



# Guidelines for Agency Representatives Attending Press Sheet Inspections

**GPO**

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GPO Publication 315.2 | June 2015



## FOREWORD



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One of the ways in which this is accomplished is through the conduct of Press Sheet Inspections (PSI's). On-site PSI's are not required for all jobs, but when they are requested, a PSI can be a valuable tool in helping to ensure a quality product. This pamphlet contains guidelines governing the performance of PSI's by agency personnel, whether on your own, or accompanied by GPO staff.

We hope that this pamphlet addresses all of your questions about PSI's and will serve as a ready-reference guide before, during, and after an inspection. We welcome your comments and suggestions on how we can improve this publication and, as always, stand ready to assist you in any way we can.

Sincerely,

*Managing Director, Customer Services*

## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

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### **PSI Publication Series**

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This publication is one of a series of three publications detailing GPO press sheet inspection guidelines.

**For GPO staff:** GPO Pub. 315.1 “Guidelines for GPO Staff Performing Press Sheet Inspections”

**For agency personnel:** GPO Pub. 315.2 “Guidelines for Agency Representatives Attending Press Sheet Inspections”

**For GPO contractors:** GPO Pub. 315.3 “Guidelines for Contractors Holding Press Sheet Inspections”

### **Additional Copies**

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Additional copies of this publication are available as follows:

**U.S. Government agency personnel** — Copies are available through your agency’s printing officer, from a GPO Central Office customer service representative, or from a regional office.

**U.S. Government Publishing Office contractors and GPO personnel** — Individual copies are available from the Quality Control for Published Products Section. (202.512.0542).

### **Classes**

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Information regarding press sheet inspections may also be obtained in the *Proof and Press Sheet Inspection* class given for federal agency personnel by GPO’s **the Institute at GPO**. (For information, call 202.512.1283 or email [theinstitute@gpo.gov](mailto:theinstitute@gpo.gov).)

### **Job Specific Questions**

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Questions regarding press sheet inspections for specific jobs should be addressed to the GPO office handling the procurement. Contact your agency’s customer service representative at the GPO Central Office or at the appropriate regional office.

### **This Publication**

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Comments and suggestions regarding this publication should be addressed as follows:

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE  
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## **Guidelines for Agency Representatives Attending Press Sheet Inspections**

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### **Key points for agency personnel attending press sheet inspections.**

The administrative and technical guidelines listed are designed solely for direction. They are not meant to provide, or serve as substitute for, the printing knowledge and experience necessary to make the technical printing judgments required during a press sheet inspection, nor provide the contractual knowledge and experience necessary to administer a Government printing and binding contract.

It is strongly recommended that agency representatives attending press sheet inspections be familiar with the contract under which the work is being performed, and aware of the two major documents that, by reference, are part of most GPO contracts. These two documents are *GPO Contract Terms (Solicitation Provisions, Supplemental Specifications, and Contract Clauses)*

(GPO Pub. 310.2), and *GPO Contract Terms (Quality Assurance Through Attributes Program)* (GPO Pub. 310.1). Copies of both are available from your agency's customer service representative at the GPO Central Office, the appropriate regional office, or online at [www.gpo.gov](http://www.gpo.gov).

If there is a conflict between any items in these guidelines and the contract, the contract takes precedence.

## I. Administrative Guidelines

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### *Before the Inspection*

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#### **Press Forms to Be Seen and Schedule**

When the Government Printing Office (GPO) calls your agency to inform you of the press sheet inspection specify which forms you would like to see first. (Once a standard is set, forms may be waived.) At this time, ask for a tentative schedule for each form.

#### **Requesting a Different PSI Date**

When the agency or the GPO requests a change in the contractor's scheduled PSI date or time, it is not automatic. If the contractor agrees to the change, it may result in an adjusted shipping or delivery schedule.

#### **Who Will Attend**

The agency has the following options:

- Requesting GPO to attend;
- Attending with GPO;
- Attending on its own; and
- Waiving the inspection.

Inform GPO promptly if you want a GPO inspector to attend and who, if anyone, will attend from your agency. It is strongly recommended that non-Government personnel do not attend inspections without an agency representative (AR).

When deciding who should attend, keep in mind that an AR attending a PSI without a GPO inspector present is authorized to set standards for printing attributes such as type density and color, and to check compliance with various other items in the specifications. **However, the AR does not have authority to request the contractor to make any changes (including author's alterations) that alter the contract in any way.** (See also *Agency Representative's Authority* and *Author's Alterations*.)

#### **How Many Will Attend**

Try to avoid more than two persons attending; if there are two or more, name a spokesperson. Committees can make it very difficult to make the necessary decisions.

#### **Waived Inspection**

If the agency and GPO waive the inspection, the contractor will proceed on their own as if the inspection had not been requested. Nonattendance, or waiver of the inspection, does not affect any other provisions of the contract, including any requirements for the contractor to supply departmental random copies, or quality assurance random copies, for QATAP inspection.

## **Agency Authority for Changes**

The AR attending the PSI must have the agency's authority to authorize GPO to make any author's alterations that may be requested. (See also *Author's Alterations*.)

## **Critical Areas Checklist**

Make a list of critical areas to check (for example, crucial last proof corrections or changes, involved or questioned color breaks, and specific or unique areas). **The time to proofread or edit is not during a PSI.**

## **Non-business Hours Contact**

If the PSI is scheduled for non-business hours (many plants run 24 hours), be sure to obtain a night telephone number, night entrance information, and the name of a night contact person at the plant.

