



[WWW.ATOZMEDIA.COM](http://WWW.ATOZMEDIA.COM)

**ARTWORK GUIDELINES**

## THE BASICS CHECKLIST

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- **Please provide artwork in one of the following formats: Illustrator, InDesign, Quark, Photoshop, or as high resolution editable PDFs.**

If supplying your final artwork as Adobe Photoshop files, please save them as layered .PSDs, or as flattened TIF files with the template layer removed.

- **All image files used (.tif, .psd) must be at least 300ppi**

If you are using bitmap files in your artwork, please create them at 1200ppi

- **Artwork should be created in the CMYK color mode**

Or Greyscale color mode for 1-color black artwork.

If your project involves specialty printing (spot colors, embossing, stamping etc), please indicate that in our layout files. Supplying files in RGB color mode may cause unintended color shifts during the conversion process.

- **Please provide layouts with the text converted to outlines and/or include all font files used**

Provided fonts should be collected in a single zip file to prevent corruption.

Dark text on a light background should be a minimum of 5pt.

Light text on a dark background should be a minimum of 7pt.

- **Artwork needs to be provided with at least 3mm on bleed past any cut lines**

And all text should be allowed at least 3mm of safety away from any cut or fold lines.

- **Do not include a center hole in the label artwork for your CD or LP**

Allow your artwork to fill that area and we will handle knocking out the center hole during the imposition process.

- **Include notes to any relevant information in the non-printing area of your layout**

Please include callouts to page numbers, spot colors and special instructions so we have a better understanding of your intentions and expectations.

➤ **Tip:** If possible, include hardcopies of your artwork with your order. When ordering a multiple page booklet, providing a folding mockup can be very helpful to ensure your final booklet reads in the correct order.

## **SETTING UP YOUR ARTWORK**

### **PROGRAMS AND FILE TYPES WE ACCEPT:**

**QuarkXPress (version 10) .QXD, .QXP**

**Adobe Creative Cloud  
(InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator) .INDD, .AI, .PSD, .PDF, .EPS, .TIF and JPEG**

**We do accept PDF files but always require the native layout files.**

#### **Here's why:**

We don't have the same amount of control over the PDFs as with native files, we're limited to what we can fix and check.

#### **Some issues include:**

- Failure due to fonts / images not being embedded properly
- Improper flattening of transparencies which can cause boxes or lines around images and text
- Template guides left in artwork, which could print on the final piece
- Elements set to "overprint", which will drop out when printed

**\*\*You can choose to continue with the PDFs, but we ask that they look over their proofs very carefully as we cannot be held responsible for any missing or incorrect elements once they've approved the artwork and OK'd to move forward into production.\*\***

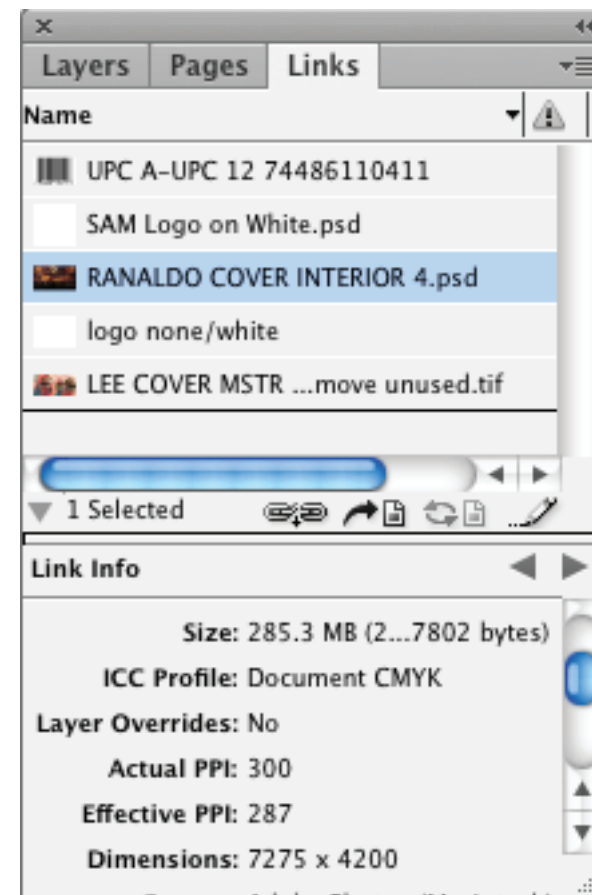
## SUPPLYING ARTWORK

**When you submit art to A to Z, the technicians open every file you submit and check for a range of potential issues that could slow your project down or cause printing errors in the later stages. This is our way of ensuring that there are no surprises when your art moves on to proofing and then to printing. If there are any issues, we will reach out to you via email or phone and walk you through the process of getting your files to the "print-ready" stage.**

