

Getting PDFs Print-Ready

PDF, the filetype of choice for professional designers

Page Size

It's easy to know what page size to use for your printed product.

Each PDF page is the product size plus bleed and we require 2mm bleed for most digital products.

So the PDF page dimensions will be the products height + 4mm and the products width + 4mm.



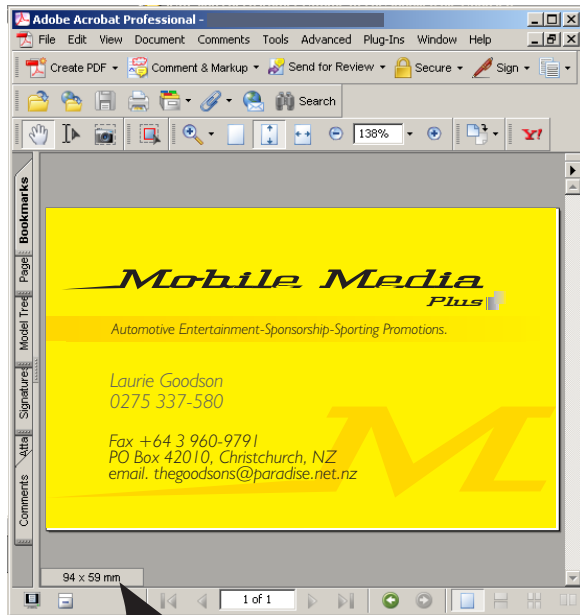
height + (2 x bleed)
= height + 4mm

width + (2 x bleed) = width + 4mm

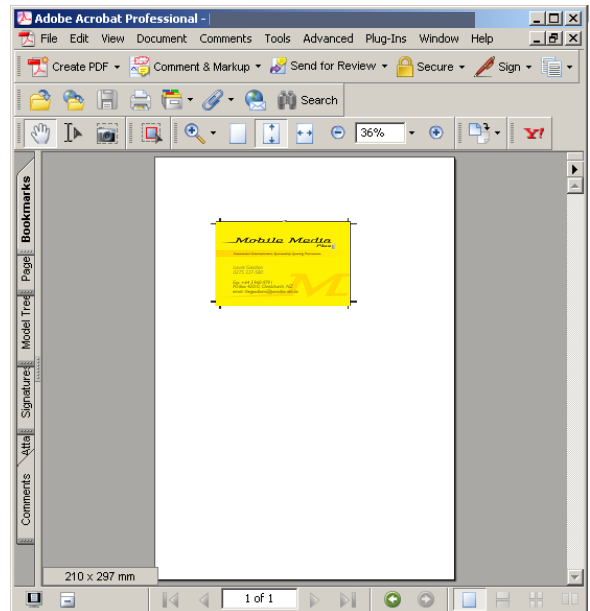
Page Size Reference

Product Name	Product Size	Bleed Amount	PDF Page Size
Business Cards	90x55mm	2mm	94 x 59 mm
Rack Cards	95x205mm	2mm	99 x 209 mm
A4 Posters	210x297mm	2mm	214 x 301 mm
A5	148x210mm	2mm	152 x 214 mm

The Right Way



The Wrong Way



How to check the PDF page size using Adobe Acrobat

Move the mouse to the bottom left of Acrobat and you will see the page size as shown in the PDF examples above.

If your units are not in millimeters. You can set this from the Units & Guides Tab of the Preferences screen which is found under the Edit Menu.

Buffer, Bleed & The Safe Area

What's Bleed?

"Bleed" is a printing term used to indicate the area that will be trimmed off after the job is printed and cut to the finished size.

What's Buffer?

The buffer is the area on the inside of the border of the finished product sized. It's 4mm at the top, bottom, left & right which you don't put anything important into.

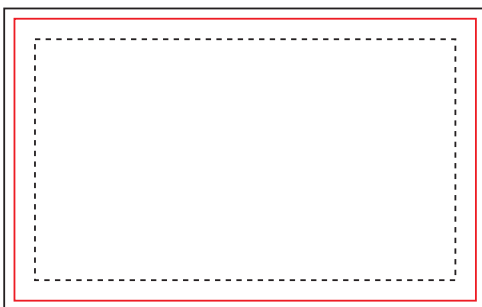
The standard Buffer for digitally printed products is 4mm because this is twice the bleed.

