

what is bleed? why is it important?

When graphics continue right to the edge of a sheet of paper, bleed is necessary. Why? A commercial printing press can't print to the edge of a sheet of paper. Instead, multiple products are printed onto a larger sheet of paper and cut down to size.

Because it's impossible to cut exactly to each design a little over print on every side is required. This is the bleed, and any professionally printed document will require it and a corresponding safe zone.

This example below illustrates a correctly designed card with 3mm of bleed, safe zone and crop marks. The crop marks outline where the document should be cut to, and the bleed is outside those marks.

Note: we will place the crop marks on your proof for print - you're not required to.

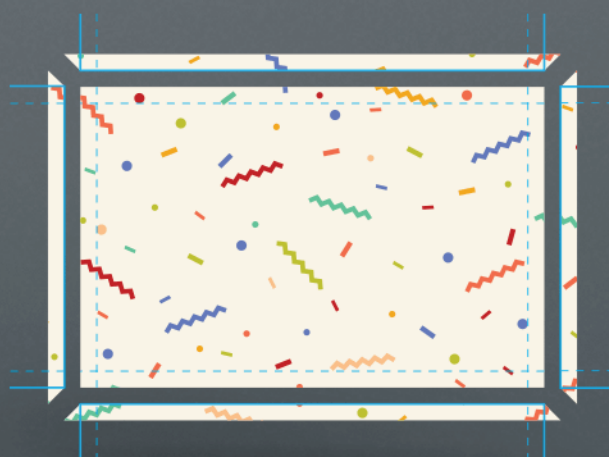
1

artwork before cutting.



2

artwork during cutting.



3

artwork after cutting.



bleed and safe zone explained.

how much bleed is required?

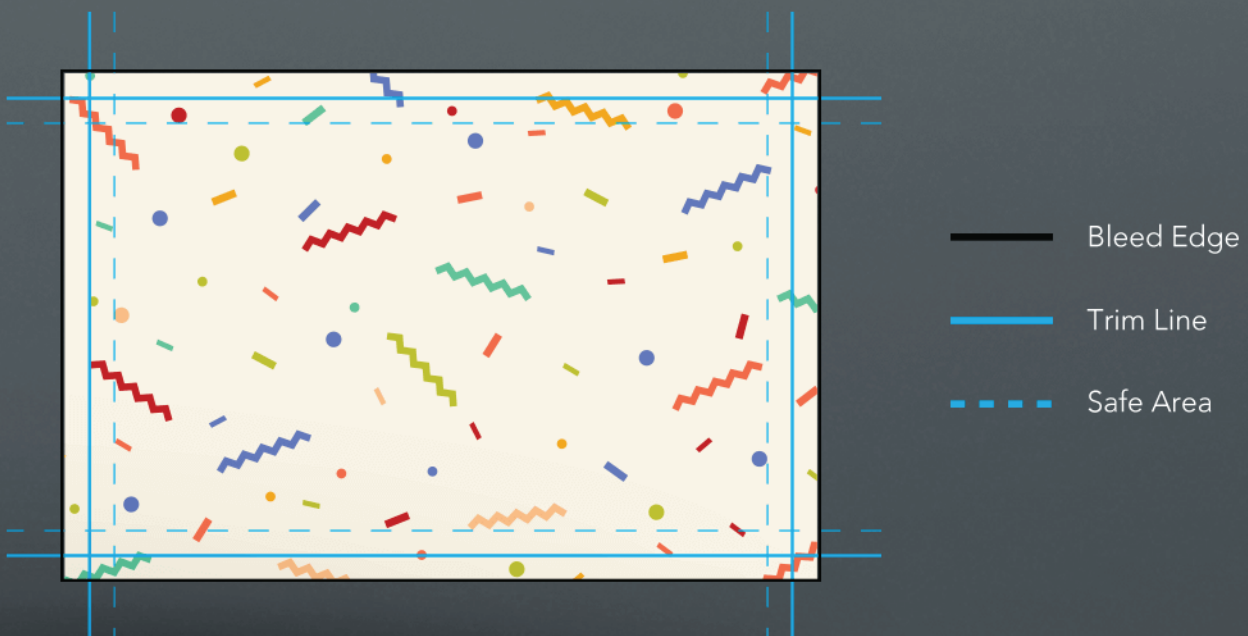
Industry standard is 3mm of bleed on each edge of a document, with a 3mm safe zone inside. This means your document should have an extra 6mm in total on each side.

For example, an A4 sheet lined up with the correct bleed will be 216mm x 303mm. It will then be cut down to a finished size of 210mm x 297mm. At the end of this guide, there is a table you can refer to containing dimensions for most standard print documents, lined up with a bleed area.

what is the safe zone?

The safe zone is an additional 3mm inside the cutting edge where no text or information should be put. Anything placed in this area is at risk of being cut off.

example of correctly designed business card:



examples of common mistakes.

no bleed area or white bleed area.

Issue: the document has not been created with a bleed area, and instead will be printed "as is". Accordingly, random white lines will appear around the edges, as printing and cutting tolerances can't be accounted for.

Solution: Extend the image into the area, or move text in by 3mm to make bleed area.



text inside bleed area and safe zone.

