

Great Print-Ready PDFs from Illustrator



Prepare. Check bleed settings, and swatches ~ Step 1

(Setup will take a few minutes, but after that, just 5 STEPS to a Great Print-Ready PDF!)

Start out right by creating all of your Illustrator files with bleed, even if the final piece will not bleed. Get in the habit and you'll never regret it. Page size ("Document Setup") should be the final trim size of your document.

Here's an example of a setting up a new, 8.5 x 11 document with bleed:

File > New > Document

The "New Document" dialog box appears. You may have to click "More Options" to see the window shown here. Type in bleed amount of **0.125**, set the "lock" icon at the end of the bleed area and all settings will automatically fill in as 0.125. Obviously, other settings such as width, height and margins can be changed however you like based on the real trim size of your document pages, but the bleed should ALWAYS be set up in your file from the start.

Be sure the Color Mode is "CMYK", and Raster Effects are set to "High (300 ppi)".

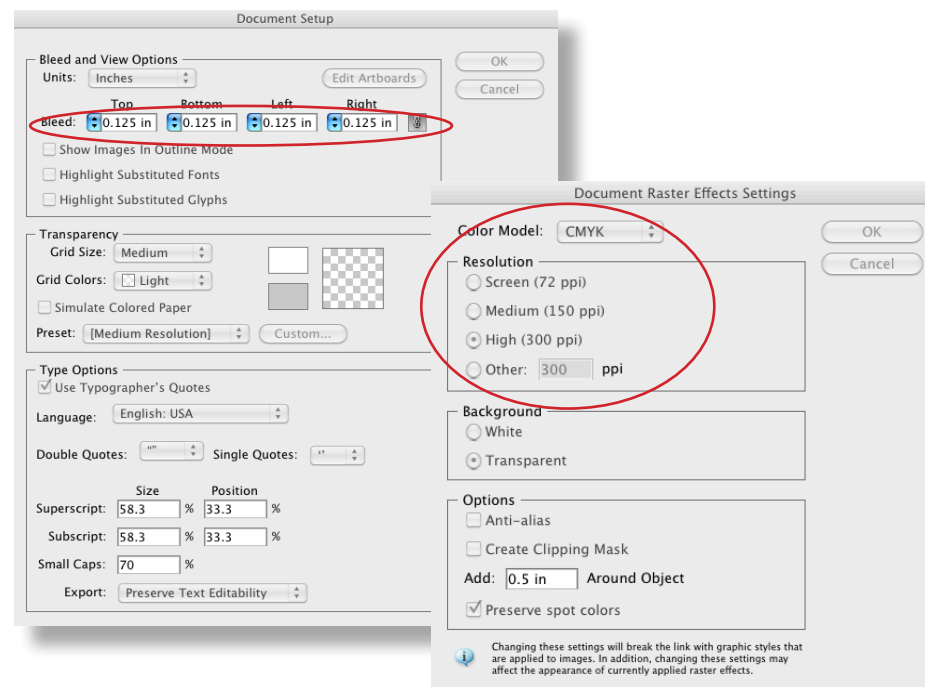
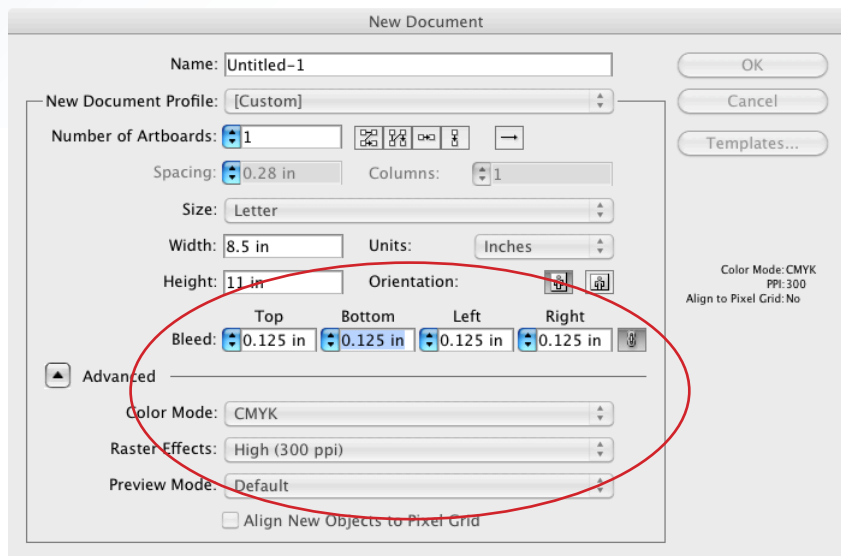
If you have a file already started and have not set up bleed, do this:

File > Document Setup

The "Document Setup" dialog box appears. Type in bleed amount of **0.125**, set the "lock" icon at the end of the bleed area and all settings will automatically fill in as 0.125. Also, do this:

Effect > Document Raster Effects Settings...