## **Necessary Telephone Numbers**

Obtain telephone numbers (work and home if applicable) of any key personnel you may need to contact at your agency or GPO and names of plant contacts. Make certain that telephone numbers include area codes. If you will be attending an inspection without a GPO inspector, you may wish to obtain a night phone number or email address for the GPO Contracting Officer administering the contract. This number is needed in the event of author's alterations or other specification and schedule changes that require immediate GPO contractor authorization.

## **Tools**

If you are attending the inspection without a GPO inspector, check that you have any necessary tools, such as printer's magnifying glass (loupe), and ink books that you may need to take with you.

## **Waiting Time**

PSI's usually include waiting time; plan accordingly.

## **Schedule Verification**

Immediately before starting travel to the PSI, call the plant and verify that the inspection is still on schedule.

## **Standing Travel Orders**

If you attend PSI's frequently, try to obtain blanket travel orders. This will avoid unnecessary delays in the event of short PSI schedule notification. (See also *Requesting a Different PSI Date*.)

## **Pursuing Agency Programs**

You are in the contractor's plant to set certain standard for a specific contract. An invitation to the plant does not extend to the pursuit of your agency's policies or programs. An example of these would be safety or environmental inspections of the plant.

## **Ethics**

Learn and follow your agency's ethics regulations regarding any offers of food, drink, entertainment, or any remuneration, should they be offered to you by the contractor.

For the information of agency representatives, the GPO staff works under a GPO directive, which states, in part, that GPO employees "shall not solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, any gift, gratuity, favor, entertainment, loan, service, or any other thing of monetary value from any person with whom he or she transacts business on behalf of GPO." The directive does not prohibit GPO employees from accepting food and nonalcoholic beverages of nominal value at a contractor's plant or place of business on an infrequent basis when the conduct of official business within the plant or place of business will be facilitated, and when no provisions exist for individual payment. The acceptance of doughnuts and coffee or their equivalent is permitted when official business will be facilitated.

## **Confidentiality**

Do not discuss with the present contractor anything you have learned about another contractor. Treat any information that you learn during an inspection with the utmost confidentiality (for example, proprietary data, such as type of equipment and number of personnel, or business-sensitive information, such as quality level, and proofing and printing problems). Such information should not be discussed with anyone other than personnel from GPO or your agency who have a need to know this information.

## *During Travel*

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### **On-Time Arrival**

Arrive at the inspection site on time. Contractors can claim additional compensation for waiting time.

### **Lateness**

If you think you may be late for the inspection, call the plant contact person immediately. Contractors have the right to claim additional compensation for press waiting time. When you are late by any length of time and the contractor indicates they will bill GPO for holding time, be sure to inform GPO of this and report it on your inspection report. (See *Starting the PSI* for information on contractor delays.)

In the event you are delayed and a GPO inspector will be attending the PSI, the GPO inspector will start the PSI on schedule to avoid waiting-time charges. If the GPO inspector knows of your delay, they may be able to plan for your delayed arrival.

Contractors have been instructed that, if an AR is attending a PSI without a GPO inspector and the AR has not arrived or called within one-half hour after the scheduled starting time, the contractor should call the GPO office that scheduled the PSI for instructions. If the GPO office has closed, the contractor will wait 30 minutes and then proceed with the work.

### *At the Plant With a GPO Inspector*

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#### **Coordinating the PSI**

If a GPO inspector and an agency representative are present at the inspection, the GPO inspector will coordinate any agency requests. They will follow many of the same guidelines outlined below in *Inspections Without a GPO Inspector*.

#### **Holding Time**

If you arrive before the scheduled starting time, but the GPO inspector has not arrived, and the contractor wishes to begin, ask the contractor to wait for the inspector's arrival. If the GPO inspector has not arrived or called by the scheduled starting time, wait one-half hour and then begin without him/her.

#### **Author's Alterations**

When considering author's alterations, remember that they are additions to the contract, are chargeable, and may cause changes to the delivery schedule. The GPO inspector will advise you of the impact of the author's alterations being considered.

Since the contract is between GPO and the contractor, if you desire to make such changes, the GPO inspector will either authorize any changes (they have limited authority) or arrange for the Contracting Officer to do so.

#### **Signing Off on the Press Sheet**

When present, the GPO inspector will officially sign off on the press sheet when it is acceptable. They may ask you also to sign the approved sheet.

### *Inspections Without a GPO Inspector*

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#### **Agency Representative's Authority**

If you attend a PSI without a GPO inspector, you are authorized by GPO to perform the PSI. You may set standards for printing attributes, such as type density and color, and check compliance with various other items in the specifications. However, if you request the contractor to make any changes or author's alterations that require additional costs or will affect the schedule; get it in writing and inform the GPO Contracting Officer. You do not have the contractual authority to change any requirements of the specifications (including QATAP levels or standards), even if no additional charges or schedule changes are needed.

## **Starting the PSI**

Introduce yourself to the company contact. Outline with them the procedures you will follow for the inspection. Contractors have been instructed that their make ready should be completed before you arrive. Sheets presented to you should incorporate all type and color change requests shown on the last proofs and should be in register, ready for approval.

Contractors have been instructed that, if the GPO inspector or agency representative is kept waiting at a PSI, the contractor may be charged for waiting time. If you are kept waiting, make an appropriate record in your notes and on the inspection report.

## **Inspection Location**

When an inspection is held in a conference or viewing room, do not enter the pressroom or any other part of the plant without the contractor's approval.  
(See also *Viewing Conditions* under Technical Guidelines.)

## **Number of Sheets Needed**

Ask for three consecutive copies of each press pull presented to you and number each one (the same number on all three sheets). Start with new numbering for each press form. Multiple sheets are needed to compare possible defects caused by paper, ink, or presswork. For web-printed jobs with multiple webs, or multiple images around the cylinder, ask for at least three copies of all images.