## RESOLUTION

Unlike designing for web, non-vector print files need to be at a resolution of 300 dpi or higher at the intended print size to ensure that the image is sharp and not pixelated. This is especially important on detailed images, or images/raster layouts that contain text. It's important to note that though one can resample an image in Photoshop from say, 72 dpi to 300 dpi, the quality of the image will still suffer significantly. For that reason, artwork should be created in its original form at 300 dpi at the intended size to avoid any resolution issues.

Please do not scale up from the image's original size (and resolution). Any time an image is resized to be significantly larger, its effective resolution will suffer. As an example: A 240 dpi image originally at about 10" x 10" is resized to 12" x 12". The resulting resolution is around 200 dpi. By the same token, if that original image is resized to 5" x 5", the effective DPI rises to above 500 dpi. For this reason, it's always important to make sure artwork is 300 dpi or higher at the appropriate print size! This linked image has been scaled up from its original size. The result is a lowered "effective" resolution, which could result in pixelation in the final piece.



**Tip:** If you're working in InDesign, viewing your effective resolution couldn't be easier. Select the image in question on the links panel, and scroll down to see its original and effective (current) resolution!

## FONTS

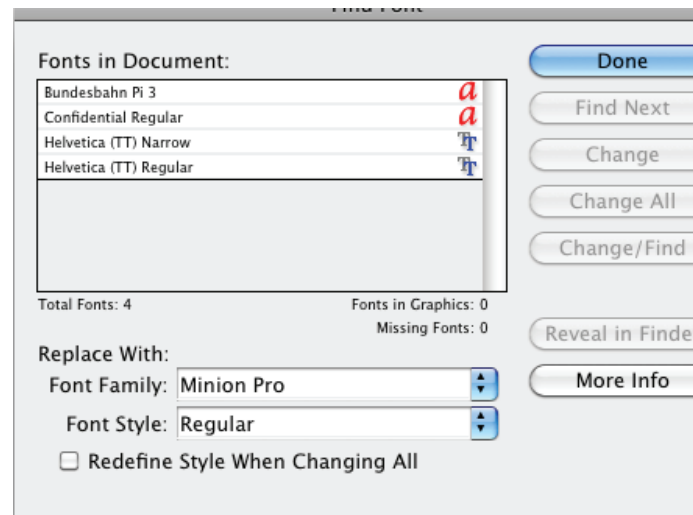
Potential font problems are seemingly endless, but in short, the most common font-related issues we find are fonts missing from the layouts. Fonts should always be collected and sent along with your layout files to ensure that there are no font substitutions, reflow issues, or missing text. Alternatively, you can outline fonts in the layout which converts them to paths rather than "live text," eliminating the need for the font files. In many programs there's an easy way to gather linked files and fonts automatically, but you can also just place the fonts you're using are in a folder and send that along.

A common request is to just replace your version of a font with another by the same name, however there are often slight differences between font files which could cause text to reflow and change the appearance of your layout.

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Font files often come over corrupted. Be sure to put your font files in a folder, and compress (.zip, .rar, etc.) that folder before sending!



➔ **Tip:** If your "Find Fonts" window looks like this, you're good to go! If you see an alert to the right of the font name, you'll need to find that font and load it on your system before proceeding.

## LINKED IMAGES

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Much like fonts, some images are not embedded in your layout but rather are linked in from files on your local system. If we open that font on a computer which doesn't have the same image files on it, the result is a missing link. A missing link can result in a low resolution preview, or a complete lack of image in the space the image should be. For that reason, you should always package your files and send any images which are in use in the file along with the layout files!

