



How to Send a Print-Ready File

✓ Use the Right File Format

The file format is the single most important decision you make to have a print-ready file.

- ✓ Send a high-resolution PDF is the standard for professional printing. It locks in your fonts, colors, and layout exactly as you designed them.

✓ Accepted Formats

PDF/X-1a or PDF/X-4
High-resolution PDF (press quality)
PDF Print (Canva)

✗ Avoid These

Word documents (.docx)
PowerPoint files (.pptx)
Low-resolution JPEGs or PNGs

✓ Set Your Resolution to 300 DPI

Dots Per Inch (DPI) measures the resolution of the physical output from a press and is important for image sharpness.

72 DPI

Screen only
Will print blurry

150 DPI

Marginal
Acceptable for some uses

300 DPI

Professional print
Always use this

For print, your images need to be 300 DPI or higher. A quick rule of thumb: photos taken on a modern smartphone are usually high enough resolution. Photos downloaded from websites or pulled from Google Image Search are almost always too low — typically 72 DPI — and will print blurry. When in doubt, if the image file is under 500KB it is likely screen resolution, not print resolution.

Quick Tip: Zoom in to 300% on your image in your design program. If it looks blurry on screen at that zoom level, that is how it will print!

✓ Set Your Color Mode to CMYK

Printers use four ink colors to produce every shade — Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black (CMYK). Computer screens use Red, Green, and Blue (RGB). If you send a file set up using RGB, your colors may shift when printed.

- ✓ **Before you export:** In your design program, go to Document Setup or Color Settings and confirm the color mode is set to CMYK before you create your PDF.

Adobe/Canva: Chose PDF Print. In PDF Print, under 'Color Profile,' choose CMYK.

Powerpoint, Microsoft Word: These default to RGB. Save as a PDF. File→Save As→PDF



✓ Add Bleeds and Crop Marks

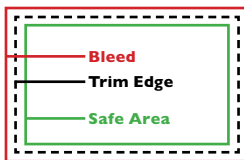
If any color, image, or design element is expected to extend to the edge of the page, you need to add bleed to your print-ready file.

Bleeds are an extension of your artwork beyond the trim edge. If your project does not have a white border, it will be trimmed to finished size. When preparing final files, be sure all the design and text elements are within the safe zone.

Standard bleed amount:
0.125 inches (1/8") on all four side

Safe zone for text and logos:
Keep all important content 0.125" inside the trim edge

Adobe/Canva: Choose PDF Print. In PDF Print, choose 'Crop marks and bleed'.



✓ Embed Your Fonts

Fonts need to be embedded in your design so the output is as expected, staying with the file through prepress and production. Sending your font files along can assist if not properly embedded in your pdf.

- ✓ **When saving your PDF:** Look for an option that says 'Embed All Fonts' or 'Subset Fonts.' In Adobe Acrobat, Illustrator, or InDesign this is found in the PDF export settings. Always turn this on.

Using Canva? Fonts are embedded automatically when you export as PDF Print — no additional step needed.

✓ Check Your File Before You Send It

Spend five minutes on this checklist before hitting send. It prevents the most common reasons print jobs are delayed.

- ✓ File is a PDF, PDF/X-1a or PDF/X-4 and final dimensions are preferred
- ✓ Resolution is 300 DPI or higher for all images
- ✓ Color mode is CMYK not RGB
- ✓ Bleed is included if necessary
- ✓ Fonts are embedded in the PDF
- ✓ Check final dimensions and trim size
- ✓ Ensure content is within 0.125" of the crop marks
- ✓ Include key info in file name
(ie: Your Company_Postcard_5x7_Front_v2.pdf)

✓ Send Your Print-Ready File

- ✓ Your name and company
- ✓ Project Name
- ✓ Size
- ✓ Quantity
- ✓ Paper or substrate preference if you have one
- ✓ Any special finishing — folding, perforation, coating
- ✓ Delivery/Mailing instructions
- ✓ Deadlines

Not sure if your file is ready? Just ask! Metro Presort reviews files before going to press and will reach out with a final proof before production. [Contact us!](#)

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