

File Prep Guide

A practical reference for preparing artwork for professional printing - including resolution, color, bleeds, fonts, packaged files, templates, and wide-format graphics.

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Prepare Your Artwork With Confidence

Great printing starts with properly prepared artwork. This guide brings together the core file-preparation guidance from Edison Press's older website content and organizes it into a cleaner reference for customers.

CHECK	BEFORE YOU SUBMIT
1	Build artwork at the correct finished size.
2	Use high-resolution images; 300 dpi is recommended for standard print work.
3	Prepare color appropriately for commercial printing, typically CMYK.
4	Include bleed where artwork extends to the finished edge.
5	Keep important text and graphics safely inside the trim line.
6	Embed or package fonts and linked images when supplying native files.

Essential File Preparation Topics

These fundamentals are useful regardless of the design application used to create the artwork.

Image Resolution	For standard print work, Edison Press's older guidance recommends 300 dots per inch (dpi). Images below that resolution may appear soft or blurry when printed. Avoid enlarging low-resolution raster images beyond the size for which they were created.
CMYK Color Mode	Commercial process printing commonly uses cyan, magenta, yellow, and black (CMYK). Artwork created for screens is often RGB, so color can shift when converted for print. Preparing print artwork in the appropriate color mode helps make output more predictable.
Bleeds, Cut Line & Safety Margin	When a background, photo, or color is intended to reach the finished edge, extend it beyond the trim line into the bleed area. Keep important text and graphics inside the suggested safe area. The older template guidance specifies at least a 1/8-inch white margin when no bleed is used.
Borders With Bleeds	Borders near a trimmed edge can appear uneven if normal cutting variation changes the visible width from side to side. Allow enough space between a border and the trim edge, and avoid extremely narrow borders when visual symmetry is important.
Fonts & Transparency	Before sending native artwork, verify that required fonts are available and that linked assets are present. Packaging the document is the safest way to collect fonts, linked images, and the native file when Edison Press may need to make revisions.
Fonts & Text Point Sizes	Very small type can lose clarity, especially when reversed out of a color or built from multiple process colors. Keep critical copy comfortably readable and consider the final printed size rather than only the on-screen view.
Line Width	Extremely thin rules may not reproduce consistently in print. Use line weights substantial enough to remain visible at final size, particularly for reversed lines or lines built from multiple colors.
Raster vs. Vector	Raster graphics are made from pixels and can become blurry when enlarged. Vector graphics are built from paths and can scale while remaining crisp. For large-format graphics, vector artwork is especially useful for logos, text, and other elements that need to scale significantly.

How to Package Files

The older Edison Press instructions state that high-resolution PDF, EPS, TIFF, DOC, and PUB files were accepted. A high-resolution PDF with bleed was described as the most foolproof format. When revisions may be needed, supply the native file together with all fonts and linked images.

Packaging an InDesign Job

1. Open the document

Open the final document in Adobe InDesign.

2. Fix missing images

Open the Links panel and resolve any missing or modified links by reconnecting them to the correct high-resolution source files.

3. Fix missing fonts

Use Type > Find Font. Load required fonts or substitute appropriate fonts before packaging.

4. Package the files

Use File > Package. The package should collect a copy of the document, linked high-resolution images, and fonts.

5. Confirm package options

Choose a destination folder and confirm that the options to copy fonts and linked graphics are enabled.

6. Compress the folder

Compress or ZIP the completed package so the collected files can be transferred together.

7. Upload the package

Submit the compressed package using the current file-transfer or order-upload method provided by Edison Press.

Tip: Before packaging, use InDesign's preflight tools to identify missing fonts, missing links, overset text, and other document issues.

Using a Print Template

Edison Press's older template instructions describe templates as a way to simplify layout and help customers account for bleed, safety zones, borders, folding, orientation, and other product-specific requirements.

Recommended workflow

- Choose the template variation that matches the product, orientation, and number of printed sides.
- Select a template format compatible with your design software. The older packages included formats such as EPS, JPG, INDD, and PDF.
- Keep the template on a separate background layer and create the printable artwork on its own layer.
- Extend any background or image that bleeds to the outer bleed boundary.
- Keep important text and artwork inside the suggested safe area.
- Before exporting the final file, remove or hide the template layer so none of the guide marks print.
- Export a high-resolution PDF or provide properly packaged native artwork when revisions may be required.

Resolution reminder

The older template instructions recommend 300 dpi for standard print files and images. Lower-resolution artwork may appear blurry when printed.

Preparing Large-Format Graphics

Visibility

Size text for the intended viewing distance and place signage where it can be seen by the target audience. The older Edison Press guidance used a general rule of approximately one inch of letter height for every ten feet of viewing distance.

Readability

Organize the message so it can be understood quickly. Emphasize key words with size, weight, spacing, and contrast, and group related elements logically.

Notice-ability

Use contrast and a clear visual hierarchy so the sign stands apart from its surroundings. The older guidance identified strong combinations such as black on yellow, white on black, yellow on black, black on white, and blue on white.

Legibility

Choose typefaces that remain easy to distinguish at the expected viewing distance. Decorative and script fonts can become difficult to read when viewed from farther away.

Raster vs. Vector

Raster artwork is pixel-based and can blur when enlarged. Vector artwork is path-based and generally scales cleanly, making it particularly useful for large-format logos, type, and graphic elements.

FINAL CHECK

Before Sending Artwork

- ✓ Correct finished size and orientation
- ✓ Bleed included where required
- ✓ Critical content inside the safety area
- ✓ High-resolution images
- ✓ Appropriate print color mode
- ✓ Fonts embedded, outlined, or packaged as appropriate
- ✓ Linked images included when native files are supplied
- ✓ Template guides removed from the final printable file
- ✓ Final PDF reviewed at 100% magnification before submission

A note about older content

This guide modernizes and reorganizes the file-preparation material supplied from the customer's older website. Specific upload links, software screenshots, mailing endorsement rules, and other time-sensitive operational details were not reproduced as current instructions. Those items should be confirmed before publishing them as active customer guidance.