Issue: The document has a bleed area and a safe zone. but there is text within the safe zone and bleed zone. If printed as is, the text will likely be cut off.

Solution: Move text in by 6mm, allowing 3mm for the bleed and 3mm for the safe zone.



examples of common mistakes.

text inside safe zone.

Issue: The document has a bleed area and a safe zone. but there is text within the safe zone. If printed as is, the text will likely be cut off.

Solution: Move text in by 3mm to get it out of the safe zone.



the bleed area is a different colour than the edges of the design.

Issue: The bleed area is not a continuation of the background design; it's a different colour. When printed, there will likely be random lines around the edge of the finished product.

Solution: Make the bleed area a continuation of the background design.



examples of common mistakes.

object touching cutting line doesn't extend to the edges of the bleed.

Issue: Although it does touch the cutting line if the job is printed as is, there could be random lines along the edges.

Solution: Extend the image to the edge of the bleed area, or move it to within the safe zone.



object is halfway between the cutting line and the safe zone.

Issue: If printed, it may touch the edge on some print products and not on others.

Solution: Either extend the image to the edge of the bleed area, or move it so it's within the safe zone.

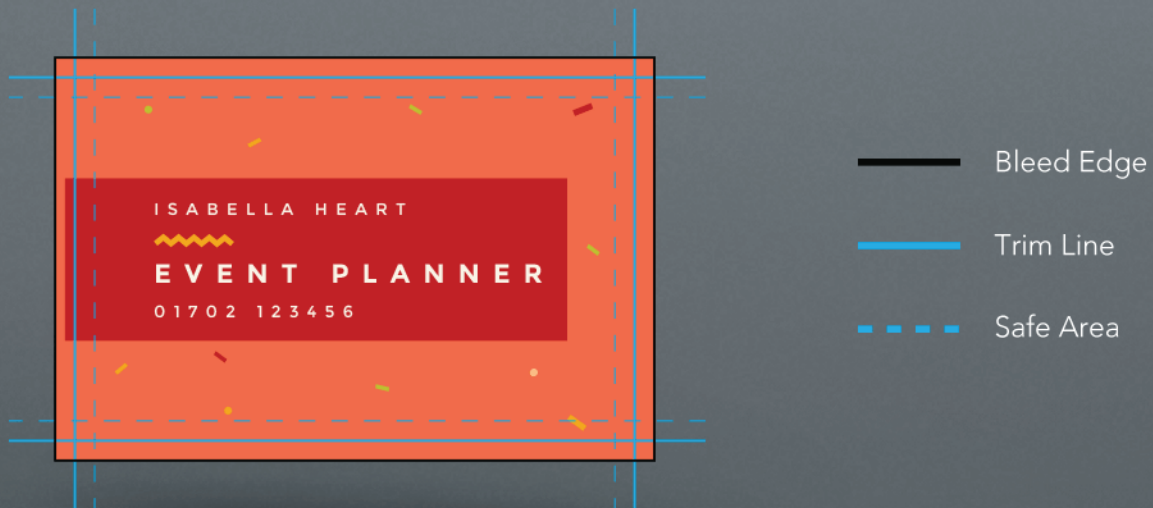


examples of common mistakes.

the object doesn't fully extend to the edge of the bleed area.

Issue: The image doesn't fully extend to the edge of the bleed area. If cut as is, some print may have a random line around some edge.

Solution: Either extend the image to the edge of the bleed or move it so it sits within the safe zone.



not enough bleed.

Issue: The design doesn't have enough of a bleed area. If cut as is, there may be random white lines around the edges of the finish product.

Solution: Either extend the background image to fill the bleed area, or move the text and images in by 3mm all around to create more bleed.



what is i can't correct my document?

If you aren't able to correct the document, there are two other options available to you:

Print with a border.

We could print your document with a 6mm border in the colour of your choice. 6mm will ensure even borders on each edge.

Have the design professionally redone.

A professional graphic designer can recreate it for you with correct bleed and safe zones. Our in house graphic design team would be delighted to assist in this regard.

table of sizes and resolutions

The following tables outlines printing a portrait document at 300dpi (dots per inch), which will produce a high quality result. On the following pages, you can view size charts for flyers and posters, which illustrate the difference in proportion and size based on a standard A4 page.

	Size in mm (without bleed)	Size Pixels 300dpi (without bleed)	Size in mm (with bleed)	Size Pixels 300dpi (with bleed)
Buisness Cards	85 x 55mm	1004 x 650	91 x 61mm	1075 x 720
DL	99 x 210mm	1169 x 2480	105 x 216mm	1240 x 2551
A6	148 x 105mm	1748 x 1240	154 x 111mm	1819 x 1311
A5	210 x 148mm	2480 x 1748	216 x 154mm	2551 x 1819
A4	297 x 210mm	3508 x 2480	303 x 216mm	3579 x 2551
A3	420 x 297mm	4961 x 3605	426 x 303mm	5031 x 3579
A2	594 x 420mm	7016 x 4961	600 x 426mm	7087 x 5031
A1	841 x 594mm	9933 x 7016	847 x 600mm	10004 x 7087
A0	1189 x 841mm	14043 x 9933	1195 x 847mm	14114 x 10004