



## Label Artwork Specifications

These are our suggested Artwork Specifications for best quality printing. We understand you might not always have the ability to get a high end graphics file. We will work with you to create a high quality label from what you can supply us. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact us and we will help you with what will work out best.

### Software Supported (Mac and PC versions)

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**Our preferred format is an Adobe Illustrator .AI file** with all fonts converted to outlines or supplied with the file. If text is converted to outlines, we will not be able to make any minor text changes if needed. It is also a good idea to send a PDF or Jpeg along with the file for viewing / visual verification. Layout programs like Word, Excel, Powerpoint, and Publisher not acceptable for pre-press production and will have to be recreated.

#### Adobe Illustrator - versions up to and including Creative Cloud

Provide file along with all high resolution links, fonts (if not outlined, and a PDF for a visual reference.

#### Adobe Photoshop - versions up to and including Creative Cloud

File should be set at full size with bleed. Minimum resolution of 300 dpi for images.

Photoshop text is not recommended as it does not print clean edges and could appear blurry.

#### Adobe Indesign - versions up to and including Creative Cloud

Provide file along with all high resolution links, fonts, and a PDF for a visual reference.

### Design Requirements

Include and embedded all images.

Image Resolution = minimum of 300 dpi | 600 dpi for line art (monochrome bitmap images)

This includes your Raster Settings (*Lower resolutions can be used but quality will suffer and can look pixelated and blurry*)

All Colors should be set up as CMYK or Pantone (PMS) colors.

All Fonts should be turned to outlines/paths/curves or supplied with the artwork.

To see more on how to do this check out our Additional information on [Converting Text to Outlines](#)

Minimum Type Sizes for Best Quality for Flexo: (*general guidelines and can vary depending on the font used*)

Process color builds = 7 pt Bold

Sans = 4 pt

Serif = 5 pt

Reverse Sans = 4 pt Bold

Reverse Serif = 5 pt Bold

Strokes / Lines : Minimum .25pt

Include Bleeds and Safe Zones on Finished art.

Screens & Colors should not have a range of less than 1% unless at 0.

To see more on screened colors check our Additional information on [Color Builds](#)

### Additional Information

Bleeds

Convert Text to Outlines

Safe Zones

Screen Color Builds

Top 10 Art Prep Mistakes



# PALCO

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## *Label Artwork Specifications Cont...*

### *Full Bleeds and Layout Requirements*

Minimum Bleed = 1/16" (.0625")

Safe Zone Minimum = 1/8" (.125") in from all edges

To see more details check out our Additional information on [Bleeds](#) & [Safe Zones](#)

### *Sending Artwork*

The easiest way to send us files is via email in the recommended format.

We can receive email attachments up to about 10 Megabytes, but keep in mind that your email server may have smaller limits. We also accept Drop Box and WeTransfer links as well as physical media such as CDs and Flash Drives.



## *Top 10 Label Artwork Prep Mistakes*

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Every day we receive artwork files for custom label printing. Sometimes the art we receive is perfect and ready for print, but more often than not there are problems that need to be addressed before we can move forward with printing. We have created a list of the more common mistakes that people make when preparing their artwork for press. If you take care to avoid these mistakes you will save yourself a great deal of time and money.

### 1. Missing Fonts

You might have picked the perfect font for your artwork, but if we don't have it, when we open your file we will get an error message and it will default to something else. The best way around this is to always outline your fonts before sending us your file, or send the fonts along with art file. For this reason we also like to have a copy of the artwork sent as a Jpeg or PDF so we can compare and solve any problems that might arrive.

### 2. Improper File Resolution

Many times people send us a file of a picture, logo or graphic that was on their web site and expect us to create a nice looking label from it. Unfortunately, in most cases the file on the web site is very low resolution, 72 dpi. We know if we print a file at that resolution it is going to look horrible. We recommend a minimum resolution of 300 dpi or using vector based artwork for best results. We would also like to remind people that images from the web are not copyright free and permission should always be asked from the original owner to be used in any manner.

### 3. Spelling and Typing Mistakes

This one should really go without saying, but because we see it so often we wanted to have it here. While we have an extensive quality process to catch mistakes, it is your responsibility to check your label artwork carefully. We have learned that you can never proofread enough - even when you are sure it is correct check it one more time. Sometimes we print beautiful labels only to discover a spelling mistake after the fact. You can save yourself disappointment and expense by spending extra time making sure all your text is correct.