## **Marking up Press Pulls**

Write the date, time and "suggested" corrections on the first sheet of each pull.

## **Recordkeeping**

Recordkeeping is important. In an inspection log, keep notes of the time each press pull is received by you, when it is returned to the printer, and "suggested" corrections to the sheet. This information will be needed should a dispute arise.

## **Verifying Requested Changes**

When a revised press pull is received, be sure to compare it with the previous pull to verify whether the requested corrections or changes have been made.

## **Inspection Time**

Take a reasonable amount of time, including some time alone, to inspect the sheet before signing it. **Remember, this is not the time to proofread or edit.**

## **Critical Areas Checklist**

Be sure to check the items on the critical areas list you brought with you (for example, crucial last proof corrections or changes, involved or questioned color breaks, specific or unique areas).

## **Questions or Problems**

If questions or problems arise during GPO business hours, do not hesitate to call your agency's customer service representative that awarded the contract at the GPO Central or Regional Office.

## **Author's Alterations**

When considering author's alterations, remember that they are additional to the contract, are chargeable, and may cause delays in the shipping or delivery schedule. (see *Agency Representative's Authority*)

## **Record of Author's Alterations**

If author's alterations are requested, describe and record them in your notes; include such information as the number of hours of prepress time (file management / rip time), delayed press time, the number of plates remade, if known, the contractor's cost and schedule estimate, if provided, and any other pertinent details. This information is also needed for the *Agency Onsite Inspection Report* (GPO Form 2694A) (See also *Agency Onsite Inspection Report*.)

## **Setting the Standard**

When you are ready to approve the press sheet by signing "OK FOR COLOR," you will be establishing a standard for:

- Type quality and uniformity (QATAP Attribute P-7);
- Halftone match (QATAP Attribute P-8);
- Solid or screen tint color match (QATAP Attribute P-9); and
- Process color match (QATAP Attribute P-10).

For these attributes, the OK'd sheet becomes the standard that the printer is to match throughout the run.

## **Number of Sheets To Sign**

Sign at least three consecutive sheets. Mark them with the date and time. Give one OK'd sheet to the contractor and take two with you. The signed sheets that you take with you are a legal record of your approval, and may be needed by GPO if there are any related problems. If you require sheets for other purposes, ask for additional ones. (See also *Storing Signed Sheets*.)

## **How To Sign**

**Sign the approved sheet "OK FOR COLOR"** to approve type quality and uniformity, halftone match, solid or screen tint color match, and process color match. (See also *Setting the Standard*, *Signing for Specialty Inspections*, and *OK With Corrections* in the Technical Section.) Whenever possible, make comments and signatures in a non-image area.

When the press sheet has multiple images up (especially more than four) mark one "OK FOR COLOR" to be used as a standard.

## **What Not To Sign**

**Do not sign “OK TO PRINT.”** If you sign “OK TO PRINT,” you are taking responsibility for items such as margins, image placement, and pagination, which you most likely did not check. These items are the contractor’s responsibility; if you sign “OK TO PRINT” and one of these items is incorrect, you have accepted the job and cannot later successfully complain about these approved elements.

For these same reasons, if you use a ruled-out sheet to check margins, image placement, etc. (even if you are trained and experienced in the use of a ruled-out sheet); do not sign the ruled-out sheet except in very special circumstances, such as during some form inspections.

## **Signing for Specialty Inspections**

For specialty inspections, such as collating or folding, **do not sign “OK” or “OK TO PRINT.”** **Sign “OK FOR (      ).”** Fill in the blank with whatever it is that you are specifically checking (for example, “OK FOR COLLATING”). Be as specific as possible. Specialty inspections may require other applicable specialty procedures not covered in these guidelines.

## **Waiver After Arrival**

Waiving the inspection after your arrival at the plant because of problems is not a valid option for an AR. If you cannot approve a sheet (unconditionally or as marked) because there is a problem, contact GPO. However, standard setting for upcoming forms is not waived if you approve one or more forms and then leave, instructing the contractor to follow an approved form as a standard. In cases like this, inform the contractor which signed-off press sheet is to be the standard and for which upcoming press forms. Also make an appropriate notation on the approved press sheet that is to be followed, and record it in your notes and on the inspection report.

If, for example, you inspect two forms of two-color text and then decide, on site, not to remain for the four-color cover, the inspection of the four-color form is waived. You should inform the contractor of this, and make an appropriate record in your notes and on the inspection report to GPO.

## **Unsignable Press Sheets**

If you cannot, or will not, approve a press form or the entire job and the contractor cannot correct the existing problems in a reasonable amount of time, contact GPO for guidance before leaving the plant. After normal GPO hours, call the Contracting Officer’s night telephone number. If you cannot reach a CO, leave a message or email. Describe the issues and any pertinent details, and record them in your notes.

(See also *Waiver After Arrival* and in the Technical Guidelines section, *Length of Time for Color Adjustments.*)

### **“Stop the Press”**

**Do not tell the contractor to “Stop the Press,”** or say anything that could be construed as such a statement, for any reason, including finding that the contractor is saving work without an approval. Agency representatives do not have the authority to tell the contractor to start or stop their equipment, nor does any GPO staff member have such authority.

However, if you find that the contractor is saving unapproved work, you can and should clearly inform them that no approval has been given. Should the contractor persist, contact GPO immediately.

### **PSI's at Subcontractors**

If, for any reason, you attend an inspection in a subcontractor's plant and a prime contractor's representative is not present, request the prime contractor's presence. In your dealings with the subcontractor, remember that the Government's contract is with the prime contractor and not the subcontractor.