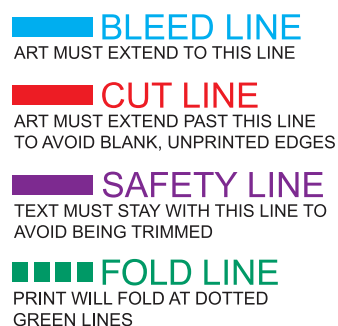
➤ **Tip:** There's an easy way to check the file names of your links: In Adobe software just go to Window > Links and you'll see all linked images. In Quark, you can select Utilities > Usage to view all fonts and linked files.

## BLEED AND SAFETY

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Bleed is an additional area of printed artwork that extends past the cutting line. Your final printed artwork is cut by a chopping mechanism to achieve its finalized size. The trimming process has a tolerance of up to 3mm, which means it is possible that your print could shift between 0-3mm when being cut to the final size. The presence of bleed prevents areas of noticeable unprinted stock, often referred to as a "white flash" on your final product. Likewise, any text or important design elements should have 3mm of space away from all cut and fold lines. This area of buffer is commonly called "safety."

In this closeup on the bottom edge of our 12" LP Gatefold Jacket template, you can see that the blue line represents the bleed requirement, the red line represents the cut, and the purple line represents the safe area. The green dotted lines represent the fold of the spine.



➤ **Tip:** Because of the cutting process and the potential for a shift, if you plan on having a border around the outside of your artwork, err on the side of thick rather than thin. This way, if the cut does shift slightly, it will be less noticeable on the finished piece.

Examples:

# CORRECT



Here we have all text within the safety line and artwork extending to the bleed line. This final product will have no white flashes or clipped text.

# INCORRECT



Here we see text flush with the cut line and an image that does not extend far enough past the cut line. This print is highly likely to have the cut running through the text and may include a white flash on any one of it's 4 sides.

## **RGB VERSUS CMYK**

RGB and CMYK are the two most common color models around, and the difference in the same art when in RGB mode versus CMYK can be very slight, or very significant. For that reason, it's important to understand that all artwork submitted in RGB will need to be converted to CMYK. Here's why:

RGB (Red, Green, Blue) is a color space used on-screen. In short, this is typically the color space used for web-design or other on-screen applications. Many applications such as Illustrator or Photoshop are set to RGB as a default, so it's a good idea to check before designing!

CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black), on the other hand, is the colorspace used for printing as it refers to the process ink colors used in almost any print application. Some RGB colors simply cannot be replicated in CMYK, so again, for printed applications be sure to design in CMYK!

So, in short:

RGB is for screen viewing only, and web or on-screen design.

CMYK is for printed applications, whether digital or offset printing.

➡ **Tip:** When color is absolutely critical, request a **hard-copy proof** from your customer service representative. This will take the guesswork out of RGB to CMYK conversions, resolution issues, and more.



## SPECIALTY PRINTING: SPOT COLORS, VARNISHES, FOIL STAMPING, EMBOSsing AND DEBOSSING

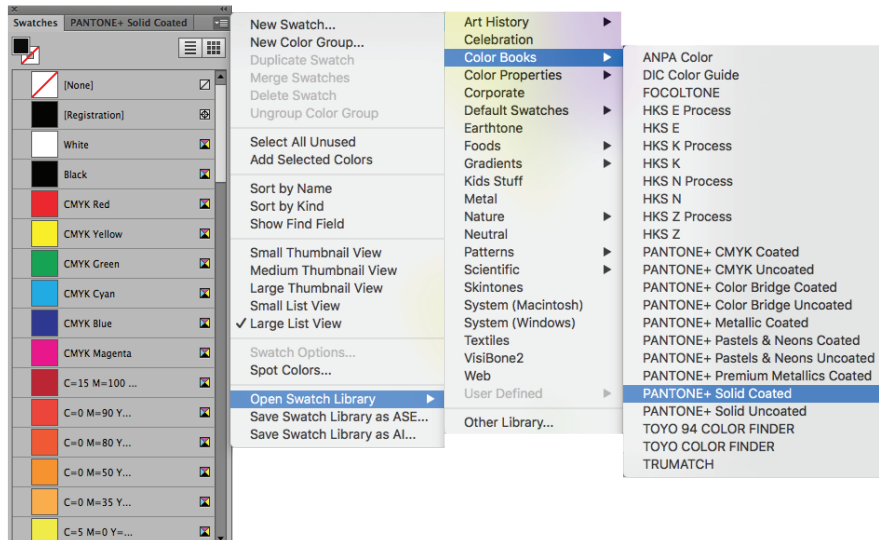
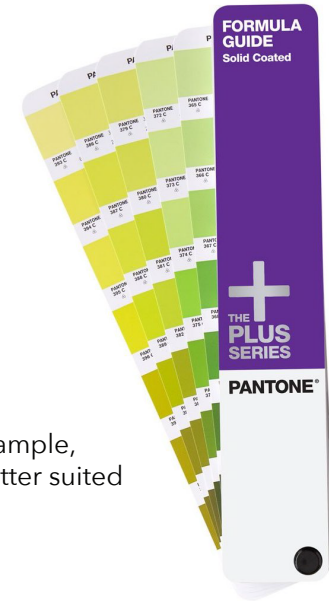
Special printing features, such as spot colors and foil stamping, can make for a very impressive final product when executed correctly.