### 4. Missing Bleed or Clear Zone

If you want your color to print all the way to the edge of your label you need to include a minimum bleed of 1/16" (.0625"). For example, if you want to print a 4" x 5" label, the size of the artwork you would create would be 4.125" x 5.125". The reason is because during the die-cutting the label material can move ever so slightly when running through the presses, so you need to make allowances for this in your artwork. For this same reason you need to allow for a Clear Zone around the edges of your label that is free of text. More details can be found on our [Artwork Specs page](#).

### 5. RGB vs CMYK

Everything we print is in CMYK, also known as four color process, and Pantone colors. However, all computer monitors display color as RGB (Red-Green-Blue). Your files should Not be saved as a RGB color space, the color is going to shift and could dramatically look different when printed in CMYK; so it is always a good idea to create your artwork as CMYK and/or with Pantone colors. Also Note that your monitor and desktop printer will never be an exact match to the professionally printed product due to differences in RGB, monitor calibrations, different printers and a variety of other factors. You should request a hard color press proof if color is the utmost importance to you.

### 6. Hard to Print Color Mixes

We are a Flexographic print shop. While there are many benefits there are some limitations when printing screens. Colors and gradients should not have a range of 2% and lower unless set at 0. If there is screen percentage this low, during the plate making process it will be scrubbed partially or completely clean and cause unintended printing results. More details can be found on our [Artwork Specs page](#).

### 7. Thin Borders

If you want a thin border or one that prints right near the edge this isn't a great design idea for print, as you might not be happy with the end result. There is always some slight movement when printing and die-cutting your labels on press. While this movement is only a small fraction of an inch, if your border is thin and near the edge of the label this movement will be noticeable. Our advice, if you want a border, make a thicker one (more than 4 points). This way the slight movement will not be as noticeable.

### 8. Missing Graphics/Links

All your graphic elements should be embedded into your document and placed images supplied as separate files when sending them to us, otherwise when we open your file there may be missing graphics or artwork.

### 9. Unsupported Software Format

There are a lot of different software programs you can use to design labels. Most of them cannot be used on a professional printing press. We have artwork specs on our web site to follow, but you will always be better off if you use the graphic industry standard programs: ex. Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, Indesign, Quark. While you still need to follow the art specs, these programs are designed to create high quality art that will produce the best quality custom label. If you don't have this software, then make sure you can export into a standard graphic formats such as AI, EPS, TIF or a hi-res JPEG.

### 10. Color Expectations

Many people create their label artwork and then print it out on their inkjet or laser printer, thinking this is how their labels will look. Your monitor and desktop printer will never be an exact match to a press printed product due to differences in RGB, monitor calibrations, different printers and a variety of other factors. You should request a press proof and color match if color is the utmost importance to you.

We see files every day that contain one or more of these mistakes. So if you can avoid these common pitfalls when creating your artwork, your custom label order will be processed more quickly and you will receive the high quality result that you are no doubt expecting. We also offer our own graphic design services and would love to work with you to create and bring your design to a printed reality.

If you have questions please let us know, we will be happy to help you.



## Bleeds

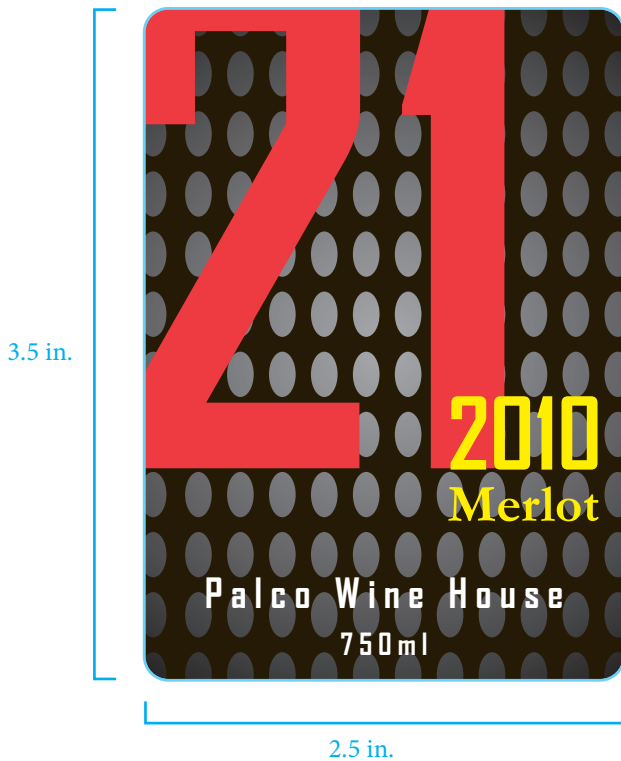
**Bleed** is a the term that refers to printing of the design that goes beyond the final trim edge of the any piece of printed artwork. The artwork bleeds off the edge. The bleed gives the printer a small amount of space to account for movement of the paper while running through the press, and design inconsistencies. Bleed ensures that no unprinted edges occur in the final trimmed design.