In the event you are in a subcontractor's plant without a prime contractor's representative present and any major difficulties arise, be sure, if at all possible, to contact GPO and discuss the situation before leaving the subcontractor's plant.

### **Return Schedule**

When additional press forms are to be inspected, get an update on the PSI schedule before you leave the plant, and reconfirm the schedule before you return. If the inspection is to be in the nighttime hours, have the contractor call with advance notice. Amount of advance notice time should be discussed before leaving the plant.

## *After the Inspection*

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### **Onsite Inspection Report**

Fill out a copy of the “Agency Onsite Inspection Report” (GPO Form 2694A) within 3 days of the PSI and submit it to GPO/QCPP. Be sure to include information regarding any delays to contractor-verified schedules. This information will assist GPO in providing your agency with better printing services. Send the form via mail to Quality Control for Procured Printing — U.S. Government Printing Office, Room C848, Stop PPSQ, 732 N. Capitol Street, NW, Washington, DC 20401, email to [QCPP@gpo.gov](mailto:QCPP@gpo.gov), or fax to 202.512.1343.

### **Storing Signed Sheets**

Retain the approved, signed press sheet(s), and any other sheets, samples, or paperwork in a safe place. Approved sheets and other samples should be retained at least through the product warranty period.

Should there be a complaint about the job, submit the approved sheet(s), along with the complaint (GPO Form 1815), the unopened departmental random copies (blue labeled carton), electronic media, the camera-ready copy, and any other necessary material, to your agency's customer service representative that awarded the contract at the GPO Central or Regional Office.

## **II. Technical Guidelines**

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The guidelines listed below are provided for AR's attending PSI's on their own without a GPO representative present. If a GPO inspector is present, they will follow many of the same guidelines outlined below.

These technical guidelines are to be used when conducting a PSI. Printing knowledge and experience must be used in conjunction with these guidelines.

The purpose of a PSI is to check that final corrections and changes have been made and to set certain specific standards for the contractor to match during production. However, you are not there to operate the printer's equipment, or to act as the printer's print-quality consultant, or to instruct the printer how to produce the product.

The procedural guidance below relates to the sheet fed printing of a typical booklet, book, or poster. Specialty products and very short or long runs may require different procedures. (See *Web Guidelines* for information on web-printed jobs.)

Nothing in these guidelines is meant to take precedence over the conformance of the product to specifications, including the Quality Assurance Through Attributes Program (QATAP). A PSI does not take the place of a QATAP product inspection.

### **Stock**

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#### **Stock Errors**

Check for obvious contractor stock errors (wrong color, text-weight stock in place of cover-weight stock, etc.). This check is recommended as a first step so that time is not spent on register and color, only to find later that there is a major stock error.

If you believe that there is a major contractor stock error, discuss it with the contractor. Contractors may change the stock to meet GPO specifications on their own, once the problem is pointed out. However, be sure that you and the contractor understand that you are not requesting a change in stock, since AR's cannot make any changes in specifications, stock included. (See also *Stock Specification Change* and *Stock Testing*.)

#### **Stock Specification Change**

Only the Contracting Officer may make changes in stock specifications. If a change in stock is needed for any reason, contact the Contracting Officer immediately.

#### **Questioned Stock**

If you believe that the stock is not the stock specified, and the contractor does not resolve the issue on their own, contact your supervisor and/or the CO immediately. The CO will advise you and the contractor how to proceed, but the decision as to how to proceed will require individual analysis in each situation.

Remember that you do not have the authority to tell the contractor to stop their press for any reason, including questions regarding stock. Remember also that the

Contracting Officer must make any instructions to the contractor that changes the delivery schedule. (See also *Stock Testing*.)

### **Stock Testing**

The approval of a press sheet, as outlined in these guidelines, does not constitute an approval of the stock.

Should there be any discussion with the contractor regarding stock, be sure that they understand that you cannot test paper on site, and that stock must be tested at GPO's lab for conformance to specifications. (For further information on testing, see the publication *Government Paper Specification Standards*. [www.gpo.gov/vendors/sfas.htm](http://www.gpo.gov/vendors/sfas.htm))

Even though a job has printed, should you still have concern regarding the stock, ask for several unprinted samples of paper to bring back for testing as part of the QATAP inspection of the product. Paper brought back for testing should be submitted to GPO immediately upon your return. (See also *Questioned Stock*.)

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### *Proof Corrections and Author's Alterations (AA)*

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#### **Last Proof Corrections and AA's**

If there were proofs on the job, check that any last proof corrections and author's alterations (other than color) have been made. This check is recommended as a first step so that a lot of time is not spent on register and color, only to find later that major content corrections have not been made.

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### *Register*

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#### **Registration Before Color**

Make register moves before adjusting color. Do not get involved in adjusting color before adjusting register, as register changes will alter color.

#### **Register**

Check at least the following types of register:

- Internal to each illustration;
- Edges of each illustration (register and masking);
- Trap of screens or tones to illustrations;
- Butt of screens or tones to illustrations;
- Rules, type, and design elements made by screens;
- Type or design elements that reverse out of multiple colors to paper color; and
- Type or design elements that reverse out of single, or multiple colors, and then print back in with another color.

When marking mis-register, circle the area that is out of register and indicate mis-register; do not indicate what moves are to be made.

## **Process Color Register and QATAP**

When establishing process color register, remember that you are setting a production standard and that the tolerances in QATAP are production tolerances, not standard setting allowances.

### *Color*

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#### **Viewing Conditions**

Before checking color, check that the viewing conditions meet any requirements called for in the contract and QATAP (for example, 5,000 – degree Kelvin lighting, as called for by ISO standards). If the conditions do not meet any standards that are required, be sure to note this on your *Agency Onsite Inspection Report* (GPO Form 2694A).

