



Understanding Bleeds, Safe Page Margins and Crop Marks

Bleeds

When any image or element on a page touches the edge of the page, extending beyond the trim edge, leaving no margin, it is considered a "bleed". It may bleed or extend off one or more sides. Photos, rule lines, graphics and decorative text elements can bleed off the page.

The purpose of extra bleed allowance is to compensate for the normal amount of shifting or deviation that occurs as a result of cutting and/or folding to a finished size. It also addresses the fact that ink cannot be run exactly to the edge of a sheet when on press.

For bleeding images, it is necessary to incorporate a minimum of 1/8" extra image allowance (1/4" is preferred). Extra bleed allowance is accomplished by "stretching" or extending the bleeding page elements to the outside of the final page size by another 1/8" to 1/4". Do not add this allowance to your page size in your "Document Setup". The page size should be set to the final trimmed size of your publication.

Elements that bleed off the page can sometimes add to the cost of printing if a larger sheet of paper is required to accommodate the extra bleed allowance. If you need to reduce costs, check with your printer to understand any costs associated with bleeds, and consider designing without bleeds.

Safe Page Margins

For the same reason that extra image is needed for bleeds, extra margin or white space is necessary to keep non-bleeding elements from being trimmed off, folded through, or from falling too close to the trim edge. A general rule is to maintain a margin of at least 1/4" for any project that folds, meaning that all non-bleeding elements should fall inside the trimmed page edge or fold by at least 1/4". For flat work such as postcards or business cards, 1/8" is sufficient but 1/4" is recommended.

Keep in mind you will need additional inside or bind margin allowance for books or booklets. The amount of extra allowance you will need depends on how your book binds.

Binding Method *Suggested Margins*

Perfect Bound: 1/2" to 5/8"

3-Hole Drill (for insertion in binder): 3/4"

Punch Binding (Wir-O and Plasticcoil): 1/2"

Bound Books with 3-Hole Drill: 1"

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Crop Marks

Crop marks that indicate the final trim/cropping of pages should be incorporated into the print-ready file. In page layout programs intended for creating print-ready files, the crop marks (AKA printer's marks, bleed and/or trim marks) are added via print settings. Crop marks should be .25 or .5 pt. in width and should be positioned (offset) at least 1/4" outside of the page box.

Check with your HBP print team for assistance in preparing your final files for production or for assistance with choosing settings.