How do you create a bleed? Simple, you create your art so it actually extends beyond the final trim size of the design. Our minimum bleed is 1/16" (.0625"). Example shown here is set up for a finished label of 3.5 x 2.5 inch (h x w).

The Blue line being the Die line or finished trim.

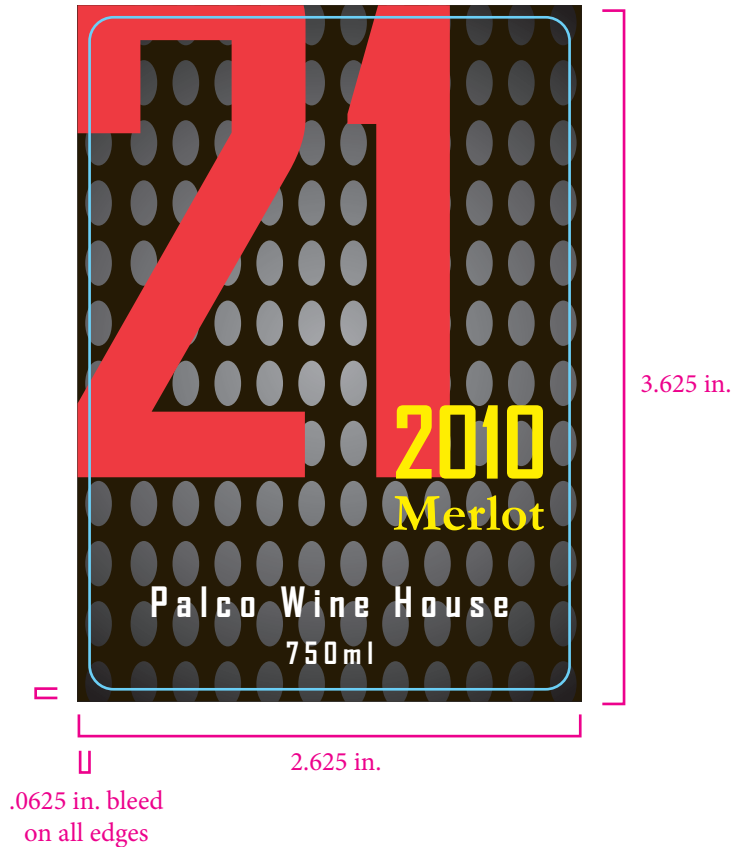
### INCORRECT Set-Up

No bleed set outside of the finished trim or die line.



### CORRECT Set-Up

The bleeds runs beyond the final trim size of the artwork.



Remember that Bleeds need to be a minimum of 1/16" (.0625") on ALL Sides. So the artwork is a total of 1/8" (.125") larger overall. In this case the bleed size would be 3.625 x 2.625 inch; with the final trim size being 3.5 x 2.5 inch.

If there is no bleed on your document you can see even the slightest movement on press can cause a white unprinted area to show up on the edge of your design; as seen in this example on the left.



## Safe Zone

**Safe Zone or Clear Space** is a printing term that refers to area within the cut/trim line where you can be sure important text and graphics will not be trimmed off the label inadvertently.

Palco requests that you allow a minimum of 1/16" or .0625" inside the trim line, we prefer to allow 1/8" .125" if the design allows, on all sizes, for the safe zone. In the image below, the safe area is shown with a dashed magenta line – make sure you keep all essential text and images in this space as anything in the blue area could be trimmed off do due shifts of the paper while running through the press. This is basically the same idea of the bleed but to insure that all your information remains on the label or final trimmed design.