#### **OK'd Color Proof**

If there is an OK'd color proof, compare the press sheet with the OK'd proof. After the proof has been approved, the OK'd color proof becomes the intermediate standard for judging the press sheet. It is no longer correct to judge the press sheet for color against the original, when there is an OK'd proof.

After the press sheet has been approved, it becomes the approved standard and supersedes any earlier intermediate standards for some QATAP attributes, including color. (See the specifications for the order of precedence of standards. See also *Other Color Standards*.)

#### **Other Color Standards**

If there is no OK'd color proof, or if specific illustrations have not been OK'd for color, check the press sheet to be sure that these illustrations are OK as corrected, or appropriately represent the originals. (See the specifications for the order of precedence of standards.)

#### **Additional Slight Registration Moves**

Even though registration has already been checked, obtaining desired process color may require additional slight registration moves.

#### **Matching Flat Colors**

Check the color and ink density of flat colors such as Pantone Matching System™ or Toyo Color Finder colors. If there are discrepancies between your ink book and the printer's, check whether a color chip was provided with the artwork, or an ink draw down was provided with the proofs. If so, use it as the standard.

#### **Tint Percentages**

Visually, or by using a screen tint-comparator, check that tint percentages meet specifications. Also check that all repeating flat and built-process colors are even across the sheet, taking in-line situations into account.

## **Even Type Density**

Check type density and evenness across the sheet, and mark the press sheet as required.

## **Form-to-Form Color**

When applicable, check form-to-form color match, particularly where images cross the fold bind. You may need previously OK'd press forms for reference.

## **Matching Press Sheets to Proofs**

Process colors on the press sheet presented to you should match the OK'd proof colors, taking into account that prepress proofs are not ink on paper and that there may be differences such as the base stock of the proof and press in-line situations.

## **Process Color Adjustments on Press**

**Adjusting color on press can achieve only minor changes.** Almost all color adjustments should be done at the separation or proof stage. Do not attempt to "make" the job on press.

Every press color adjustment situation requires individual analysis. Do not tell the contractor how to adjust the press; state how you perceive that the color on the press sheet does not match the color on the proof or other approved standard. Describe what it is that you see as a difference between the press sheet and the approved standard (for example, "The green color of the grass on the press sheet looks to me to be bluer than the green of the grass on the proof").

## **Color Bars**

When color bars are called for in the contract, but they are not present, be sure to note this in your inspection report to GPO, and have the contractor add them.

AR's who are skilled in the use of color bars may wish to use them as an aid in helping to set a color standard for the press sheet or for any of their other uses, such as for slur targets to check image sharpness and for checking dot gain. However, if there is a problem indicated by the color bars, discuss the problem instead of the color bars. (See also *Densitometer*.)

## **Densitometer**

AR's who are skilled in the use of a densitometer may wish to use one as an aid in setting a color standard on the press sheet.

However, if there is a problem in matching color on the press sheet to the approved standard, be sure to discuss the matter in terms of the matching problem instead of the densitometer readings.

## **Returning to Even Densities Across the Sheet**

If the process color does not match the approved standard and the printer is unable to make it match after a reasonable amount of time, one means of attempting to achieve a color match is to balance the ink densities across the sheet and then to adjust the ink densities as necessary to match the OK'd proof, or other approved standard. However, it should be the printer's decision whether to go back to this point in the make-ready.

## **Length of Time for Color Adjustment**

A guideline for most process jobs is that you should be able to get color in 1 or 2 hours (based on the printer providing a new sheet in 15 minutes). If it takes much more time, you may likely have electronic file, plate, blanket or mechanical problems. Tactfully and professionally discuss the situation with the printer. If they suggest that corrections can be made, use your professional judgment to determine whether this is a viable route and can be achieved in a reasonable amount of time. After receiving an estimated time to make the corrections, discuss whether other forms can be put on press while one is being corrected, to decide if you should wait at the contractor or return to office/hotel.

## **Unsignable Press Sheet**

If an OK cannot be achieved via corrections made on press or by prepress, follow the Administrative Section guidelines for *Unsignable Press Sheets*.

## *Halftones and Other Illustrations*

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### **Halftones and Illustrations**

Check halftone and illustration reproduction quality for any loss of shadow or highlight detail and for midtone range reproduction. Be sure to check any spots on the press sheet against consecutive press sheets, the proof, electronic file, or original copy.

## *Content*

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### **Type Breaks**

Check for type breaks and loss of information, and mark the press sheet when required. Be sure to check against the proof, supplied visuals, or original copy.

If you request any content changes, including type or copy changes, remember that the changes must be handled as author's alterations. (See *Author's Alterations* in the Administrative Section.)

### **Dirt**

Check for dirt and other necessary cleanups; and, if necessary, mark the press sheet accordingly.

## *Before Signing*

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### **Startup**

When color is "good," sign off and then ask the printer to make any minor adjustments (wash blankets, etc.) needed to start up, and then to start counting and bring in a sheet at about 500 on the counter (3,000 to 5,000 for web printed jobs). Compare this sheet with the sign off sheet.

### **Minor Running Color Adjustment**

If necessary, fine-tune the color adjustments while running. However, remember the product is now being saved.

## *Signing Off*

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### **Signing Off**

Sign off three consecutive sheets, "OK FOR COLOR." (See also *Signing Off* in the Administrative Section. )

### **OK With Corrections**

Sign "OK FOR COLOR With Corrections." If color and other standards that you are there to set are good, but you cannot sign off, because of problems such as gear streaks or ghosting, which cannot be corrected in a reasonable length of time (1 or 2 hours), it is OK to sign off "OK FOR COLOR With Corrections." However, be sure to note the specific problem on the sheet.