Set Color Mode as CMYK and Resolution High (300 ppi).



Changing these settings will break the link with graphic styles that are applied to images. In addition, changing these settings may affect the appearance of currently applied raster effects.

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Prepare. Check bleed settings, and swatches ~ Step 2

Okay. Now the bleed is set. Here's what you see and how to use it:

Outside Red Line = Bleed Area

The page now shows the bleed area, represented by a red line that is OUTSIDE the black, trim line. (Be sure your "view" is set to "show guides".) ANYTHING that touches the black, trim line MUST continue on past that line up to the bleed line. Pages without bleed at these points CANNOT be printed and trimmed correctly.

The example to the right shows various elements set to "bleed" off the trim of the page.

BLEED LINE - elements must extend up to this line

TRIM LINE ↑

MARGIN LINE ↑

BLEED
HERE

BLEED
HERE

BLEED
HERE

fish: more than dinner



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BLEED
HERE

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Prepare. Check bleed settings, and swatches ~ Step 3

Now ...to Swatches!

The Swatches Palette

First, clean up the swatch palette.

Go to the little triangle at the top/right of the swatch window and choose, “select all unused” then delete those swatches.

This example shows several CMYK process swatches, four RGB process swatches, and two Pantone Spot swatches with a similar name. The RGB swatches should be changed to CMYK process swatches.

If this job is quoted/estimated to print in only CMYK, then the spot colors should be changed to 4-color process colors.

If this job is to print using just spot Pantone colors, then that is all that should be shown in the swatches palette.

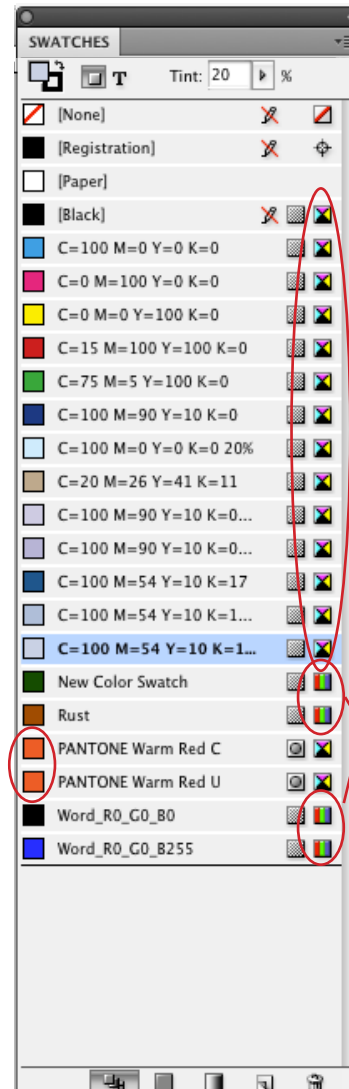
To edit the swatches, in the swatches palette, click on each swatch you wish to change and select the appropriate color type and color mode.

Note the two bottom swatches that begin with “Word_”. These have appeared with imported text from Word. Typically the black-looking swatch can be deleted and replaced with “Black.” never leave it as-is.

These are Pantone Spot Swatches

If your job’s print specification is quoted or estimated as containing spot colors, then the number of spot colors here should match your printing estimate. In this example, there are two “Warm Red” spot colors – there should only be one with the same name on the final file.