What's the Safe Area?

The Safe Area is the printed product size minus the buffer. Logos, text, etc all should be within the Safe Area.

Safe Area Reference

Product Name	Product Size	Bleed Amount	PDF Page Size	Safe Area
Business Cards	90x55mm	2mm	94 x 59 mm	82 x 47mm
Rack Cards	95x205mm	2mm	99 x 209 mm	87 x 197mm
A4 Posters	210x297mm	2mm	214 x 301 mm	202 x 289mm
A5	148x210mm	2mm	152 x 214 mm	140 x 202mm



- ♦ The **product** size is shown by the red line. 90 x 55mm
- ♦ The outer black line is the **full design** including the bleed area. 94 x 59mm
- ♦ The dashed inner line is the **safe area**. 82 x 47mm
- ♦ The space between the red line and the dashed line is the **buffer**. This is 4mm tall / wide.
- ♦ The space between the outside black line and the red line is the **bleed**. This is 2mm .



Here's an example with a business card graphic. We can see that the logo for Mobile Media Plus fits nicely in the safe area.

Look carefully at the big background M.

The background M bleeds off the edge of the card when it passes the red line. The top part of the big background M will always be trimmed off.

The bottom right edge of the big M will sometimes be trimmed through, it ends right on red box which is the product size.



This is the area within the red box, the business card as a final product, 90 x 55mm.

Buffer, Bleed & The Safe Area

cont.

The Wrong Way

Ask yourself, if the card will vary up to 1.5mm then what may be trimmed off or end up too close to the edge?



- ◆ This logo ends on the cutting line. It won't appear consistent from one card to the next. It should be moved inside the safe area.
- ◆ This text is outside the safe-area.

The Wrong Way



- ◆ The card doesn't have 2mm of bleed.

Graphics & Resolution

Use 300 DPI for good results.

Make sure your artwork's resolution is at least 300 dpi. This resolution will ensure that your design will appear crisp and sharp instead of blurry and pixelized. Graphics from websites are usually unsuitable and are at 72 dpi. As a guide a 300 DPI 94 x 59mm bitmap will have 1110 x 697 pixels.

72 DPI is for monitors

300 DPI is for printing

What's DPI?

Dots per Inch. DPI is a measure of the quality of your graphic.

Colours

Use CMYK colours

We can print no matter what colours you setup your PDF with. For full control, **use CMYK colours.**

You can achieve a rich black by using 4 colours, for example CMYK (40,40,40,100). A one colour black, (0,0,0,100) may result in a dull black that you may not be happy with.

If you choose RGB colours, they will appear more dull when printed in CMYK.

A computer monitor can produce a far wider spectrum or gamut of colours by mixing light compared to the colours available by mixing Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black toner.

CMYK is what commercial digital printers use.

A four colour grey will come out better than a grey that only uses K (Black) and when using solid blocks of colour, the more toner-heavy colours will look richer than the lighter colours.

Four colour black can be used to achieve a really glossy effect, CMYK - 40,40,40,100 looks great, but 100,100,100,100 is so dark it will bleed into surrounding colours.

If you require colour accuracy, ask us about a Printable CMYK Colour Table Book.

Request printed proofs instead of emailed proofs if colours are very important to you.

Fonts

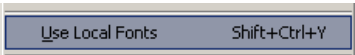
To make sure your fonts are handled correctly either :

- ♦ Embed your fonts in the PDF
- ♦ or Convert all fonts to paths / outlines

Otherwise what we print may substitute Arial for the font you chose.

How can I use Adobe Acrobat to see how my PDF will look on another PC?

- ♦ Open your PDF as normal.
- ♦ Untick Use Local Fonts. This is under the Advanced Menu.



Use Local Fonts

Shift+Ctrl+Y

If the fonts look different when you untick this, you'll need to embed your fonts in your PDF or convert the them to paths/outlines. Don't supply the required fonts to us.