

Printing Films Using Adobe Illustrator

These instructions are for those using a RIP with an inkjet printer or a postscript laser printer. If a RIP is not available, see our instructions on printing separations from Photoshop without a RIP.

Illustrator CS3 or higher can open or place Photoshop (PSD) color separation files directly as native Photoshop files for film output. It can also use Photoshop color separations saved as a PDF.

Just save the color separation using Photoshop as you normally would and make sure to **KEEP** the RGB Channels! If the RGB Channels are deleted, you'll receive an unsupported color mode error and the file will not open or place into Illustrator.

If there's no RGB channels, then simply make 3 blank channels and move them to the top of the channels panel above all the colors of the separation.

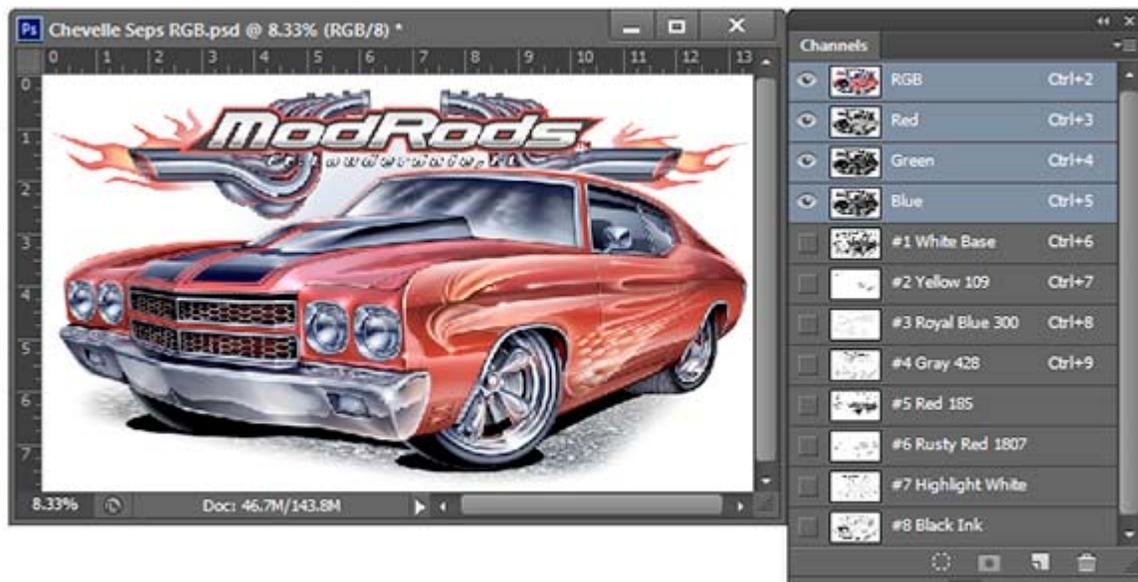
Next in Photoshop go to Image > Mode > RGB Color. This converts the image to RGB format and retains the separation intact.

It doesn't matter if the RGB channels are blank as the external program just needs them to read and open the file.

Delete all other channels not required for film output.

Now just **OPEN** this file using Illustrator or use the **PLACE** command to insert into an existing Illustrator document and follow instructions on the following pages to send the separation to film.

The sample below is exactly how the file needs to appear in Photoshop prior to saving with the RGB Channels included.



