

LASER LETTERS' INSIGHTS



A Quick File Prep CHECKLIST

- Document is a PDF
 - Fonts are embedded
 - Images are high-res
 - File is sized correctly and includes bleeds for “to-the-edge” printing
 - Color mode is CMYK
- If you're unsure, it's always better to ask before production begins.

File Formats Explained: What Printers Actually Need (and Why)

Design files may look perfectly fine on screen, but still cause problems in production if they aren't set up correctly. Understanding which file formats work best for professional printing can save time, reduce revisions, and help ensure your final piece looks exactly the way you intended.

Why File Format Matters in Printing.

Professional printers look at image resolution, fonts, color space, and file stability during production. Some file formats preserve this information well. Others don't—and that's where issues can arise.

The Best File Format for Printing: PDF

With the correct export settings fonts will be embedded, image resolution will not be compressed, layout is honored, and a PDF document will open consistently across systems.

Native Design Files (Illustrator & InDesign)

Files created in professional design software—such as Adobe Illustrator (.AI) or InDesign (.INDD)—can work well if they're packaged correctly with all fonts and all image links. If anything is missing, it can slow production or lead to unexpected substitutions.

Image Files: JPGs, PNGs, and TIFFs

Image files can be tricky for print. JPG and PNG files are often low resolution and not sized correctly for print. Creating the proper bleeds requires some hefty math skills. Image files may look fine on screen but print blurry or pixelated.

Office Files (Word, PowerPoint)

While these programs are great for everyday documents, they are not intended for professional printing. When these documents are opened on a computer other than the one that created the file, fonts are substituted and line/page endings shift. These files ALWAYS require additional setup before they are ready to print.

At Laser Letters, we're happy to review files, answer questions, and help you prepare artwork that prints properly and professionally.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

A PDF helps your project move smoothly from intake to press—without delays, surprises, or quality issues.