BEFORE:



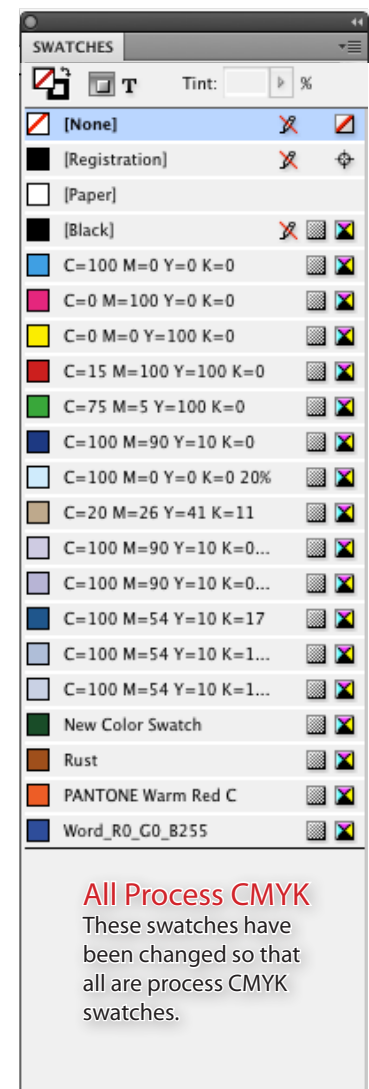
These are CMYK Process Swatches

If your job is specified to be printed in 4-color process only, then all swatches should look like this with these icons at the right.

These are RGB Swatches

These should be converted to CMYK process swatches.

AFTER:



All Process CMYK

These swatches have been changed so that all are process CMYK swatches.

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Prepare. Check bleed settings, and swatches ~ Step 4

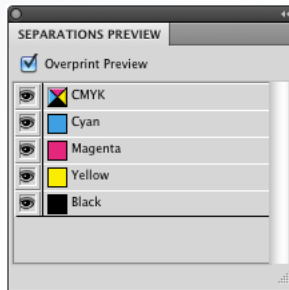
Check Swatches with Separation Preview

Check Swatches in Use with "Separation Preview"

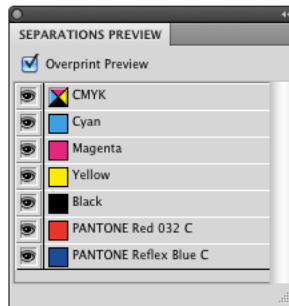
Go to "Window > Separations Preview".

In that palette, click "Overprint Preview" - "On".

This example shows only CMYK active separations:



This example shows CMYK and two Pantone Spot-color separations:



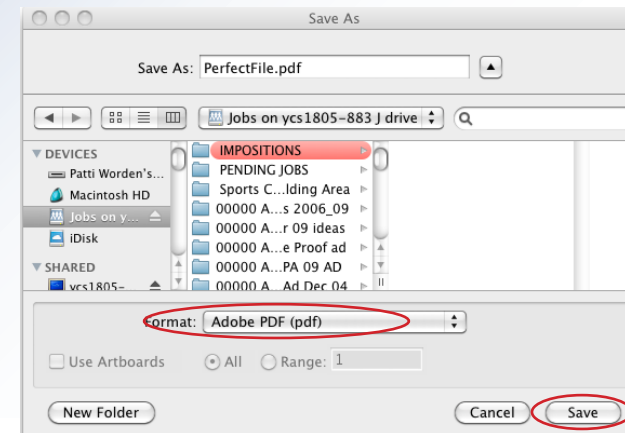
Separations Preview will always list CMYK - Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black. It will also list other active ink colors. To view which colors are actually in use in your document, toggle the "eye" icon on and off and note where the colors are being used. The swatches in use in the Separations Preview window should MATCH your printing estimate specifications. If not, fix the swatches until it does match.

PDF!! Save Great Print-Ready PDF! ~ Step 1

Choose the right settings for a Great PDF!

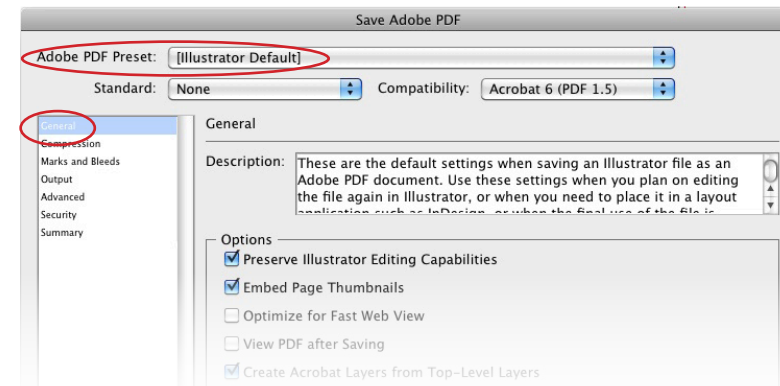
Make a new Adobe PDF Preset for Illustrator PDFs – You'll only have to do this Once!