Before leaving the plant, make certain that the contractor understands what the problems are and what is expected of them. If you are providing a conditional signoff during GPO business hours, inform the GPO Contracting Officer of this and the problems before leaving the plant. If GPO is closed, call as soon as it reopens. Also be sure to note the problems in your report and bring back sheets showing evidence of them. This procedure should not be used for color corrections needing new plates.

### **Keeping Approved Sheets**

Bring back the approved sheets, and if there were major problems, bring back copies of all marked sheets for the CO to review. (See also *Storing Signed Sheets* in the Administrative Section.)

## *Web-Printed Jobs*

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### **Web Guidelines**

Technical guidelines remain the same for web jobs as for sheet fed printed jobs. It is incumbent upon the AR to work with a reasonable speed. However, a running web is not a reason to rush unduly, or to sign off on contractually unacceptable printing.

### **REMEMBER**

- Press sheet inspections are costly, are not required on all jobs, and do not take the place of proper proofs; thus they should be requested judiciously.
- Agency representatives attending press sheet inspections without a GPO representative should have the printing knowledge necessary to make the technical judgments required during an inspection.
- Monitoring quality control during the production run is not the purpose of the press sheet inspection. The purpose of the press sheet inspection is to set some specific standards by which the finished product can be measured as defined by the contract specifications and the Quality Assurance Through Attributes Program (QATAP)

## Appendix

### FOR GPO USE

Inspection Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Contractor: \_\_\_\_\_ Contractor Code: \_\_\_\_\_

### U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

### AGENCY ONSITE INSPECTION REPORT

*(See notes on back -Use block 18 for continuation, if needed)*

1. Contractor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ City & State: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Jacket No.: \_\_\_\_ Prog. / P.O.: \_\_\_\_ Type of Inspection: \_ (Proof) \_ (Press) \_ (Bindery)

3. Inspection Date: \_\_\_\_ Product Type: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Pages: \_\_\_\_ No. of Colors: \_\_\_\_

4. Name & title of agency representative(s) (AR): \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No.(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did a GPO inspector attend, and if so who? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What equipment was used for this order? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What contractor personnel did you work with on this inspection and what are their positions?  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Where was the inspection held? \_\_ (Pressroom) \_\_ (Inspection Booth) \_\_ (Conference Room)  
\_\_ (Other)

9. Describe the conditions and general atmosphere: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Were the copy, proofs, and samples available and ready? \_\_ (Y) \_\_ (N)

11. Was the contractor on time for the inspection? \_\_ (Y) \_\_ (N) If late, how late and why?  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. What difficulties, if any were encountered? \_\_\_\_

13. What was the cause of the difficulties? \_\_ (Government-Furnished Material) \_\_ (Other)

Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Was any unusual assistance required? \_\_ (Y) \_\_ (N) Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

15. What were the results of the inspection? \_\_\_\_\_

16. Did anything occur (AA's or PE's) that would lead the printer to request additional time or funds? If so, describe: \_\_\_\_\_

17. What Product Quality Level is this job? \_1 \_2 \_3 \_4 \_5 None. Would you recommend this firm for similar products at this level \_\_ (Y) \_\_ (N) Why? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Continuation (Item No. \_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ (continued on back)

Report Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_ AR's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### FILL OUT ONE FORM FOR EACH INSPECTION

Send the form via mail to Quality Control for Published Products — U.S. Government Publishing Office, Room C848, Stop PPSQ, 732 N. Capitol Street, NW, Washington, DC 20401, email to QCPP@gpo.gov, or fax to 202.512.1343.

GPO FORM 2694A  
(5-91) P. 50091-7

## AGENCY ONSITE INSPECTION REPORT

This Report Relates To This Jacket/Print Order Only  
*It Is Not An Overall Quality Evaluation*

If during an inspection you encounter any difficulties, do not hesitate to call your agency's customer service representative that awarded the contract at the GPO Central or Regional Office.

1. Fill out this item completely; there are numerous contractors using very similar names.
2. If the inspection is for a term contract, indicate the program number and the print order number.
6. Identify the equipment fully, if known. If there are two or more of the same presses, indicate which one was used. We need to know if a specific piece of equipment has problems.
7. Indicate if the person(s) you worked with were prepared, and willing to do what was needed. What was the working relationship: good, strained, etc.?
9. Describe what the physical conditions were like, including proof/press-sheet viewing conditions. What was the overall attitude of the plant personnel?
11. If the inspection started late, and the reason is known indicate it, be specific. For example, previous job still running, waiting for paper, corrections not completed. This information can help assess workload and forewarn of schedule problems.
12. If there were any difficulties, describe them in relation to specifications or Quality Assurance Through Attributes Program (QATAP) attributes where possible. For example, trouble getting halftone match, two hours to get it bound without wrinkles.
13. If there were difficulties and the cause is known, describe the reason(s) behind the difficulties. Examples: "supplied negatives did not register", "proof corrections not made"; "could not get rid of streaks"; "author's alterations".
14. If you went beyond inspection and assisted the contractor in their work to get an acceptable product, indicate this. For example, explained how to get rid of ghosting, suggested that they try another glue.
15. Did you leave with an acceptable product, or did you have to come back the next day? Did you have to settle for less than an acceptable result due to time constraints?
16. Describe anything that occurred for which the printer might bill for additional expenses, or request a delivery extension. List all items, even if you do not believe the request would be valid.
17. Indicate what QATAP Product Quality Level this jacket is. None indicates no level, such as marginally punched forms.
18. Use this space for continuation or additional comments. Positive and negative comments are acceptable. Please be specific.