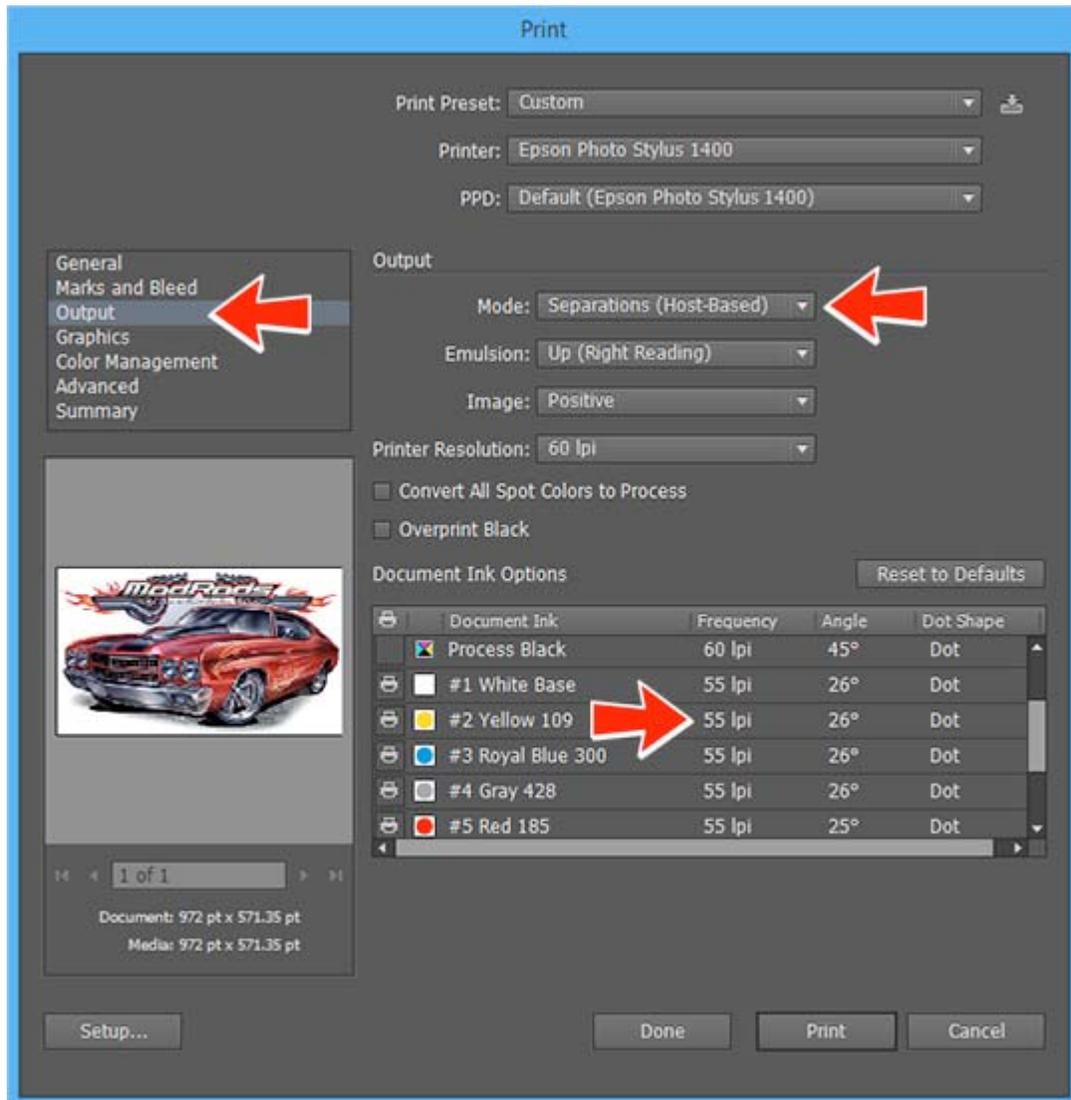
Never name any of the color channels “black, yellow, cyan or magenta” when saving a color separation in Photoshop that is to be printed from an external application.

Doing so will be confusing when printing the separations as multiple colors of the same name will be seen within the print dialog functions. Its also possible that printing errors will result or the file may refuse to open.

Therefore, when naming these common color channels, always label them “black ink” or “yellow ink” or just add something else to its name such as a PMS number.

Now within Illustrator, Go to File > Print and choose your Printer (RIP).
Click on Output and within “Mode” choose “Separations (Host Based)”.
All of the channels of the separation are now active in the Ink Options window.

Deselect all Process Colors and only select the channels required for film output.
Change the Frequency, Angle and Dot Shape of each channel to be output to film. The file is now ready to send to the printer.



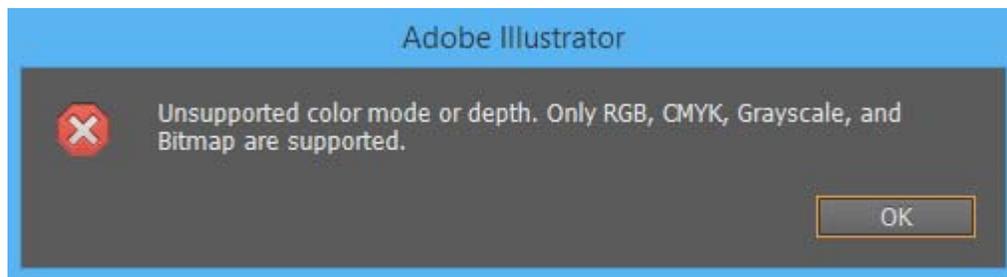
Register marks can be added by using Illustrator's standard marks, adding marks to the file using the UltraSeeps Actions prior to saving the separation or creating your own custom vector register mark with Illustrator is a great idea.

Just design a register mark with Illustrator using the color "Registration". The mark can then be duplicated and placed exactly where you'd like them and they'll print on each channel.

