



Preparing Adobe Illustrator Files

File transfer guidelines for production-ready artwork

Crucial Colour Ltd

When preparing to transfer your Adobe Illustrator files to Crucial Colour Ltd, it's essential to ensure your files are complete, error-free, and ready for production. Follow these steps for an efficient and professional handoff.

1.

Organise and Clean Up Your Files

Artboard Setup

- Ensure the artboard size matches the required dimensions
- Include proper bleed and trim marks (standard bleed: **3 mm** unless otherwise specified)

Remove Unused Items

- Delete hidden layers, unused swatches, brushes, and symbols

Outline Text

- Convert all fonts to outlines (**Type** → **Create Outlines**) to avoid font issues

Expand Appearance

- Expand complex effects (strokes, gradients, effects) to maintain consistency

Check Linked Assets

- Embed or supply all linked images
- Ensure all images are **300 dpi** or higher

2.

Set Up Layers for Clarity

Organise artwork into logical layers, such as:

- Artwork
- Dieline / Cut Lines
- Fold Lines
- Spot Colours / Finishes
- Lock non-editable layers (e.g., guidelines or templates)

3.

Save in Compatible Formats

Crucial Colour Ltd operates with Heidelberg Prinect and Screen CTP workflows, so please follow these standards:

- Save a working file as **.AI** (Adobe Illustrator) for editability
- Supply a press-ready **PDF/X-4** with:
 - Bleed included
 - Fonts embedded or outlined
 - CMYK colour profile applied
- Ensure:
 - Dielines and special finishes (varnish, emboss, foil) are on separate layers
 - All special finishes are set up as clearly named spot colours

4.

Collect All Required Files

Illustrator Packaging

- Use **File** → **Package** (Illustrator 2020+) to gather:
 - AI file
 - Fonts
 - Linked images
 - Report
- Alternatively: manually place all assets into a single folder

5.

Double-Check Production Settings

Before sending:

- Confirm all colours are **CMYK** (no RGB)
- Verify all spot colours (Pantone or custom)
- Ensure all technical lines are included and clearly defined:
 - Cut lines
 - Creases / folds
 - Perforations
- Use clear naming conventions (e.g., "Cut" as 100% Magenta)
- Minimise unnecessary transparency to avoid processing issues

6.

Compress the Files

- Compress into a **ZIP** file to maintain integrity
- Use clear naming:

```
ProjectName_ClientName_Date.zip
```

7.

Transfer Files Securely

Send files using:

- WeTransfer
- Dropbox
- Google Drive
- Or email (if size permits)

By following these steps, you'll minimise production issues and ensure Crucial Colour Ltd can process your job efficiently and accurately.

For assistance, contact our Prepress team:

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