**Thank you for taking the time to fill out this inspection report.  
This information will help the Government Publishing Office better serve your agency's printing needs.**

18a. Continuation (Item No. \_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Press Sheet Inspection Glossary

The following glossary contains PSI-related terms that are used in this publication, and defines them as they relate to GPO press sheet inspections. This list is provided for informational purposes only.

For legal definitions of terms relating directly to QATAP, see GPO publication 310.1, *GPO Contract Terms (Quality Assurance Through Attributes Program)*.

**Approved Sheet** *See OK'd Press Sheet.*

---

**AR** An abbreviation for “agency representative.” The agency person attending the press sheet inspection.

---

**Author's Alterations (AA's)** Changes to the Government-furnished material (GFM) or proofs made by the originator, after work has been started by the contractor. These are not corrections due to printer's errors (PE's). AA's are chargeable and may require changes to the shipping or delivery schedule.

---

**Blanket** In offset lithography, a sheet of rubber or similar material, clamped around a cylinder, which transfers the image from the plate to the paper.

---

**Built Process Color** A color made by using tint screens of two or more of the four colors of ink used in process color printing. (*See also Flat Color and Process Color.*)

---

**Camera Ready Copy** Any material ready for the printer's camera or scanner (e.g., typeset copy, photographs, illustrations, and mechanicals).

---

**CO** An abbreviation for “Contracting Officer.” Any person appointed with a warrant that has the authority to enter into, administer, and terminate contracts.

---

**Color Bar** A quality-control tool that uses blocks of ink and special targets printed in the non image area of a press sheet to help the printer evaluate and control ink film thickness, dot gain, trapping, slur, etc.

In process color work, the color bar shows each process color individually, some color combinations, and screen tints. In higher quality work, color bars are used on all jobs, even Single-color work.

---

**Cyan** One of the colors of ink used for process color printing. A light bluish color that reflects blue and green light and absorbs red light. (*See also Process Color.*)

---

**Densitometer** An instrument used to measure transmitted or reflected light (optical density). Some printers use a densitometer during press make ready to measure the optical density of ink on the press sheet. Many densitometers can also use ink density values to calculate process color properties, such as dot gain and hue error.

---

**Departmental Random Copies (Blue Label Copies)** Copies for departmental use that are certified by the contractor as having been selected at random from the production lot—not to be confused with separate (occasionally requested) quality assurance random copies, supplied directly to GPO.

Departmental random copies are part of the agency's order and should be used last. If there is a question of the order's having met specifications (including QATAP requirements), this box of copies must be sent UNOPENED to GPO, along with the complaint. Departmental

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random copies are packed in a separate box, with a blue label used to identify them; therefore, they are sometimes referred to as "Blue Label Copies."

---

**Electronic File** A file containing digitized graphic and/or text information arranged in a specific file format

---

**Flat Color** A printed solid color or tint that is the actual color of the ink used, and not color created (visually) from two or more process ink colors. Flat colors can be identified by the use of various commercial identification systems (for example, PANTONE Color No. 186™ which is a flag like red color; in the Toyo Color Finder System, a similar red would be identified as CF0045). (See also **Built-Process Color**.)

---

**Form** *See* **Press Form**.

---

**Form-to-Form Color** Color that must match from one press form to another. For example, a photograph or design element that will cross a page break or bind and is printed as two separate images (on two sides of one press sheet, or on two different press sheets).

---

**Four-Color Process** *See* **Process Color**.

---

**Gear Streaks** Parallel streaks or slurs across the sheet at the same interval as gear teeth on a cylinder. A term improperly applied to all parallel streaks.

---

**Ghost Image** An undesired weak image that appears on a press sheet where there is no corresponding image on the file. A ghost image may be caused by ink or water or paper chemistry. However, one type of ghost (an ink starvation ghost) is caused by the design of the printed piece itself.

An undesired ghost image should not be confused with a planned "ghost halftone," which is a halftone that intentionally prints with less density than a "normal" halftone. (See also **In-Line Situation**.)

---

**Halftone** The gradation of tone achieved by a large number of dots of varying size. All continuous tone photographs and some illustrations must be converted to halftones in order to be printed by offset lithography.

The quality of reproduction of single color halftones is dealt with in QATAP through requirements for highlight, mid-tone, and shadow reproduction.

---

**Highlights** The lightest areas in a halftone reproduction. They will contain dots of the smallest size, or no dots at all.

---

**In-Line Situation** An "ink on press" condition that can cause incorrect color matching. In an in-line situation, one image located directly in the path of the ink flow may adversely cause ink-related problems, such as mismatching of colors, for images located behind it in the ink flow.

---

**Loupe** A magnifying glass used during a press sheet inspection to check register and other printing attributes.

---

**Magenta** One of the colors of ink used for four-color process printing. Magenta reflects blue and red light, and absorbs green light. (See also **Process Color**.)

**Make ready** The process of preparing a machine to perform the function for which it was designed. Press make ready includes loading and adjusting paper, plates, and ink and water. It also includes setting register between colors and obtaining ink density to match the color standard (i.e., an OK'd proof, a supplied sample, or original copy).

---

**Masking** Protecting or blocking out parts of the copy or negative.

---

**Mid-tone** The tonal range of a halftone between the highlights and the shadows. (See also **Highlights and Shadows**.)

---

**Negative** A photographic image in reverse shading from the original image on the camera-ready copy (light is dark, dark is light). The opposite of a negative image is a positive image.

---

**Offset Lithography** A printing process in which an inked impression from a smooth printing plate is first made on a blanket cylinder and then transferred to the paper being printed. (See also **Sheet-Fed Press** and **Web Press**.)

