Adobe℠ Customer Services

Opening Adobe Illustrator™ 3.0 Files with Compound Paths Turned into Guides

The Adobe Illustrator™ 3.0 ReadMe file states

"Do not save files that contain compound paths (including type that has been converted to outlines) that have been converted to guides."

In other words, if you select a compound path and choose Make Guide from the Arrange menu, once you save and close the document, you will not be able to reopen it. Type objects that have been converted to outlines using Create Outlines in the Type menu are defined as compound paths and so should not be made into guides. This problem has been addressed in versions 3.0.1 and later of Adobe Illustrator, but these later versions will not be able to open files created in version 3.0 that contain compound path guides.

An error message such as this will appear when you attempt to reopen the file:

Error Context:
161.2474 508.4369L
161.2474 550.2205I
(f) *
*U

This will be followed by the message, "Can't open illustration. All objects in a compound path must be paths."

To fix the file so it will reopen in Adobe Illustrator, write down the lines of code you get when you try to open the file. They are telling you where the error occurs in the Adobe Illustrator code.

Next, make a copy of the file to work on. Open the copy in a word-processing program such as Microsoft® Word® or MacWrite®. If the file is not recognized by the word-processing program, or if it opens as a graphic, refer to the program's user guide for instructions on how to open foreign file formats as ASCII text. The file should open to display the PostScript™ code that describes your artwork.

Search for "(f) *"

*Note: If the text is stroked but not filled, you will search for "(s) *." If the text is stroked and filled, search for "(b) *." If you are using Microsoft Word, you can search using the Find command in the Utilities menu. You will find the "(f) *" after the lines of code in the Error Context that you wrote down.*

Remove the parentheses and the asterisk (just leaving the letter). This will disable the guide attribute for the object.

Sample Adobe Illustrator Code:

Bad File	Good File
133.7411 540.2636 L	133.7411 540.2636 L
133.7411 498.5 L	133.7411 498.5 L
126.9725 498.5 L	126.9725 498.5 L
126.9725 550.2005 L	126.9725 550.2005 L
135.2532 550.2005 L	135.2532 550.2005 L
161.1034 508.4369 L	161.1034 508.4369 L
161.2474 508.4369 L	161.2474 508.4369 L
161.2474 550.2005 I	161.2474 550.2005 I
(f) * ———— change to ———>	f
* U	* U
* u	* u
0 R	0 R

If the object was stroked, or stroked and filled, you may be making the following change:

(s) * ———— change to ———>   s

— or —

(b) * ———— change to ———>   b

Choose Save As from the File menu, and give the file a new name, saving in Text Only format. Close the file; then launch Adobe Illustrator, and open the file from within the application.

If you have several compound paths that have been made into guides, you may need to go through this procedure a number of times in order to get the file to open. Always save backups in case you accidentally remove the wrong line of code.