



mohawk

# Designing with Watermarks

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Watermarks have been a hallmark of high-quality papers since the 13th century. Originally developed as the papermaker's mark, they have been used to verify the authenticity of a document and have become symbols of authority, substance and craftsmanship in paper. Today, watermarks in writing papers represent prestige and professionalism.

Modern branded writing papers usually have the paper's name as the watermark, These marks also indicate the amount of cotton and recycled fiber in the sheet. In addition to mill-branded watermarks, customized watermarks are made with a company's name or logo. Known as private watermarks, these are the ultimate in prestige and authenticity for business documents.

## Details

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### HOW WATERMARKS ARE MADE

A watermark is an unalterable part of the paper, created in the paper-making process. Wordmarks or illustrations are cast or hand-formed in brass and attached to the dandy roll on the paper machine. The dandy roll smooths out the top of the sheet while pressing the watermark design into the wet fibers. The paper at this point is about 85% water and the fibers can be shifted and relocated without changing the character or strength of the sheet. As the sheet goes through the drying process, the watermark becomes a permanent part of the paper.

### WATERMARK PLACEMENT

There are various ways the watermark can be positioned on an individual sheet of stationery.

**Random/Non-Localized:** Each sheet will contain a complete watermark, but the position will not be consistent. In some sheets, the mark may even be cut off.

**Localized:** Mark always appears in the specified position on the sheet of stationery. Traditionally, these marks are centered within the lower 2/3 of the stationery sheet to make sure they will not be covered by the printed letterhead. Tolerances for localized marks are +/- .5" (13mm) top to bottom and left to right of the specified location.

**Centralized:** Each sheet of stationery will contain one full watermark with the possibility that the mark will be cut at the top and bottom of a sheet. Tolerances for centralized marks are +/- .5" (13mm) left to right, but the mark will move top to bottom vertically in the sheet.

**Repeating/Multiple:** Two or more marks appear on each sheet. Dandy rolls built for multiple marks are typically more expensive than single mark dandy rolls.



Random



Localized



Centralized



Repeating

### DETAILS TO CONSIDER

When printing watermarked paper, be sure the watermark is right-reading facing up. Check that the watermark is not interfering with large printing solids and/or graphics. Confirm the orientation of the watermark/grain direction in the pre-flight process, to insure that the printer's imposition aligns properly to the sheet.

### GRAIN DIRECTION AND WATERMARK CONFIGURATIONS

Understanding the relationship between watermark configurations and grain direction can significantly enhance the quality of the final product. If the final letterhead is grain long, it will feel more substantial and rigid in the hand. However, art with a critica registration may require a 4-up or 8-up grain long pressform, yielding a grain short letterhead. If the printed letterhead will be imprinted on a small press or copier, the needs for proper grain orientation should be considered and the printer should be consulted.

**Head-to-Foot:** The head (or top of the watermark on a master sheet is aligned to the bottom, or foot, of the watermark above it on a sheet. Head-to-foot watermarks run perpendicular to the paper grain. These master sheets are referred to cross grain, head-to-foot. Random watermarks will drift from the bottom edge to the top edge in succeeding letterheads.

**Head-to-Head:** The watermarks on a master sheet are head-to-head, with the marks on one side of the sheet reading properly, and the marks on the other half reading upside down. Head-to-head watermarks run parallel to the paper grain and these sheets are referred to as long grain/head-to head. Random watermarks will drift from the right-hand side of the letterhead to the left-hand side in succeeding letterheads.

### PRIVATE WATERMARKS

A private watermark is an exclusive design embedded into the paper for specific client. These private watermarks add security, distinction and elegance to corporate stationery. Mohawk provides both traditional watermarked stationery as well as or innovative DigitalMark process, which is suitable for smaller print runs.

# Designing with Watermarks

## Details Continued

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### TYPES OF WATERMARKS

Wire marks are the most common. These marks appear lighter than the surrounding paper. Shaded marks appear darker. Combination marks combine elements of both techniques. Designers creating private watermarks should know that wire marks are more suitable for thin lines, detailed artwork and lettering, while shaded marks are used to achieve heavier lines. Bold type forms and to fill larger areas. Keep in mind that designs with fine lines and small negative spaces aren't suitable for watermarking.



Wire



Shaded



Combination

### Head-to-Foot Press Sheet



Head-to-Foot



### Head-to-Head Press Sheet



Head-to-Head

### MOHAWK WATERMARKS

*Strathmore*  
PURE COTTON

Strathmore Pure Cotton Wove

*Strathmore*  
WRITING 25% COTTON

Strathmore Writing Laid  
Strathmore Writing Wove  
(All shades except Recycled  
Bright White)

*Strathmore*  
WRITING 25% COTTON  
RECYCLED

Strathmore Writing Wove  
(Recycled Bright White only)

*Strathmore*

Strathmore Cambric  
Strathmore Enhance  
Strathmore Smooth  
Strathmore Wove

v|i|a

Via Linen  
Via Smooth

v|i|a  
25% COTTON  
RECYCLED

Via 25% Cotton Light Cockle  
Via 25% Cotton Smooth

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