The Blue line being the Die line or finished trim.  
 Dashed magenta line is the Safe Zone.

### INCORRECT Set-Up

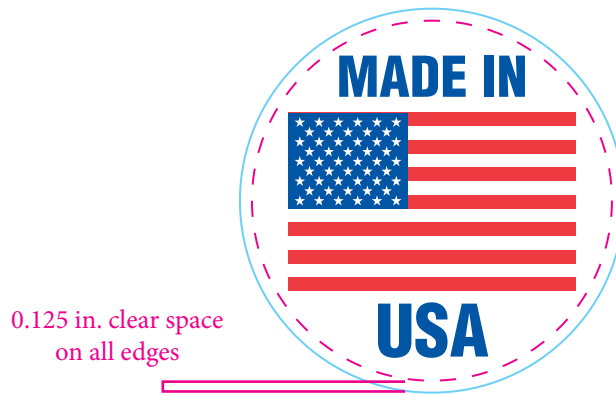
Text and design elements are set up to the Dieline



These areas outside the safe zone may be cut off when die cutting

### CORRECT Set-Up

Text and design elements are within the Safe Zone



0.125 in. clear space on all edges



Remember that your clear space (Safe Zone) needs to be a minimum of 1/8" (.125") on ALL Sides. So the safe zone is a total of 1/4" (.25") smaller than the final trim size.

If there is no clear space on your document you can see even the slightest movement on press can cause important information to be inadvertently trimmed off as you can see in the example on the left.

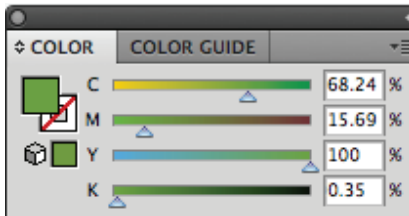


## Color Builds

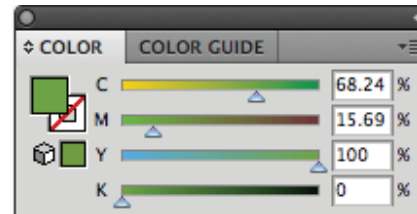
We are a Flexographic print shop also known as Flexo. While there are many benefits to Flexo printing there are some limitations when printing screens with very low percentages. Screened Colors, also known as your color percentage, should not have a range of less than 2% unless 0. If there is screen percentages this low, during the plate making process it can be scrubbed partially or completely clean from the plate; causing unintended printing results. This effects things like color mixes, and is often most noticeable with gradients, glows, drop shadows, soft transitions where it goes to a full fade out into white.

The best remedy is not to have any color mixed in the range below 1% and gradients end at 1%. Best practice is to remove this part of the screen or adjust your colors. Here are some examples.

### INCORRECT Set-Up



### CORRECT Set-Up



Good Color mix for printing. There are no percentages lower than 2% and as you can see there is not a large noticeable difference between the two.



## Converting Text to Outlines in Adobe Illustrator

When using Adobe Illustrator how to (and when to) convert text to outlines for press-ready artwork is essential knowledge. If you will not be sending fonts along with your artwork, best practice is to turn fonts to outlines or paths. If you don't send the fonts and don't outline your text we may not have the typeface that you used and it will cause problems when setting up artwork for press. Turning Fonts to outlines effectively means that the text is no longer text - it has become a graphic, and the text cannot be altered.

Converting text to outlines is very easy in Illustrator. The "Green" text in the graphic shown below (left) has a blue line underneath it. This shows that the text is made up of a typeface and is not paths or a graphic, but is editable text. The little blue square at the left end of the line indicates that the text is left justified. If the type were centred or right justified, the little square would move accordingly.



To convert text to outlines, Select your text or Select All of your label. It doesn't matter if other graphic elements are selected. Select Type/Create Outlines from the menu. The text will become outlined and can't be edited as text (see the image above right). Now you can see the line beneath the text has gone. The text characters now have editable paths, or outlines, around them - they are no longer text, but vector graphics, and can be edited as such.

It is always a good idea to keep an editable copy of your document as an AI file before you convert text to outlines and save then a copy of the file with the fonts outlined for press. This is so you can come back and edit it later, instead of having to recreate the artwork with text again. If you want us to make minor changes to any text, we would need the original editable copy, if not the outlined file will work.

