

Getting started with ACM cutting files

This guide walks you through the basic tasks for creating plate cutting files in the ACM file format.

Feature background

- In version 4.0, you could use TIFF Assembler Plus (TAP) to create and save a cutting file in either the CF2 or EPS formats.
- Version 4.1 added the ability to output a cutting file as an ACM file.
- Version 4.2 significantly expanded and improved cutting table support. For example, to help prevent plate lift, new options provide better knife control for bevel cuts, including long cut lines.

For more details about the version 4.2 features, see the release notes (answer **70569**) and the illustrated training presentation (answer **73896**).

Requirements for these activities

- [Kodak Customer Portal](#) account to access your Kodak service and support portal. (New users can click **Request an account**.)
- A general working knowledge of the VPS+ software
Otherwise, first perform the lessons in the *Self-study Student Guide*. See answer [72851](#) in your Kodak service and support portal.
Note: See also the [TIFF Assembler Plus 4.2 user guide](#).
- Lesson files downloaded from answer [72962](#) and extracted to an accessible location.
- For the cutting activities, one of the following items:
 - Actual plate media
 - An **EnableAnimation.xml** simulation file if you prefer to simulate instead of using actual media

(Optional) Enable the animated simulation of plates being cut

After you follow these steps to create a simple blank file, an HTML animation file is automatically created whenever you output a layout with an ACM cutting file.

1. At your VPS+ workstation, use a text editor to create a blank **EnableAnimation.xml** file.
2. Place the file in the applicable location:
 - On Windows, place the XML file in **C:\Windows**.
 - On Mac OS X, place the XML file in your **<user home folder>**.
3. After you output a layout with an ACM cutting file, go to the folder that contains the output **xxx_Layout.tif** and **xxx_Layout.acm** files.
4. Locate and double-click the animation HTML cut file—**xxx_Layout.html**.
An animated preview opens in your default browser, showing a simulated blade as it cuts out the images according to the cut lines defined in the layout.

Tip: To avoid clutter, delete the **EnableAnimation.xml** file before doing production work.

Review the options for the ACM cutting file feature

When you enable ACM cutting file creation, several flexible options become available. Review these options before proceeding with the activities.

Cut Preferences options

1. Select **Edit > Preferences > Cut**.
2. Select the **Create cutting file when outputting layout** check box, and select the **ACM** output file format.
3. Set the other options as desired. This example shows the default settings:



The following settings are specific to the ACM format. For example, only ACM files support etching the label into the back plate material before the label is inked.

Min Split Length

Specify the minimum split length. By default, any cut line longer than 508 mm (20 in.) is cut from the center outward, to prevent the plate from moving or lifting on the cutting table.

Camera Marks

Select the desired camera mark. Cutting tables that use ACM files require camera marks, which are automatically placed in the output TIFF file.

Camera mark location

Specify the placement of the camera marks.

Camera mark count

Place either **2** or **4** camera marks. For some configurations, **4** camera marks provide a more precise cut.

Label etching

For more permanent labeling, select this option to etch (lightly cut) the label into the plate before it is inked.

Label position

Specify whether to place the label at the center, top, bottom, left, or right side of the plate or TIFF file.

Label font size

Specify the default or maximum font size for labels.

Layout setup options

Use **Layout Setup** to override the global **Cut** preferences or adjust the cut box of the TIFF files in a layout.

Cut File	According to preferences ▼	
ACM Mark Location	According to preferences ▼	
ACM Cut Margin	X: 0.0 mm	Y: 0.0 mm
ACM Cut Offset	X: 0.0 mm	Y: 0.0 mm

Cut File

To override a disabled **Create cutting file** preference, select **Create**. If the last-saved **Cut** preference was the **ACM** file format, the other ACM settings become available. (If not, return to **Cut** preferences and select **ACM**.)

ACM Mark Location

To override the current **Camera mark location** preference, select either **Bottom/Top** or **Left/Right**.

ACM Cut Margin

To adjust the default margin preference, edit the margin **X** and **Y** values that define the cut box around each TIFF in the layout.

- A positive **X** margin increases the height of the cut box vertically.
- A negative **X** margin shrinks the height of the cut box vertically in both directions.
- A positive **Y** margin increases the width of the cut box horizontally.
- A negative **Y** margin shrinks the width of the cut box horizontally in both directions.

ACM Cut Offset

To shift the cut box from the default 0,0 location, edit the offset **X** and **Y** values.

- A positive **X** offset shifts the cut box upward.
- A negative **X** offset shifts the cut box downward.
- A positive **Y** offset shifts the cut box to the left.
- A negative **Y** offset shifts the cut box to the right.