Go to "File > Save As"



This window requests a filename, and that you choose a location for your PDF. Choose "Adobe PDF (pdf)" as the Format, then "Save".

In the next window, in "General", choose "Illustrator Default" as the Adobe PDF Preset, then click down to "Compression" - leave as-is, then to "Marks and Bleeds".

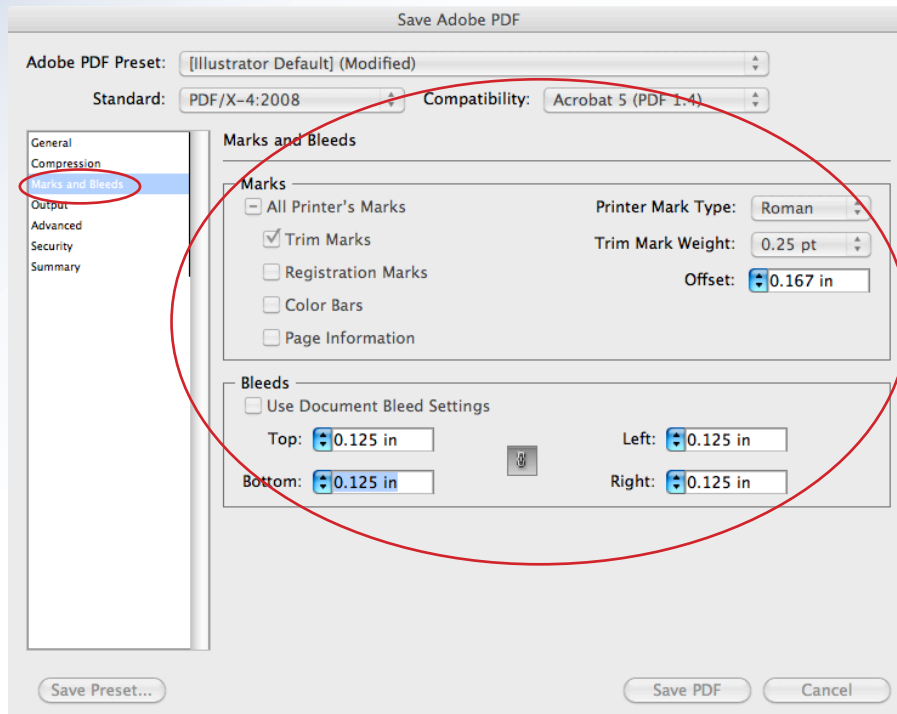


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Export a Great Print-Ready PDF! ~ Step 2

Final steps of options.

Next go to “Output”. Set the options shown here::



Now Save the Preset you just made with a name you’ll remember, and *use it* the next time you create a PDF for Offset Printing!

Here’s how to use your new PDF Preset to make Great PDFs!:

With your final file open and ready, go to “File > Adobe PDF Presets...”

Choose your new preset and export the file. As long as you followed the directions for setting up the bleeds, checking the swatches, and preflighting, your PDF file will be GREAT!

As a final check, ALWAYS open and view your PDF before sending it for printing. You should see the crop marks and bleeds that you set on all of the pages. These will not appear on the final prints, being trimmed off, but are necessary for successful offset printing.

From Now On...: 4 Steps to a Great PDF!

✓ BLEEDS.

Make your new file with bleed. Set your Screen Mode under “View” to “Normal”. Be sure all items that touch the trim edges extend to the bleed lines.

✓ SWATCHES.

Be sure all unused colors are deleted and all remaining swatches match your printing estimate specifications.

✓ EXPORT.

Export a PDF using your new Offset Printing Profile.

✓ VIEW.

Look at your PDF before sending. Admire the results!

Send your final PDF to Advanced Color Graphics this easy way:

www.advancedcolorgraphics.com

Click on “upload file” and follow the easy instructions!

Questions? Just call us: (814)-235-1200 or Toll-Free - (877) 552-1200