Adobe℠ Customer Services

Masking Tips for Adobe Illustrator Version 5.0

Masking is a way to cover part of an image so that only a portion of the image appears through a shape or shapes you create. This technical note describes how to create masks and includes tips for working with masks.

CREATING MASKS IN ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR 5.0

A mask or *masking object* can consist either of a single object or a compound path. (See your *Adobe Illustrator User Guide* for more information about compound paths.) In Adobe Illustrator, you mask objects by placing the mask in front of or on top of the objects you want to be masked.

To create masks in Adobe Illustrator 5.0 or greater:

1 Create the masking object from a single object or from a compound path.

2 Position the masking object directly in front of the object or objects you want to mask.

3 If necessary, change the stacking order of the masking object by selecting the masking object and choosing Bring To Front from the Arrange menu. If the masking object and the object to be masked are on different layers, the masking object must be on the topmost selected layer. To move the masking object to the top layer, use the Layers palette: in the palette, select the layer name that contains the masking object, and drag the name to the top of the list. For more information, see "Moving Objects Between Layers" in the *Adobe Illustrator User Guide*.

4 Select the masking object and the objects you want to mask, and choose Masks/Make from the Object menu. The masking object loses its paint style attributes and is filled and stroked with None; only the portion of the artwork that falls within the mask is visible.

TIPS

• Artwork inside the mask can be edited and moved. Once you have positioned the artwork where you want it within the mask, you should group the artwork and the mask so that they can be treated as a single item. (If you group objects that are on different layers, all of the objects are moved to the topmost selected layer.)

• If you plan to create several masks in a single document, it is easier first to create the individual masks in separate documents and then to combine the masks by copying and pasting them into one document.

• A document containing several masks or several compound objects for masks may be difficult to print. If your file is too complex for an output device to print, you may receive a printing error message such as "Cannot print illustration, offending command 'clip,'" "–8133," or "limitcheck error." If you receive a printing error message, you can try to simplify the file, lower the printing resolution, or print to a device with more memory.