

What is bleed?

Bleed is usually an intentional design element; When any image or element on a page touches the edge of the page, extending beyond the trim edge, leaving no margin it is said to bleed. It may bleed or extend off one or more sides and includes images, photos, rules, clip art, and text elements.

What is bleed for?

Two reasons. It is to allow for deviations when cutting/trimming the printed job and also to allow for inaccuracies of the printing press. Slight movement of the paper on the press or movement during trimming could result in items that are supposed to bleed off not quite reaching the edge, leaving paper showing at the edges. Bleed allowance extends the image off the page a sufficient amount to counteract these slight deviations.

Do I need Bleed?

If any element of your job does not extend to the edge of the finished size of the job, then no. However, unless its a one off job it is always best to add bleed regardless if it is there or not, that way you will never forget. You will need to know your document size which is usually your trim size and your bleed size, which is usually around 2mm wider than the trim size. Finally you'll need to know your print area, this is the area in which you know everything will print. Remember these are just rules and rules are there to be broken – when you know what you are doing.

Examples

No bleed will cause your printer problems

The first example is of a business card with no bleed. The text is too close to the edge. We would not use this file to print from.

Keep information away from the edges

The second example above has the text too close to the edge. You can plainly see that the trim marks cut through the text. (Also highlighted by the white box). The blue guides represent the area that you should use for the edge of any text for your design it is 4mm from the edge of the card.

Do not use borders

We advise our clients never use borders on their designs as on the third example. Borders may sound like a good idea, but we will not guarantee that any border will come out even on all sides of each card.

This is the correct way to supply a print job

The last card has 2mm of bleed so we can trim correctly, text is away from the edge and there is no border to highlight any trimming inaccuracies. A perfect job.

