

TECHNIQUE

PREFLIGHT CHECKLIST

Good habits often eliminate bad habits. One good habit will help you avoid many bad habits – create a preflight checklist designed to help you avoid common mistakes before committing to final output. Doing this will help ensure optimum quality and save time and money.

Here's a checklist of common mistakes. Use it as a springboard to create your own checklist, adding to and subtracting from it whenever and wherever you find it useful to do so.

1. Inflexible file setup
2. Layers flattened
3. Incorrect layer stack order
4. Cross purpose adjustment layers
5. Inadequate midtone contrast
6. Shadows and/or highlights clipped
7. Excessive saturation reducing gradation and/or clipping in one or more channels
8. Inaccurate color balance
9. Horizon not level
10. Imprecise cropping
11. Image edges loose, tight, or cluttered
12. Imprecise masking
13. Imprecise retouching
14. Imprecise or excessive sharpening
15. Excessive noise
16. JPEG or compression artifacting
17. File extension missing or misspecified
18. File name too long or containing invalid characters
19. Low file resolution
20. Low print resolution specified (low sharpness)
21. High speed printing specified (banding)
22. Nozzle clog (microbanding)
23. Printer head misalignment (banding)
24. Slow data transfer (banding)
25. Printing with Black ink only (visible dot structure)
26. Printing with black ink optimized for alternate media type (matte or glossy)
27. Missing or misspecified ICC profiles
28. Conversion to a small gamut workspace – sRGB or CMYK (reduced saturation)
29. Double color management (print is light and magenta)
30. No color management (print is dark and green)
31. Wrong output profile selected
32. Wrong paper type selected (too little or too much ink)
33. Printing on the wrong side of the paper (undersaturated with weak blacks)