If your design contains additional specialty printing, please have it set up on a separate layer in your layout program. If you are using Photoshop, do not flatten this artwork into the CMYK background of your file.

Please use the PANTONE Solid Coated swatches (available in your program's swatch library under the Color Books menu) to fill the the spot color elements in your design with the appropriate color.

If you are incorporating foil stamping, embossing, or a spot varnish in your design, please indicate this in the name field of the separate layer these elements appear on. The elements should be vector or 1-color raster (bitmap, psd with transparent background) and set to "overprint" in the layout program. A custom spot color swatch should be assigned to the element and the swatch should be named as the type of detail it represents (ie: "Deboss", "Emboss", "Silver Foil", "Spot Matte Varnish").

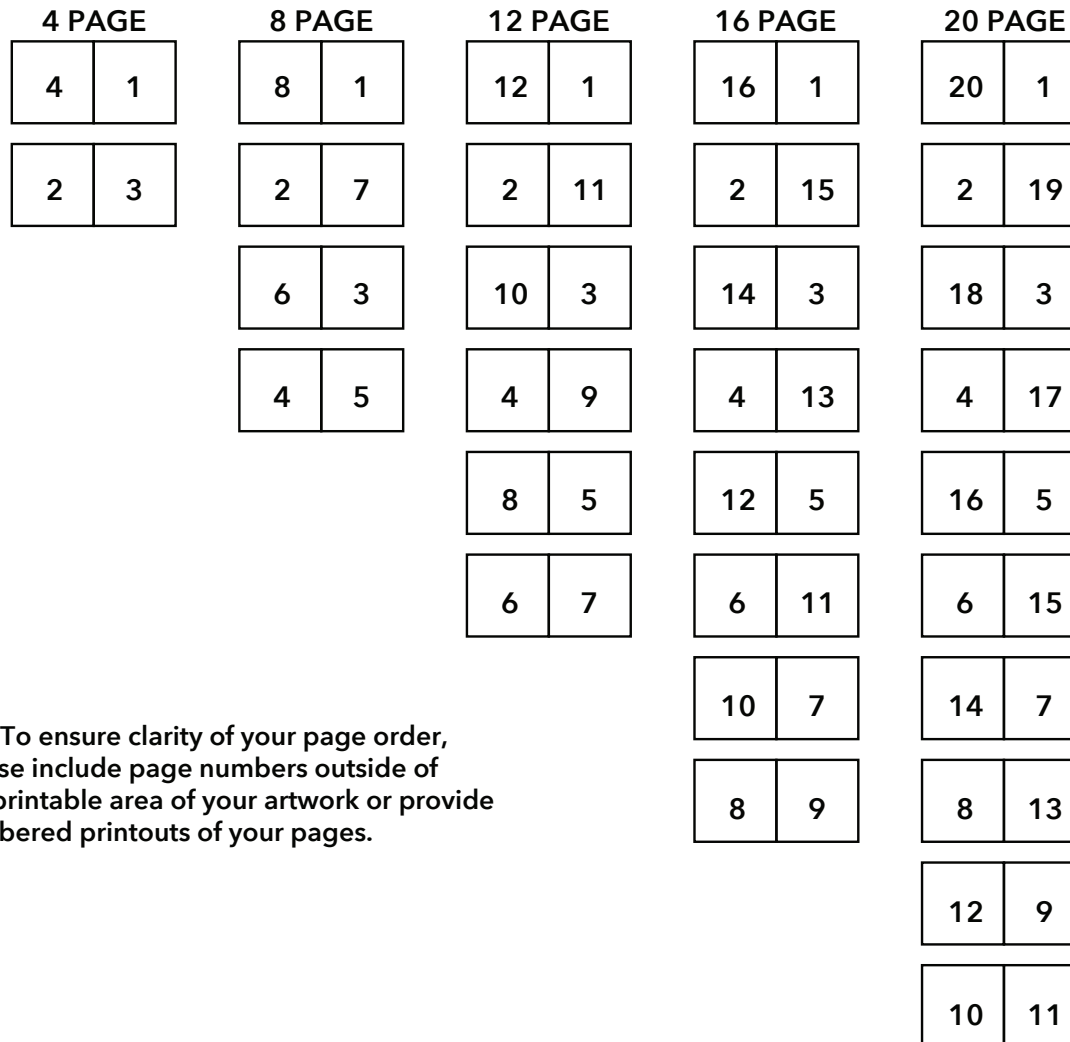
Some details are too small or fine to accomodate such specialty effects. Small text and thin outlines, for example, are not well suited for many of the treatments mentioned above. Large text and filled in areas are much better suited for these types of additional printing features.



