

How to Create a White Ink (Spot White) Layer in Adobe InDesign

When printing labels on clear, metallic, coloured, or transparent materials, a white ink layer is often required to make colours appear bright and opaque. This guide explains how to create a Spot White layer correctly in Adobe InDesign.

When Do You Need White Ink?

White ink is commonly used when printing on:

- Clear labels
- Transparent films
- Silver or metallic labels
- Gold labels
- Coloured label stock
- Kraft paper labels
- Window decals

If you're printing on standard white label stock, a white ink layer is usually not required.

Step 1 – Create a New Layer

1. Open the Layers panel (Window > Layers).
2. Click Create New Layer.
3. Name the layer White Ink (or Spot White if requested).
4. Place this layer above your artwork layer.

Step 2 – Create the Spot Colour

Open Window > Color > Swatches, create a New Swatch with:

- Color Type: Spot
- Color Mode: CMYK
- Swatch Name: White (or Spot White)

Use a visible colour such as 100% Magenta for on-screen viewing.

Step 3 – Copy the Objects That Need White Ink

Copy the objects requiring white ink, lock the artwork layer, select the White Ink layer, then use Edit > Paste in Place.

Step 4 – Apply the Spot White Swatch

Apply the White Spot swatch as the Fill colour and remove any unnecessary stroke.

Step 5 – Turn On Overprint

Open Window > Output > Attributes and enable Overprint Fill (and Overprint Stroke if needed).

Step 6 – Verify the Layer

Ensure all white objects are on the White Ink layer, use the Spot White swatch, overprint is enabled, and objects align perfectly.

Exporting Your PDF

Export as Adobe PDF (Print), preferably PDF/X-4. Preserve spot colours and transparency, include bleed if required, and do not convert spot colours to process.

Before You Send Your File

- ✓ White ink on its own layer
- ✓ Spot colour named White or Spot White
- ✓ Overprint enabled
- ✓ Alignment verified
- ✓ Images 300 dpi
- ✓ Fonts outlined or packaged if requested
- ✓ Bleed included

Common Mistakes

- Using a process colour instead of a spot colour
- Forgetting Overprint Fill
- Misaligned white objects
- Using Paper instead of Spot White
- Converting spot colours during export
- Placing white objects on the artwork layer

Need Help?

If you're unsure whether your file has been prepared correctly, send it to us before printing. Our prepress team will review your artwork and let you know if any changes are needed.