

Creating Cut Files

In Illustrator:

You will need to create a file with 3 layers. The bottom layer needs to be labeled Art, the middle layer needs to be labeled CutContour, and the top layer needs to be labeled RegTargets. Please provide us with an EPS file.

The Art (bottom) layer will need to contain all artwork, images, text, etc. There should be no artwork on any other layer. If you can provide a 1/8" bleed on all sides of your art, this will be very helpful to us.

The CutContour (middle) layer will contain the contour lines that are meant to be the cut lines. If your artwork is Vector based, you can simply select the outline of the art image from the Art layer and Copy and Paste in Front onto the CutContour layer. This will ensure that it lines up perfectly with the outline of the Art layer. If your artwork is Raster based, you will need to use the pen tool to create a closed outline of your desired cut shape. Cut lines should have a one point black stroke.

The RegTargets (top) layer will have four 3/8" black circles with the stroke and fill both turned on to black. The placement is important as these will serve as the targets for the optical registration system on our digital die cutter. Below the image, you need to place one circle at the far left, one 3.5" to the right of that first dot, and one at the far right. They need to all be aligned with each other along the same horizontal center point. A fourth circle needs to be placed at the top right of the image. The top circle and the bottom right circle need to be aligned on the same vertical center point as. There should be 1/4" of white space between these circles and the image. The target circles must fall outside of the bounding box of the cut line.



Please see example to clarify any questions.

The fish, text and water background are all contained in the Art layer.

The red outline is the cut line that was created using the pen tool in Illustrator in the CutContour layer.

The red dashed line indicates the bounding box of the cut line that the target circles must fall outside of. In the instance of the art image having a bleed, please use the bounding box of the image bleed, instead of the cut line, to set the circles proportionately.

The four black circles are the targets needed for the optical sensor to locate the cut line relative to the art. Their locations in this sample indicate their proportionate distance from each other and the cut line in the file. They are located on the RegTargets layer.

If you are working in an alternative software, but need to create a cut file for your job, please follow these instructions for getting your artwork into Illustrator.

From Photoshop: Convert your file to a flattened tiff. Open Illustrator, make your Art layer, and go to File > Place to select your artwork to be placed into your Art layer. Once your art is on its own layer, you can proceed to make a CutContour layer, creating the cut line with the pen tool, and a RegTargets layer, adding the black circles as instructed above.

From QuarkXPress: Go to File > Save Page as EPS. Open the EPS file in Illustrator and name the layer it opens into your Art layer. You can then proceed to make a CutContour layer, creating the cut line with the pen tool, and a RegTargets layer, adding the black circles as instructed above.

From InDesign: Go to File > Export, and choose the EPS option. Open the EPS file in Illustrator and name the layer it opens into your Art layer. You can then proceed to make a CutContour layer, creating the cut line with the pen tool, and a RegTargets layer, adding the black circles as instructed above.