produced by a "Digital" press:
- Minimal, if any, Dot Gain or Ink Spread may occur

If labels are produced by an "Offset" press:
- Colors may appear slightly darker between the film and the printed piece

FINEPRINT

Be cautious:
- When dealing with small type and fine details that may fill in or spread during the Printing process.

5. Color

Our labels are typically produced by digital printers using process color, which combines cyan, magenta, yellow, and black (CMYK) to produce most colors. If you have a specific PANTONE® color you're trying to match it can be converted to process color by most graphic design applications.

LABEL

We recommend:
- Process color (CMYK)
  Process color will produce the best results.
- One-color black
  Try to avoid including additional colors (cyan, magenta, and yellow) when using 100% black.

We accept:
- RGB color
  Not recommended due to unacceptable results when converted to process color.

6. FONTS

There are thousands of fonts on the Internet. Some require you to purchase usage rights while others may be free. Please check your font usage rights early in the design process.

It's unlikely we have the same typeface, version, or even the rights to the font you're using. The best way to avoid any issues is to convert all your text to outlines before providing final artwork. By doing this, text will be converted to a non-editable element (vector) and no longer require the font to be loaded. Keep in mind that once this is done text edits will be difficult for you if changes are needed. A common practice is to keep an original version before creating a version with outlined text.

We recommend printing your label out at actual size to ensure your text appears as intended.

LABEL

We recommend:
- Convert all text to outlines
  Ai & Id: Type> Create Outlines.

- Fonts should be no smaller than 5pt (Medium font style)
  Also, go easy on the copy. A label is not the place to put your doctoral dissertation.

- Use caution when using "Light" and "Thin" typefaces with small point sizes (~5pt)
  You should test Print your label scaled at 100%.

- Avoid "Reversed" text on small text (~5pt)
  This will reduce the chance of enclosed spaces from filling in.

We accept:
- Editable text (not outlined)
  Please include the actual font files (.otf or .ttf) with your art files.

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7. Stroke/Rule Thickness

If you have strokes/rules in your artwork you should use caution when using thin lines to avoid disappearing when printed.

LABEL

We recommend:
- At least .5pt thick, and at least 1pt thick when over black backgrounds (reversed)

8. UPC CODE

Consider the color of your container, product and ink when using barcodes. Printing a barcode on a dark container may require a white background or you may consider reversing the barcode.

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LABEL

We recommend:
- At least 1" wide
  Please confirm they work as intended if they are used smaller than 1" wide.

- Black barcode on a white field
  This will be the most successful.

We accept:
- Reversed (light color over a dark background)
  Please test before providing final artwork.

Resources:
Get Started Guide

9. Margins & Bleeds

These need to be considered so critical content avoids being cut-off during the printing process.

We recommend:
- Keep all critical text and graphics at least 1/16" from the trim edge
- Include at least 1/16" bleed

We accept:
- Content 3/8" from trim edge
  Critical content should not come within 1/16" from trim edge.

10. Wraps and Panels

A wrap refers to how a label "wraps" around a container, and a panel is the "side" of the label that can been seen without having to rotate the container when applied.

Only about 30% of the container can be visible at any one time. Keep this in mind when designing your label so panel content is visible without turning the container.

We recommend:
- Print out your art and adhere it to your sample container
  This is a great way to verify your artwork looks as expected.

11. Templates and Die Lines

We do not require artwork built using a template. CGA provides base dominions for all labels. But if you are printing your own labels, it is always highly recommended you test fit the label before printing. Simply cut a piece of paper to the exact size and wrap your bottle.

We recommend:
- Verify the label fits your container correctly
  Your container may have a slight taper, so labels may need to be designed with that in mind.

13. Review / Confirm

Print it out and try it on. You'll be amazed at how many problems you'll catch if you do this simple trick. Print your label out at actual size (double check that Adobe Acrobat does not have "Shrink to page" selected) on any printer, cut it out, and tape it to your container. You'll quickly see that your front panel is too wide, your text is too small, your label doesn't fit, the wrap doesn't line up, etc.

LABEL

TEST PRINT

We recommend:
- Proofread your content
  Check for spelling, proper instructions, correct ingredients and legibility. You'll be glad you did.

- Print-out your art and place it on your container
  This is a great way to confirm your label looks as you expected.

14. Submit

The last step is to have someone check your art and make sure that it's going to print successfully. The last thing that you want to do is print hundreds of labels and find they aren't the right size, the image is fuzzy, the text is too hard to read, or the color is off.

We wish you the best of luck with preparing art files for label printing.

SPELLING

CHECK IT!

We HIGHLY recommend:
- Read and spell check every word. CGA is not responsible for spelling errors or other typos. It is your responsibility to make sure ALL is good.

LABEL

CHECK IT!

We recommend:
- Clearly name your files
  This is helpful when product lines that have several types, and/or sizes

15. Celebrate

Behold, the finished product. A quality label on a quality container is a quality thing.