

Mama's Chores *for* Photoshop

Photoshop Crop Marks, Bleed, and Print to PDF

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Requirements: *Photoshop versions 6 through CS2*

Do it all in Photoshop®

Normally one would generate crop marks and generate a PDF document from a desktop publishing program such as Adobe's InDesign. But for those of you, who do not own a desktop publishing program and need to generate a PDF file showing crop marks, here's how to accomplish the task all from within Photoshop.®

Including Bleed in your Document

The image in the poster example has a final "cut size" of 10 x 15 inches.

Knowing this, the original blank Photoshop Document was created at 10.25 x 15.25. These dimensions allow for an even 1/8th inch bleed all around the document and the final print size will be 10 x15 after it's cut.

A bleed amount is always required if the imagery of a file extends to the edge of the page. The document is usually created a little larger than the final print size in order to compensate for minute cutting errors. In other words—the imagery it bleeds over the cut line. If the imagery extends beyond the final cut size, minute cutting errors will not show up as white borders because the bleed amount of the image will cover the otherwise blank area of the paper. Crop marks designate the cut line usually 1/8th inch inside the Photoshop Document.

Professional printers usually require a 1/8th to 3/16th bleed area around the perimeter of the image. This is important to know before creating your Photoshop Document, as you must add these dimensions to the final "cut size" of your document. Normally, adding 1/4 inch to the Width and Height of your document will give you the 1/8th inch bleed you need around your document. Simply adding this amount after you've created your design will not work! Nor will adding a solid color border to frame the image—that's tacky and unprofessional! The bleed amount must be included before you begin your design!

Guides

Before you begin to design or bring images into your Photoshop Document you should add some guides to your document. The bleed guides (outer guides) are for the bleed; to let you know that this is the area that will be cut off, so don't put important elements here. The second set are margin guides (inner guides). This set should be at least 3/8 of an inch from the bleed guides or 1/2 inch from the edge. These are set so you don't place any important Type or elements beyond these guides. The proportions of the Margin guides do not necessarily need to be equal all around, but, in general, they should be at least 3/8th of an inch or more from the bleed guides.

The easiest way to set accurate guides in Photoshop is to go under the View menu and choose New Guide. Here you can type the exact placement of a vertical or horizontal guide. All you have to do is type in ".125in" for the Horizontal. Be sure you type in "in" for inches. Click OK and go back to View>New Guide to set the same amount for the Vertical. These steps will place a guide on the left side and top of your document. To place the guides on the right side and bottom, choose Image>Rotate Canvas 180 degrees and repeat the steps.

You could also view the Rulers. Command R (Mac); Control R (PC) and with the regular Move tool drag guides from the top and left side rulers. However this isn't as accurate as the View>New Guide method.

STEP 1

When you have finished your poster project, create a duplicate flattened version of it. Go to Image>Duplicate and check the Merged Layers only option. This is the copy you will generate with crop marks to the Adobe PDF Printer.

The Adobe PDF printer is different from choosing PDF from the format tab in the Save As Dialog box. The Adobe PDF printer is a “virtual” printer, which actually creates a file rather than a physical print but it will include any of the print settings chosen from the Output pane of the Print with Preview Dialog box.

STEP 2

Go to the top menu, File>Print with Preview. When this dialog box opens, click the Page Setup button and choose “Tabloid” for the paper size (11x17). Click OK to return to the Print with Preview dialog box.

If you followed the set up instructions correctly, the dimensions of your Scaled Print Size (100%) should read—Height: 15.25 x Width:10.25, in this area.

STEP 3

Check mark “Show More Options” underneath the preview of your poster.

1. Click the Color Management tab and choose “Output.”
2. Click the Bleed button.
3. Type in “.125” inches. Make sure the unit of measurement is “inches!” Click OK in the Bleed box.

Put a check mark in the “Corner Crop Marks” option.

STEP 4

Click the Print button.

Choose Adobe PDF from the Printer Tab.

Click Print and a Save dialog box will open where you can choose where to save the PDF.

STEP 5

Open the Adobe Acrobat program and from there, open the PDF file you just generated to make sure it looks OK and that the crop marks are visible.

