

Ask the Technical Experts!

One of the benefits of membership is the technical expertise provided by Printing Industries of America. Our technical experts from the Center for Technology and Research discuss common production problems and issues. The Center for Technology and Research helps members with environmental, health, and safety concerns; consulting and on-site technical assistance; Technical Association of the Graphic Arts; and technology training.

Q. Some of the software on my Mac is behaving erratically, unlike the way it worked after it was installed. Someone suggested that I “zap” the computer; what are they talking about?

A. If software on your Mac is behaving erratically (either the operating system or specific applications), you may be able to quickly solve the issue by “zapping” the memory on your Mac. NVRAM (nonvolatile random-access memory) is a small amount of memory that your Mac uses to store certain settings and access them quickly. PRAM (Parameter RAM) stores similar information, and the steps for resetting NVRAM and PRAM are the same. To “zap,” shut down your Mac, then turn it on and immediately press and hold these four keys together: Option, Command, P, and R. Release the keys after about 20 seconds (after you hear **two** reboot bongs from your operating system) and allow your Mac to start normally.

Q. Are there standards for the cleanliness of a printing facility?

A. While there are no external standards, some companies adhere to the Lean manufacturing concept of 5S and establish their own standards. 5S is a method of workplace organization and cleanliness so abnormal conditions are immediately visible. Companies producing packaging or labels for food clients may be asked to adhere to Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) for Production of Food Packaging. These cover cleaning, sanitation, pest prevention, personal hygiene, and other practices for the control of food safety hazards. Developing and demonstrating your own standards is wise, even essential, depending on the markets you’re serving.

Q. A customer is disputing the size of the type we used in a brochure claiming the type is too small and not 12-point. What are the character height tolerances for different point size fonts?

A. Font size is NOT a measure of the height of the font character. Font point size comes from the measure of the thickness of the old lead hand set type, not the size of the actual character. The size of the metal type characters were smaller than the full width of the metal type or point size. The font character height could be 50% the thickness of the metal type or point size or about half the height of a type character in a different font of the same point size. Adobe and individual font software manufactures may have a standard or guideline for font size and type character height

for their digital fonts, but again not all font characters are the exact same size in a given point size. You should be providing the customer some type of proof, even a laser copy, so the customer can see the layout and text before the job is printed.

Printing Industries Resources:

Offering unbiased and confidential results, Printing Industries of America provides a range of testing and laboratory services, as well as consulting. For more information, please contact techhotline@printing.org, labservices@printing.org or consulting@printing.org.