PRINT FILE FORMATS:
A Quick Cheat Sheet

Send the Right File. Get Better Print Results. A quick guide to choosing the right file format and preparing artwork for print.

Common Questions

Quick answers to the most frequent questions

Question	Short Answer
Can I just send a screenshot?	No. Screenshots are low-resolution raster images and print blurry.
Is my logo high enough quality to print?	Yes, if it's a true vector file.
Why do printers keep asking for a vector file?	Vector artwork scales to any size, from a business card to a billboard, without blurring.
Can I use an image from a website?	Not usually. Images from websites, social media, screenshots and email signatures are almost always too low-resolution for print.

Vector vs. Raster

Understanding the difference helps you send the right file.

Vector files (.ai, .eps, .pdf, .svg) can contain mathematical paths, lines and curves that scale without losing sharpness. They're ideal for logos, illustrations and graphics that need to scale.

Raster files (.jpg, .png, .tif, .gif) are made of pixels and have a fixed resolution. They can be reduced without a problem, but enlarging them causes blur and pixelation. Photographs, scanned artwork, screenshots and images downloaded from websites are typically raster files.

Choosing the Right File Format

The best format depends on what you're printing.

Logos and artwork that need to scale – (signs, banners, apparel, logos): Vector files (.ai, .eps, vector .pdf or .svg.)

Photographs – .tif at final print size or a high-resolution .jpg if .tif isn't available.

Print-ready projects – PDF is the safest universal answer.

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Format Guide

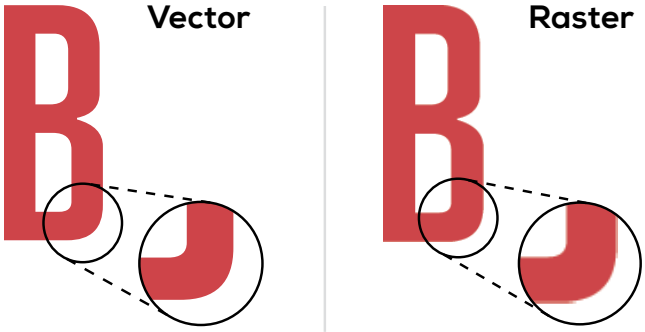
Use these quick references for common file types.

Vector Format Types

Format	Quick Rules to Remember
.ai	Great for logos and scalable artwork, but not for photography.
.eps	Great for logos and scalable artwork, but not for photography.
.pdf	Works across every job type. When in doubt, send a PDF.
.svg	It is a vector, but not common in print. Check with us before sending one.

Raster Format Types

Format	Quick Rules to Remember
.jpg/ .jpeg	Photos only, at 300 dpi at final print size (150 dpi for wide format). Low-res JPEGs are the most common cause of print problems.
.png	RGB raster only. Convert to CMYK (as .tif or .pdf) for press; for wide format, confirm your printer's requirements and check resolution.
.tif/.tiff	The professional standard for photography. Lossless, large and reliable.
.gif	Has no print application. Please send a different format.



Check Your Artwork

Check every element, not just the file type. A vector document can still contain raster images, such as a logo pasted in as a JPEG, a photo placed in the design, or a placeholder screenshot that was never replaced.

- **Zoom in to inspect edges.** Soft or blocky edges may indicate a low-resolution raster image.
- **Check for editable paths.** In Illustrator, vector artwork typically contains editable paths and shapes. If an element selects as one flat image, it may be raster.
- **Check the file extension.** Renaming a .jpg to .pdf or .ai, or choosing .eps in Save As, doesn't turn pixels into vector artwork. The artwork must be redrawn in vector software or professionally vectorized.

Sending Your Files

InDesign and Illustrator files link to images and fonts on your computer. Use the Package (or Collect) function to gather the layout file, every linked image and every font into one folder.

If font licensing stops you sharing fonts, outline the text first. Outlined text can't be edited normally.

Have File Prep Questions?

Send the file to your B&B sales rep and we'll check it before your job moves forward.
A five-minute check beats a reprint.

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