

Step 1: Set up your document

1. Open your design software

Use programs such as Adobe InDesign, Illustrator, or Affinity Designer.

2. Choose CMYK as the color mode

- When creating a new document: select **CMYK** as the color mode.
- For an existing document:
 - In **InDesign**: Go to **File > Document Setup > Color Mode**.
 - In **Illustrator**: Go to **File > Document Color Mode** and choose **CMYK Color**.

3. Set the bleed

When creating a new document, set the bleed to at least **3 mm** on all sides.

- In **InDesign**: You can find this under "Bleed and Slug".
- In **Illustrator**: Enter the bleed in the **Bleed** field.

For an existing document, you can adjust the bleed via the **Document Setup** menu.

Step 2: Design check

1. Ensure that all images and colors are in **CMYK** (not RGB).
 - In **Photoshop**: Convert images to CMYK via **Image > Mode > CMYK Color**.
 - Use CMYK values for fills and text instead of RGB or spot colors (unless specifically required).
 2. Make sure important elements are within the safe area. Place key content at least **3-5 mm** away from the edge (inside the trim area).
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Step 3: Save as PDF/X-1a:2001

1. **Export from InDesign or Illustrator:**
 - Go to **File > Export** (InDesign) or **Save as PDF** (Illustrator).
 - Choose **Adobe PDF (Print)** as the file type.
 2. **Select the correct standard:**
 - In the PDF export settings, select **PDF/X-1a:2001** as the standard.
 3. **Check bleed and crop marks:**
 - In the export settings (under **Marks and Bleeds**):
 - Check the box for **Add Crop Marks**.
 1. Set the bleed to at least **3 mm** on all sides.
 4. **Save:**
 - Click **Export** or **Save**.
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Step 4: Check your PDF

- Open the PDF in Adobe Acrobat or another PDF viewer to confirm:
 - The bleed is correctly set.
 - All colors are in CMYK.
 - The file complies with the **PDF/X-1a:2001** standard.
 - **Done! Your document is now correctly set up and ready for printing!**