**OK'd Press Sheet** A printed sheet that is approved at the press sheet inspection. Also known as an approved sheet. (See also **Specified Standard**.)

---

**Prepress Proof** A "model" of the printed piece produced from camera copy or digital information before plates are made. (See also **Proof** and **Press Proof**.)

---

**Press Check** See **Press Sheet Inspection**.

---

**Press Form** For a sheet-fed press all of the image being printed on one side of a sheet, in one pass. (See also **Signature**.)

---

**Press Proof** An ink-on-paper sample made on a printing press and then submitted to the client for comment and approval.

Press proofs are made using the ink and stock that will be used during production. They also differ from the sheets examined during a press sheet inspection in that the client is not present during press proofing, nor is the job intended to be run during press proofing.

Press proofs are most often made as progressive proofs, which show the image printing in each color individually and then in various combinations of the process colors. (See also **Proof** and **Prepress Proof**.)

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**Press Pull** One sheet from a batch of sheets printed after press changes - to arrive at an approved sheet. (See also **Press Form**.)

---

**Press Sheet Approval** See **Press Sheet Inspection**.

---

**Press Sheet Inspection (PSI)** Examination and approval of a press sheet (at the printing plant) after press make ready and before running, in order to set specific production standards.

A PSI is not a quality monitoring of the entire run and therefore does not constitute approval of the entire run. (See also **OK'd Press Sheet**.)

---

**Process Color** Color reproduction using the four process colors of ink (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black) to simulate full color as the human eye sees it. Also known as four-color process. (See also **Separations**.)

---

**Progressive Proof (Prog)** See **Press Proof**.

**Proof** For press sheet inspection purposes, a “model” (made from digital data, positive or negative film, or plates) that reflects what the production press is expected to produce and provides a standard (intermediate or final) for the production pressroom to match. In process color printing, it is essential that the colors on the proof be achievable by the press. (See also **Prepress Proof and Press Proof**.)

---

**PSI** *See* **Press Sheet Inspection**.

---

**QATAP** An acronym for GPO’s Quality Assurance Through Attributes Program, which is used for specifying and evaluating the quality of printing, binding, and related services purchased by GPO.

QATAP has five Product Quality Levels (PQL’s), from Level I, the highest, to Level V, the lowest. The PQL relates to the amount of acceptable variation from standards.

QATAP Attributes Measurable characteristics of a printed product. QATAP specifies standards and acceptable production tolerances for its attributes.

---

**Quality Assurance Random Copies** Copies of the product that are shipped by the contractor directly to GPO’s Quality Control for Procured Printing Section for a QATAP inspection-as differentiated from departmental random copies.

Quality Assurance random copies are paid for by GPO. They are selected at random, and certified as such, by the contractor. (See also **Departmental Random Copies**.)

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**Register** The fitting-together (alignment) of two or more images. QATAP Attribute P-4.

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**Reverse** An image that is defined by the ink surrounding it, rather than printed with ink itself.

---

**Ruled-Out Sheet** A flat proof or printed press form that has been measured and ruled to show where it will be folded or trimmed.

---

**Screen Tint** A pattern of dots of equal size that creates an even tone of a color, lighter than the solid color of the ink used. Tint values range from 1% (lightest) to 99% (darkest), and are usually designated in 10% increments. (See also **Flat Color**.)

---

**Screen Tint Comparator** A printed sheet of film or paper used as a standard to judge screen tint values.

---

**Separations** The films (positive or negative) used for four-color process printing. Each film carries densities representing values of one of the four subtractive colors of ink (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black) that are used to simulate full-color originals. (See also **Process Color**.)

---

**Shadows** The darkest areas in a halftone reproduction. They contain dots of the largest size. (See also **Highlights and Mid-tone**.)

---

**Sheet-Fed Press** A press that prints on individual sheets of paper rather than on rolls of paper. (See also **Web Press**.)

---

**Signature** A printed sheet containing four pages, or multiples of four pages, folded and numbered to form one unit of a pamphlet or book. (See also **Press Form**.)

---

**Specified Standard** A pre-identified physical object (for example, electronic media, camera-ready copy, film, an OK'd proof, or an OK'd press sheet), which is the basis of comparison for a QATAP attribute, instead of a comparison with an exact or nominal value.

---

**Standard Viewing Conditions** A set of standards established by the International Standard Organization (ISO) for light intensity, color of light (5,000 degrees Kelvin), and color of surrounding area, etc., In order to ensure that color comparisons are valid. These standards are called for in QATAP when viewing color originals, proofs, and press sheets.

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**Stock** Paper or other substrate used for printing.

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**Stripping** In offset lithography, the placing of negative (or positive) film(s) on a carrier sheet (a flat) in the proper position for making plates or prints.

---

**Trapping** In presswork, the ability of one ink to accept another ink printed over it.

However, this term is also popularly used in a stripping context to indicate the intentional, slight overlapping of two adjacent images that will print in different colors.

This overlapping of images is done in order to avoid a paper-colored gap (caused by a registration shift), between images during printing. Such an overlap will show in some proofs, but, if done correctly, will not be apparent in the final printed product. In lithographic terminology, such overlapping is referred to as image "chokes" and "spreads."

---

**Type Quality and Uniformity** Printing characteristics that include type density, type dimension, and broken characters. QATAP Attribute P-7.

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**Waived PSI** A press sheet inspection, requested in specifications, which GPO later officially cancels. The contractor then proceeds as if the PSI had not been requested.

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**Web Press** A press that prints on a continuous roll of paper rather than on individual sheets. (See also **Sheet-Fed Press**.)



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