

What is Bleed? And Why Do I Need It?

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Bleed is ink or toner that extends past the trim of the printed piece to ensure that a sliver of white paper doesn't show where you don't intend for it to. Bleeds allow you to run color or graphics to the edge of a page. On a press, the artwork is printed on a large sheet of paper and then trimmed down to size. If you do not allow for a 1/8 of an inch bleed, any misalignment while cutting will result with the artwork not running to the edge of the paper and white paper showing at the edge of your design.

Build your files 1/8" larger than the final trim size

For example, if you have designed a standard 8.5" x 11" flyer with a background image that covers the entire page, you will need to enlarge that background to 8.75" x 11.25". This will make the background extend 1/8" on every side of the page.

Why is adding a Bleed necessary?

Small mechanical variations can end up leaving a hairline white edge where there should be no white edge at all, if the image is not extended beyond the final trim size. Extending images 1/8" beyond the final trim size guarantees that images truly will go all the way to the edge of the printed paper.

How do I add bleed to my design?

Adobe Photoshop

- Open Photoshop and click File > New...
- Enter the FULL BLEED dimensions. That is, 1/4" extra both vertically and horizontally.
- Set the Resolution at 300 pixels/inch
- Set the Color Mode to CMYK

Adobe Illustrator

- Open Illustrator and click File > New...
- Enter the TRIM dimensions in the Width and Height boxes (for example, our flyer sample would be 8.5" x 11")
- Enter 0.125 for the top, bottom, left and right bleed
- Set the the Color Mode to CMYK
- Set the Raster Effects at High (300ppi)

Adobe InDesign

- Open InDesign and click File > New > Document...
- Enter the TRIM dimensions under Page Size (for example, 8.5" x 11" for our sample flyer)
- If you do not see "Bleed and Slug" at the bottom of the window, click the "More Options" button.
- Enter 0.125 for the top, bottom, left and right bleed