Save the register mark created for use on all files printed from Illustrator or make a few templates of different film sizes with the marks added.

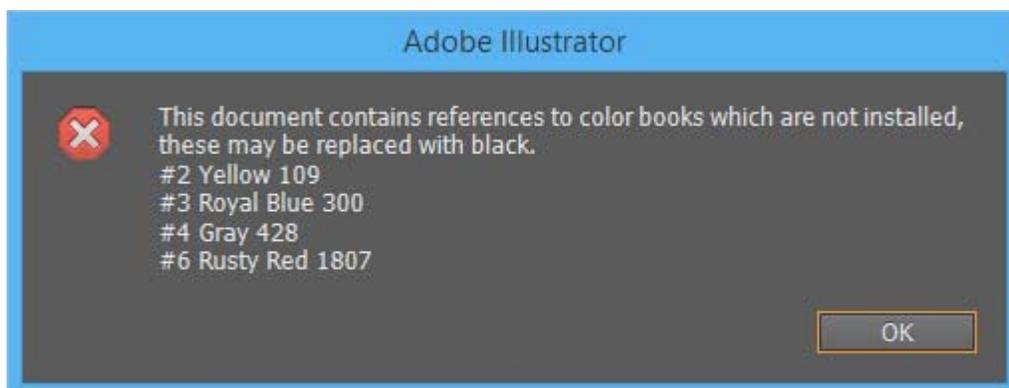
Potential Warnings When Opening A Photoshop Channel Separation With Illustrator:

Unsupported Color Mode Or Depth indicates the file doesn't include composite color mode information such as RGB Channels. If so, go back to Photoshop and add RGB channels. As discussed previously, the RGB can be void of any data. An Action to automatically add RGB Channels to your image can be downloaded here: <http://customseps.com/download/add-rgb-channels.zip>



The Color Book warning below I've only seen with Illustrator CS6 on a few occasions. It can be ignored and the file will still print correctly although the preview will look wrong.

To fix, go back to Photoshop and double-click one of the channels within the error followed by clicking the small color chip in the Spot Channel Options. Next in the Color Libraries window click the Picker button. In the color picker window, change one of the values of the R-G-B slightly such as changing the G (Green) from 132 to 133. Click OK and then OK again. Do this for each channel generating an error when opening with Illustrator to resolve the error.



Suggested Film Output Settings



Simulated Process Separations:

Dot Shape - Elliptical

All films 26 Degrees at 55 LPI.

Mesh count 280 - 305 Top Colors.

Mesh count 156 - 230 Underbase White.

Mesh count 200 - 230 Highlight White.

CMYK Separations:

Dot Shape - Elliptical

All films 22.5 Degrees at 55 or 60 LPI.

Mesh count 305 - 330 Top Colors.

Mesh count 200 - 230 Underbase White.

Mesh count 230 Highlight White.

Print Order: White Base - Yellow - Magenta
Cyan - Highlight - Black

Grayscale Separations:

Dot Shape - Elliptical

All films 26 Degrees at 55 LPI.

Mesh count 280 - 305 Top Colors.

Mesh count 156 - 230 Underbase White.

Mesh count 200 - 230 Highlight White.

Manual Printing Notes:

Some printers who print manually might want to experiment with using lower LPI settings and mesh for simulated process work. Such as 230 mesh for the top colors along with outputting films at 45 LPI - 50 - LPI - 26 degrees.

Duo-Tri-Quad Tone Separations:

Dot Shape - Elliptical

All films 26 Degrees at 55 LPI.

Mesh count 280 - 305 Top Colors.

Mesh count 156 - 230 Underbase White.

Mesh count 200 - 230 Highlight White.

Basic Spot Color Separations:

Dot Shape - Elliptical

All films (No Tints - All Solid Colors) 26 Degrees at 300 LPI .

All films (With Tints And Gradients) 26 Degrees at 50 LPI .

Mesh count 156 - 200 (designs using no white base).

Mesh count 200- 305 Top Colors (designs with a white base).

Mesh count 156 - 200 Underbase White.

Index Separations:

No Frequency, Screen Angles or Dot Shape Required.

Mesh count: 280 - 305 Top Colors.

Mesh count: 156 - 230 Underbase White.

Mesh count: 200 - 230 Highlight White.

Index Separations With Halftone White Base & Highlight Channels:

(Settings For Underbase & Highlight Only)

Dot Shape - Elliptical

Underbase & Highlight - 26 Degrees at 50 LPI.

Mesh count 156 - 230 Underbase White.

Mesh count 200 - 230 Highlight White.