## PAGINATION

Multiple page booklets should be supplied in the order referred to as "printer's spreads." Printer's spreads are a little less intuitive than laying the pages out in linear reading order, otherwise known as reader's spreads.

Here is a diagram detailing the order of printer's spreads for our most common booklet configurations:



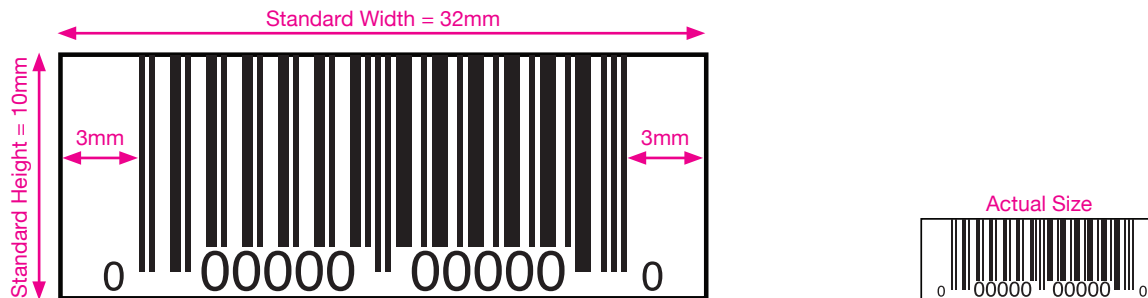
➤ **Tip:** To ensure clarity of your page order, please include page numbers outside of the printable area of your artwork or provide numbered printouts of your pages.

## BARCODES

Retailers and distributors may require your final product to feature a UPC barcode.

We recommend that you create your barcode at the following dimensions: 32mm wide x 10mm high. This is the minimum size that can be expected to function as a barcode. If your UPC barcode is printed at a smaller dimension, it will run the risk of not be recognized by standard barcode scanners.

Your barcode will also need to include 3mm of empty space on either side between the bars and the surrounding border. Less space may interfere with the scanner's operation.



Please generate your barcode as a 1-color vector file or 1200dpi raster file. We suggest that your barcode print as 100% black ink on a white background for maximum contrast. Printing in different color combinations may result in a non-functional barcode.

## UPLOADING YOUR ARTWORK

When you've finished prepping your files we recommend packaging them within the program they were laid out. The Adobe Suite programs have packaging functions under the File menu.

Once everything has been packaged and zipped up. Please go to our main site (atozmedia.com) where you can click "Upload Art" to bring you to our FTP menu.

Follow the instructions to upload and please make sure to tag your Sales Rep or your CSR as your representatives for a quick response.

