



Printing tips for CRANE'S LETTRA® Papers

Important properties of Crane's Lettra paper:

Understanding the properties of Crane Lettra paper is important before going on press:

- Lettra is an uncalendered, paper with heavy internal sizing but no surface sizing. This allows us to create an "airy" or softer feel that produces a wonderful letterpress "bite." The paper retains enough stiffness for card and other applications.
- The sheet has a somewhat textured surface due to the absence of calendering.
- There is a definite pattern difference between the two sides of the sheet. Most letterpress printers use the more pronounced pattern side for greatest effect. Offset printers may want to use the smoother side for best results.
- The standard weight is 110# cover or 300 gsm. Lettra also comes in a 32# (120 gsm) writing weight and a duplexed 220# (600 gsm) weight.
- The 300 gsm sheet has a 21 point caliper.
- Lettra is made using only cotton fibers. It is 100% cotton.

Offset Printing

Several printers have experimented with Lettra on offset presses and some have used Lettra on commercial jobs that involve multiple printing processes, including offset.

- Avoid using a duplicator press. There is not enough pressure applied to the print surface. Letterpress paper's soft, absorbent, textured surface can create a mottled look with darker colored offset inks. It is part of the unique look of letterpress. Lighter colored inks will not show the inherent mottle as much as darker colors. If the print application requires a completely mottle free look, we recommend you use Crane's Crest Cover which is surface sized, less absorbent, with a smoother texture.
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Offset printing of Lettra will produce very nice results. Each press is different, but we recommend you follow these tips to improve the appearance of your job:

- Use 150 line screens to minimize dot gains
- Print on the wire (smoother) side
- Inks that require a significant amount of transparent white in their formula should have 25% of the transparent white replaced by opaque white to make the ink more opaque and achieve a smoother ink lay
- Use an ink tack reducer if the job involves heavy ink coverage
- Increase blanket pressure
- Sheet thickness and porosity may require some fine adjustments of vacuum feed to prevent double feeding
- Long print runs can produce hickies or cotton fiber buildup on the ink rollers. Wash up the ink rollers every 1,000 to 1,500 press sheets to prevent fiber buildup or try running the paper through the press or first tower without any ink to clean off loose fiber from the paper. You may still find loose fiber so the best course of action is to stop periodically and clean the ink rollers.

Score Folding

Consideration needs to be taken when score folding Lettra due to the unique finish.

- Lighter screen tints or no ink over score areas minimizes the impact of paper fibers along the fold, when folding with the grain or against the grain.
- A cut-score (or kiss-cut score) can be utilized when scoring and folding against the grain, or when fiber lift is a problem. A cut-score is a method of scoring using only a cutting rule (without the channel) creating a slight cut through part of the paper. This method is used to create a sharp and smooth break or fold in the paper at the point of the cut.

Cutting

Lettra cover stocks are softer and bulkier than most sheets and cutting into a stack may require special handling. Printers have found these techniques helpful to ensure a clean even cut with no sheet wandering:

- Small lifts are a must to avoid having the sheets walk
- Make sure the blade is sharp; Lettra's soft surface will dull a blade quicker than a hard dense sheet
- Increase clamp pressure, taking care to not mark the sheet (try using pieces of chip board above and below the lift to cushion the paper)

Ink Jet Printers

There is a wide variety of inkjet printers, but the surface of Lettra is not designed for ink delivery systems. Most ink jet printer media guides describe paper properties that do not match well with a high quality letterpress sheet. Some printers have had success running Lettra on inkjet printers, but Lettra is not guaranteed for use on ink jet printers.

Laser Printers

Lettra is very bulky with a high sheet caliper. High bulk and caliper, the absence of surface sizing, and the textured surface can create print, sheet feeding and toner adhesion problems on laser printers. Most laser printer media guides describe paper properties that do not match well with a high quality letterpress sheet. Lettra is not guaranteed for use on laser printers.