



PROOFING YOUR WORK

There are different types of proofs available.

Lasers are quick and inexpensive to produce. Confirms file contents, shows position, color splits, and copy so you can check for any necessary type corrections. Fattens the appearance of thin type and photo reproduction quality is mediocre.

Iris Proofs are used to show content and folding. Iris proofs can be 1/s or 2/s. They show color split but are not used for accurate color.

Epson Color Proofs are pretty accurate, they will show 90-95% color accuracy. Color images generally will look crisper and cleaner when they actually go to press. This is due to the fact that Espons are prduced without dots (unlike the actual printing process).

Press Proofs are produced directly from the printing press. Very expensive, since the press must be set up and operated to produce the proof, but sometimes necessary. This is the only true color representation of the finished product.

What to look for on a proof:

- Are there typographical errors in the headlines or callouts?
- Are all the pages there and in the correct sequence?
- Do headers, footers, and folios line up?
- Do borders and rules that crossover pages align properly?
- Are all elements in correct register?
- Have live image areas been masked over or trimmed out?
- Are photos correctly placed, scaled, and cropped?
- Have any images been flopped?
- Is the trim size correct?
- Is the folding correct?
- Is each element the right color? Is the color vivid and rich?
- Have critical color areas been accurately matched?
- Are there blemishes, spots, or broken letters?
- Were corrections from previous proof, if any, made correctly?
- Check for typos again.



HOW TO DO A PRESS CHECK

We encourage press checks because they aid in successful project completion. The press check takes place after the press is set up, but before the actual run. It is your last chance to make sure all your expectations are met. While errors should have been corrected during the proofing stages, occasionally something is missed. Be aware that revisions at this point are costly, but it will be cheaper to catch and fix an error at this time than finding an error in the finished piece and having to reprint the entire job.

Color

This is the main reason you attend a press check - to make sure that the color on press matches or comes as close as possible to the color you approved in the proof. Color proofs are valuable guides but they never match press colors exactly due to differences in printing methods and materials. The press check allows you to see how your job looks and provides the opportunity to make small overall color adjustments, or to change color/s if the result is not what you expected. These "fine-tuning" adjustments can make the difference between an acceptable or exceptional result.

Take a collaborative approach to fixing problems on press. The best way to get the color you want is to work with your press operator, utilizing their expertise and experience. Concentrate on critical areas like flesh tones or corporate logo match colors. Let the press operator know what you think is out of order and ask for suggestions on how to remedy the problem. If the operator has a good sense of the results you are looking for, they will come up with the right solution.

Keep in mind that the color on press may never exactly match the color proof. Your goal is to make sure the images look as good as possible and to sign-off on a sheet you can be proud of.

Press Checklist:

- Be on time.
- The person with sign off authority needs to be present.
- Bring final approved proof and draw downs, if any, for reference.
- Establish a rapport with the press operator.
- Take your time and address each element of the press sheet.
- Look at the overall impression for color balance across the sheet.
- Make sure paper stock is what you ordered; check finish, weight and color.
- Check for missing elements and copy changes.
- Check registration for sharpness, color overlapping, edges of images and any screened type.
- Check match colors for look, density and consistency.
- Compare process imagery to color proofs; adjust to achieve pleasing color balance if necessary.
- Check type carefully for any blurriness or fuzziness.
- Check for flaws such as broken type, odd scratches, hickies, spots and ghosting.
- Get a few press samples to compare to approved sheet.
- Ask for sample of trimmed job.



POSTPRESS CHECK

While some jobs like stationery are delivered as printed, most printing is usually not complete until it is converted into a “finished” product. Postpress operations include embossing, foiling, die-cutting, scoring, folding and bindery, to name a few. If your job requires finish work, you may want to schedule a post-press check.

Here are some things to look for during a post-press check:

Embossing

Look for sharp, well-defined edges. Hold the paper up to the light and check for pinholes and ruptures. Be sure there are no “halos” or shadows around the emboss.

Foil Stamping

Check for feathering, color changes, scuffing and peeling. The edges should be sharp and crisp.

Die-cutting

Look to make sure die is making a clean cut in the correct position.

Folding, Bindery

Before the printed sheets are folded or bound, review a trimmed dummy of the finished piece to make sure all the pages are in order and line up correctly. Check to make sure inks are not cracking along folds.