



**GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESSFUL  
FILE PREPARATION**

# Print-Ready PDF

## Print-ready PDF (PDF/X-1a)

Print-ready PDFs are Atlas Print Solution's preferred file format.

What is a Print-ready PDF?

Elements must be CMYK (all SPOT colors **MUST** be converted to PROCESS).

PDF Checklist

- Embed high-res images. Recommended image resolution, after scaling, is 300 ppi (1200 ppi for bitmapped images).
- Embed all fonts.
- Atlas's rich black build is C:40 M:30 Y:0 K:100
- Exclude security settings.
- Convert SPOT colors to PROCESS.
- PDF Writer must not be used for file creation.
- Files that trim must extend (bleed) 1/8" past final trim.
- Files that Install, such as Walls / Windows / Columns must extend (bleed) 1/2" past final size. **NO CROPS** in file. Added bleed is for Install compensation.
- Build document at final size, or at a proportionate scale. (Please advise, if your file is 300 ppi at half scale, final resolution will be 150 ppi)

### Poster / Duratran SPECS

**RED**  
BLEED (1/8")

**BLACK LINE**  
TRIM

**GREEN**  
Poster Safety

### Wall / Window / Column SPECS

**RED**  
BLEED (1/2")

**GREEN**  
Safety



## Raster

photographs have great color detail, but can't enlarge without becoming blurry.

# VS

## Vector

fonts/logos have the ability to enlarge without losing quality, but limited color detail

**Raster Images:** The most common types of raster images are TIFFs, JPEGs, GIFs and PNGs. As a reference, almost all of the photos found on the web and in print materials are raster images. Since raster images are constructed using a fixed number of pixels, **they can't be resized to create a larger image without causing the pixels to become grainy and the image to become distorted.**

**Vector Images:** Vector images are more flexible. They are constructed using mathematical formulas rather than pixels, vector file types such as an **EPS or AI are excellent for creating graphics that frequently require resizing.**

**High vs Low resolution:** Raster images with DPI below 300 are best used on the web while printed images should be at least 300 DPI. A file with 300 DPI will print perfectly at the size it is set up at. When we have to enlarge the 300 DPI image, it will begin to lose resolution, especially in large format comps.

### What is a JPEG, TIF, EPS, AI & PDF?

**JPG:** JPG (or JPEG) is a raster image that is often used for photographs on the web and is usually from the RGB colorspace. A JPG can't have a transparent background so they are always in the shape of a rectangle or square with a solid background.

**TIF:** A TIF (or TIFF) is a large raster file. It is created using the CMYK color model for printing on a four-color press and is significantly larger in file size than its JPEG counterpart.

**EPS:** An EPS file is a vector file of a graphic, text or illustration. Because it is vector it can easily be resized to any size and can be edited in virtually any design program. This is ideal for Cut Vinyl.

**AI:** An AI file is a vector file created by Adobe that can only be created or edited with Adobe Illustrator. It is most commonly used when creating logos and illustrations for print layouts. This is also ideal for Cut Vinyl layouts.

**PDF:** Essentially, a pdf is usually what is provided because of its ability to be open in most programs. We can use pdfs to print high res photographs, or even vector artwork for Cut Vinyl.

## Native Files

**InDesign (.indd):** This is ideal for the client to provide. The thing is that InDesign files are not just one (1) file. They almost always need to be packaged with graphics, fonts, and logos that are all to appear on the file.

**Illustrator (.ai):** We can also use Illustrator files to print. Ideally, this is used more for Cut Vinyl and diecut files but sometimes clients will set up artwork with graphics within the file, which is ok **IF** the images and fonts used in the Illustrator file. However, PDF X-1a with Crops and Bleed are preferred. with fonts OUTLINED.

**Photoshop (.psd):** Usually, this is the worst type of live file to ask for. Photoshop is used more for image manipulation, cleaning up and rarely for high resolution, large sized images that we produce. If a client sends this type of live file, we need all images and fonts used in the file.

### When Bleed &/or Crops are needed in "Print-Ready Artwork"

Print-ready meaning, files that the studio does not have to touch or prep for production.

**Poster (mounted & unmounted):** .125" bleed all around w/ crop marks included.

**Duratran (Film):** .125" bleed all around w/ crop marks included.

**Window Vinyl:** .5" bleed all around, no crop marks needed

**Winperf:** .5" bleed all around, no crop marks needed

**Fabric:** .75" bleed all around, no crop marks needed

**Canvas:** 3" bleed all around for stretching on to frame. No crop marks needed

**Dibond / Plexi / Wood:** .25" bleed all around, no crop marks needed.

**Duratran (Plexi):** .25" bleed all around, no crop marks needed.

**Wrapped Panel:** 2" bleed all around, no crop marks needed.

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### Examples

**Cut Vinyl:** Vector File, Fonts must be OUTLINED (single solid color that can be matched to a colored roll)

**Print & Cut:** Raster File with a Vector Die Line (Die Line must be drawn in Adobe Illustrator, placed on a separate layer)

