

Stencilled Edges

The Stenciling Process

- We provide our outworker with an artwork file of your design, and the book blocks.
- The outworker creates a special stencil made from metal, with your design imposed onto the surface.
- Ink is hand mixed to match the Pantone colour requested, and each book is clamped shut to hold the pages securely in place.
- One book, and one edge at a time, the operator uses specialist equipment to squeegee ink onto the stencil, and then transfers the design onto the book-edge, where they are then left to dry.
- The stencilled book blocks are then returned to Clays where they are either bound with their cases, or packed, if they are paperback books.



How Long Does Stenciling Take?

There is a four day lead time to produce the metal stencil, once data has been received and passed to the outworker. Most inks are mixed off-site and take around three days to produce.

The stenciling process is carried out by hand, and it is only possible to stencil one book, one edge, and one colour, per pass. This means the process is far more time-consuming than spraying edges (which can be carried out in batches, rather than individually).

On average, we stencil 1500 books per day, depending on the intricacy of design.

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Things To Keep In Mind

- All trim sizes can be stencilled (A, B, Demy & Royal format etc.) but there are restrictions to the bulk/width of the area that requires stenciling.
- We recommend that the print area should be a maximum of 30mm in width - We can stencil books with a higher bulk (e.g. 50mm) but the print area should ideally be less than 30mm. Larger print areas can be achieved but this depends on levels of ink coverage and the design of the stencil.
- It is possible to stencil all three edges of the book, but three individual stencils are required and this will need three individual passes, which will impact schedule and cost.
- This process is great for simple designs and there are lots of design options!
We can spray all three edges in one solid colour, then stencil on top of the foredge in a 2nd colour.
OR We can spray the head and tail edges in one solid colour, then stencil the foredge!
Please note that when we do spray all three edges and stencil over the top, the spray can affect the stencil colour due to layering the colours. E.g. if we're stenciling white over a black spray, the white can take on a grey/blue shade as it's going over black instead of on plain text paper.
- We don't recommend using metallic inks for stenciling, as the metallic effect is lost and results can lack vibrancy.
- We do not recommend reverse-out print as there can be difficulty transferring high volumes of ink. This does depend on the design and bulk of the book but it helps to avoid having big blocks of solid colour, and to try and space out elements of the design to try 'break up' big blocks of colour.
- Sometimes a trial is recommended and costs are kept to a minimum if this is the case - The cost of the stencil is charged and if the trial is successful, we can re-use the stencil for the main run!
- We can keep the stencil and re-use it for future reprints!
- As the ink is hand-mixed, there can be a small amount of variation between the colour achieved at trial stage, and the main run.

What Do We Need From You?

- Please provide your artwork as a '.ai' file.
- Artwork must be as per the book block dimensions:
Paperback Books — Size as per finished book (with cover)
Cased Books — Size as per book block (excluding case)
There is no need to include extra bleed.
- Specify a Pantone reference for us to match to.
- Notice - Please allow us plenty of notice if you wish to include stenciling as part of your design, to ensure we can fit this in to our capacity plan!