The screenshot shows the A to Z Media Upload Center website. At the top left is the A to Z media logo. To its right is a navigation menu with links for Products, Services, Templates, Gallery, and Company. Below this is a secondary menu with links for Quote Builder, Blog, FAQ, Links, Contact, and Upload Art. Further right is a "Not Logged In" status and "Login | Register" links. The main content area is divided into two panels. The left panel, titled "Welcome to the A to Z Media Upload Center", lists benefits for registered clients: "Upload Art Files for your Project", "View and Approve your Proofs", "View and update job descriptions and preferences", "View production updates", and "Give feedback on your A to Z experience". It includes an "E-Mail:" field, a "Password:" field, and "Login", "Register", and "Forgot Your Password?" buttons. The right panel, titled "Proceed Without Registration", states "You can quickly upload a new project without an account." and features an "Upload New Project" button. At the bottom, there are links for "Terms and Conditions", "Contact Us", and "Send us your feedback", along with a copyright notice "© 2011 A to Z Media".

## **RECEIVING PROOFS AND APPROVAL**

We will proof all files back to you and will not print until final approval has been sent and confirmed.

Please note that you are reviewing PDF proofs, and the color may appear different on your monitor than on the final printed product. If this is a concern, please contact your Sales Rep or your Customer Service Representative regarding hard copy proofs. We recommend viewing all proofs with Adobe Reader, which can be downloaded from free at <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

As you look over the proofs, please check the following things:

- \* UPC/Barcode placement and number
- \* there are no font substitutions or text reflow issues
- \* all booklets are in printers spreads, please confirm page numbers per the upper corners of the proofs
- \* all panel placement is correct

Please be aware that your artwork may be re-templated to ensure that it meets the appropriate specifications. While we are always cautious during this process, it is possible that elements may have shifted or dropped out. Please inspect these proofs closely, as well as the notes below regarding your project.

### **PLEASE NOTE: ONCE WE HAVE RECEIVED FINAL APPROVAL WE WILL PRINT THE ARTWORK!**

If you notice any errors or corrections that need to be made AFTER you've given us final approval, you must contact either Sales Rep or your Customer Service Representative immediately. Replating and reprinting fees will apply as well as possible adjustment to the completion date so we ask that you please double check everything before final approval.

## **SUPPLYING ARTWORK PRICELIST**

**As you start to prepare your files for submission, we ask that you take to following into consideration.**

### **Artwork Correction Charge**

Once artwork has cleared preflight, we will send a set of PDF files for you to look over and approve. Should a correction be needed, whether it is changes we can do in-house or if you need to provide new files to us, we are happy to help make adjustments and will provide a new set of proofs as soon as possible. After the first correction however, we charge a fee of \$75. We strongly recommend that you please look over all files before approving/rejecting as to not incur costs or slow your project down.

### **Color Critical Artwork**

If color is a concern, please let your sales rep know! We have a variety of ways to accommodate your color needs. For \$75, we can provide a set of color proofs that are printed in-house, to size, which is great for overall assessment of color, placement and general design.

We can also provide press proofs that will be printed on press, using the actual stock. These are the most accurate way to see how your final product will appear. These start at \$300, but depending on the availability of the inks and stock, the price can vary. Also important to note is getting press proofs can add several days to the overall timeline of your project.

### **Design and Layout**

For \$75/hr, our expert team of prepress technicians and designers can help with design and layout for all our the printed products! Please contact your sales rep for more information.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Q: What ICC profiles should I use?**

**A:** We do not require the inclusion of an ICC profile.

### **Q: Why won't my files upload to your site successfully?**

**A:** A common cause of files not transferring correctly are the presence of special characters in the filename. Filenames should consist only of letters, numbers, underscores, and hyphens. Other characters (examples: @\$#/&? etc) may halt the uploading process.

### **Q: What does PPI mean?**

**A:** PPI stands for Pixels Per Inch. Artwork created at 300ppi will contain 300 pixels per inch of color.

### **Q: How do I make the © & ® sign?**

**A:** The easiest way to insert a © or ® in your artwork is by using the font: Bundesbahn Pi 3  
It is available for free at: [www.ufonts.com/fonts/bundesbahn-pi-3.html](http://www.ufonts.com/fonts/bundesbahn-pi-3.html)  
Type a capital 'C' for © and a capital 'P' for ®.