

Adobe Customer Services

Printing Tips and Error Messages

This technical note discusses ways to improve printing and solutions to error messages you may receive when trying to print complex documents. A document's complexity almost always results from objects exceeding a printer's memory—not from the document file size. Examples of complex objects include very long paths, compound paths, blends, masks, patterns, or objects converted through Adobe Streamline™.

Solutions to limited printer memory include installing additional memory in the printer or using another printer with more memory. This technical note describes other ways to resolve limited printer memory.

ERROR MESSAGES AND SOLUTIONS

This section describes how to resolve error messages you may receive when trying to print complex documents.

–8133 error

An –8133 error by itself generally means that the overall file is too complex. You must reduce the number of objects within the file or reduce the complexity of the objects.

Limitcheck error

Limitcheck errors usually indicate that part of the file is too complex for the memory the printer has allocated for specific tasks. The accompanying Offending Command message—such as Curveto, Fill, or Clip—indicates the source of the problem. The Curveto message usually means that one or more paths are causing the problem. The Fill message can mean that a blend, a mask, or a pattern is causing the problem. The Clip message usually indicates a problem with a mask.

VM error

A VM error usually means the printer has run out of memory. To determine which objects are causing the problem, try printing the file in sections by copying some of the objects in the illustration to a new document and printing; then adding objects and printing again. Continue this procedure until you receive the VM error again. Simplify the object or objects that cause the VM error. If a single object won't print, re-create the object.

Printer Driver corruption

Printing problems are sometimes caused by a corrupted Print Monitor or printer driver. If you cannot determine the source of the printing problem, try deleting and reinstalling the Print Monitor and printer driver from the original disks. (Users with System 6 should also replace the LaserPrep file.)

SUGGESTIONS FOR SOLVING PRINTING PROBLEMS

Here are some suggestions that may solve printing problems. Before you begin using any of these methods, *make a backup copy of your documents*.

Splitting long paths

The Split Long Paths option “breaks” longer paths into shorter segments that can be more easily processed by the printer. The splitting occurs the first time the artwork is saved or printed.

To split long paths to improve printing:

- 1 In Adobe Illustrator 5.0 and higher, choose Document Setup from the File menu.
- 2 Select the Split Long Paths option. The Output Resolution field becomes active.
- 3 Enter a value of 5080 in the Output Resolution field. This maximum setting causes the most splitting to occur; the Output Resolution value affects only the splitting of paths and not the resolution of your printer.

In Artwork mode, you should see a series of horizontal lines across your illustration, indicating where the paths are divided. (These lines do not print).

- 4 When you have finished printing, deselect the Split Long Paths option. If you do not turn off the Split Long Paths option, any new artwork you create will be split; the Split Long Paths option in Adobe Illustrator 5.0 and higher affects documents globally.

***Note:** The Split Long Paths option does not affect text, masks, compound paths, or stroked paths. You can split these paths by cutting them using the scissors tool.*

Setting flatness in Adobe Illustrator 5.x

The flatness setting determines the number of straight line segments that are used to define a curve and how accurately the curve is drawn. Curves are made up of small line segments; the smaller the line segments, the more accurate the curve appears. However, if a curve contains many line segments, it may be too complex to print and may generate a PostScript error. Setting a higher flatness can simplify a curve so that it will print. The higher the flatness, the less accurately the curve is drawn, but the more likely the curve will print without generating a PostScript error.

In Adobe Illustrator 5.0, you set the flatness indirectly according to the output resolution you specify in the Attributes dialog box under the Object menu. The program divides the actual resolution of your output device by the specified output resolution to yield the flatness. For

example, if you have a high-resolution, 2400-dpi imagesetter and you set an object's output resolution to 800 (the default), the flatness is 3. You can increase the flatness setting of the selected objects by lowering the output resolution.

The higher the resolution of your output device, the higher the flatness can be set. For a 300-dpi device, an output resolution of 100 (and a flatness of 3) is recommended. For a higher resolution device such as a 2400-dpi imagesetter, an output resolution of 200 to 300 (for a flatness of 8 to 12) is recommended. Experiment with various settings to achieve the best results for your artwork.

Simplifying the artwork or dividing it into separate documents

If you experience printing problems, try a different approach to creating your image in Adobe Illustrator, or eliminate some of the artwork if possible. If objects are covered by other objects, consider deleting the hidden objects. Here are some additional ways to simplify your document.

Blends. If you are using Adobe Illustrator 5.0, use the Gradient command instead of the blend tool to create color blends. If you use shape blends and experience printing problems, try re-creating your blends with fewer steps, or reduce the number of blends overall.

When creating step blends, use lines instead of rectangles to reduce the complexity of the blend. (Each line has only two anchor points, whereas rectangles contain four.) Be sure to specify a line weight that is thick enough so that no gaps appear in the blend when printed. (You can verify the smoothness of a blend by zooming in to the maximum enlargement and then previewing the blend.) For more information about creating smooth blends, see the technical note "Creating Smooth Blends in Adobe Illustrator."

Patterns. Simplify patterns in your document and avoid using blends, gradient fills, or fonts in patterns, because they are too complex for use as a pattern fill. Check your *Adobe Illustrator User Guide* for tips on creating simpler patterns. You can also make a series of copies of your artwork and place the copies side-by-side instead of creating a pattern.

Line segments. Make shorter paths where possible. Split long complex paths into pieces using the Split Long Paths option or the scissors tool. If your path contains curves, use the delete-anchor-point tool to remove unnecessary anchor points, and then if necessary, readjust the remaining points.

Fonts. Make sure that your file contains no unused fonts (fonts hidden behind other objects, applied to blank spaces, and so on). Be sure to deselect the Unlimited Downloadable Fonts option in the Page Setup dialog box to avoid removing fonts from the printer's memory and having to download them again. Downloading fonts increases printing time, may cause font substitutions (such as Courier substituted for the specified font), or may prevent the file from printing.

Eliminating unused patterns and colors

When working with patterns or custom colors, you can accumulate colors or patterns that are not needed in the illustration; deleting the object filled with a pattern or color does not remove the pattern or color from the file. To eliminate any unused patterns or colors in Adobe Illustrator 5.0, choose Patterns or Custom Color from the Object menu, click the Select All Unused button, and then click Delete. Save the document and then print again.

Printing at a lower resolution

Check the resolution at which the document is printing, and lower the output resolution. It is not uncommon for a document to print to a 300-dpi laser printer, but not print to a high-resolution image setter.