The PRINTER'S HELPER

For Those Who Print For Others or For Themselves

Getting ready for Spring—1840

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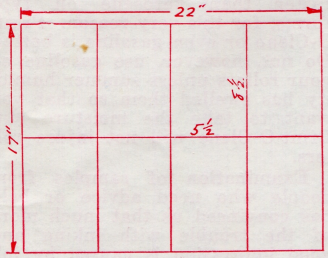
THE KELSEY COMPANY - Meriden, Connecticut 06450

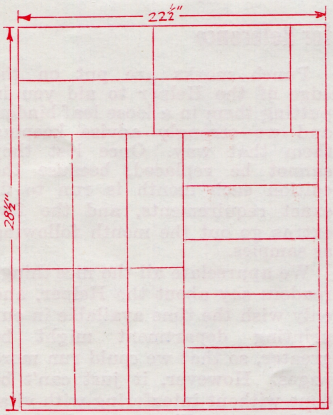
Single orders for $40 or more keep the Helper coming at least a year.

Figuring the Number of Small Sheets Which Can Be Cut From a Larger One

A reader recently suggested that we print charts showing the number of pieces of any given size which may be cut from the large sheets of paper or cardboard. Since the number of different sizes on which a printer might want that information is infinite— both as to the full size sheets and the smaller ones which may be cut from them, we are afraid no charts for which we have space would satisfy everybody, but a few hints on the subject may help.



HOW TO CUT SIZE 5½ X 8½ OUT OF A SHEET OF PAPER SIZE 17"X22"



CUTTING 15 PIECES OF SIZE 4"X10" OUT OF A SHEET, SIZE 22½"X 28½"

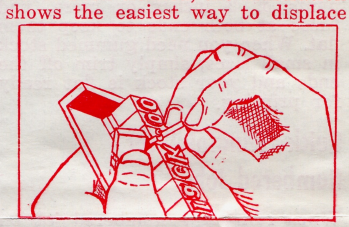
In the first place, there are standard cut sizes listed in the catalog, most of which are planned to get as many pieces out as possible with a minimum of waste, or none at all. For example, 8½ x 11 stationery can be cut from 17 x 22 with no loss, the 8½ going into 17 twice, and the 11 in 22 twice, or four to the full size sheet. If a slightly smaller sheet is wanted, no more can be gotten out, and the overage would be waste. 5½ x 8½, being half of 8½ x 11 will figure at eight to the big sheet, and so on. One important point should be remembered — a satisfactory edge requires trimming the paper again after it has been cut, and this should be allowed for on special sizes. Most stock papers— 8½ x 11, and such are cut 1/32" undersize, that amount being what is necessary to give them the final trim, and to square the sheet up. Such trimming is doubly necessary on cardboard if a nice smooth edge is to result.

The commonest size in book paper is 25 x 38, which gives 9 x 12 6 x 9, and 4½ x 6 with very little waste. Most cover stocks are listed at 20 x 26, which also cuts to 9 x 12 reasonably well, with a little margin for those who may wish the cover pages to be cut larger than the inside ones. Some papers come normally in 24 x 36 (News White, for instance) which is another snug fit for 9 x 12.

Where possible it is best to adopt work either to stock sizes or to ones which will cut with as little offcut (waste) as possible. A recent national survey of printing indicates that neither printers nor their customers are taking advantage of stock sizes as much as they might, and that as a result an enormous amount of paper is wasted through using uneconomical dimensions. Printers can afford to quote better prices if they will not only use the sizes which cut well but educate their customers to consult with them on the subject before they go so far that they can't change if it is advisable.

Changing the Spacing of a Line

This may be old hat to most printers, but for those who have never been trained, the illustration shows the easiest way to displace



Substituting one space for another size

a space in a line with a wider or narrower one. Your left hand prevents the line from buckling, while the right pushes out the old space and inserts the new. More over the type specimens in the catalog will show that there are big and small, tall and fat letters. Another "but" is the copy or work to be set. If it is filled with long, technical words, or if the writer is in the habit of using long words, an inch of type space will hold fewer of them. The only guiding post usable must assume that, the work in hand is "straight composition," without a lot of short paragraphs, or conversational quotations.

Brass Rule And Metal Rule

You have probably noticed that in the plain face rule there is a choice of metal and brass. Brass is considerably harder than the type metal, and will therefore last longer. Because of the rule face, and for various other technical reasons, metal rule and metal type, both made of the same material, will not wear down equally soon. The type will outlast the rule. This is not to say that if you use them both in the same form, that the rule will not last out the job. It means that while you will, after the job is done, put the type in the case and have it to use again, the rule may not be in quite good enough condition for another job.

Brass rule, will, if anything, outlast the type, and may be used over and over again. Therefore, in deciding which to use, give due weight to conditions. If you expect to use the rule over and over again, buy brass. If long life is not a consideration, use metal. A little of each on hand will prove very handy.

WITH OUR

READERS

Helpful Hints

Save Gummed Stock Remnants

When cutting gummed stock remnants of 2 inches or more, pad these at both ends to keep them flat. When you need gummed stock in small sizes, simply trim off the ends and your stock is flat ready for printing.

Quick "Blindfold" for Numbered Jobs

When running a numbered job on a press where the "No." is to be blinded out, try ½ inch wide cellophane tape. Tie strings on the grippers above and below numbering machines, then stretch tape from one string to the other over the "No." Ink will not adhere, and I have made as many as 50,000 impressions without changing the tape.

Speeds Reglet Distribution

To speed up distribution of reglets, slugs, and leads, cut a piece of heavy white index bristol to the exact inside dimensions of the galley (for example, a 9 x 13 inch size). Draw parallel lines across the longest dimension spaced one pica apart in India ink — the whole width of the galley. On every five-pica rule, mark 5-10-15-20-25, etc., three times across. Then all the boy has to do is line up his reglets, slugs, and leads (and even rules), and he can immediately see what the size is without using a pica gauge. Use varnish to protect the surface of the index bristol. Rubber cement will keep the board in place.

Replaces Side Guide

This suggestion works well when printing a form that is to bleed off the sheet on a platen press, and there is danger of the metal side guide on the tympan smashing the form. Fold a piece of paper and paste it on the tympan replacing the side guide.

No Scab Ink Cans

The oil paper cover found at the top of most new cans of ink usually tears and cannot be replaced. Yet something is needed to cover the unused ink to prevent it from scabbing. Make a practical cover by simply cutting one out of tympan paper with your make-ready knife.

Printing Large Sheets on Small Presses

A reader, in renewing his subscription to the Helper, says, "Please run an article on printing large sheets on a small machine."

This is not a new subject, and in addition to occasional articles, we have frequently printed contributions from readers.

The questions and the suggestions both center around ways for holding the sheets in the press and gauging them properly. It is perfectly possible to do both. Naturally, it is more convenient to have a press with a platen approximately the size of the sheet or larger, but it is not essential. Stationery, business and personal cards, greeting cards, and the like can be handled satisfactorily on a 3 x 5 press, but if the majority of your work calls for a sheet larger than 6 x 7, and your machine is smaller than 5 x 8, you had best save for the bigger machine. We say this because firms making a specialty of greeting card imprinting — which only requires a single line of type, but which must be worked on a cost paring basis — have found from experience that the 5 x 8 press is the most economical machine to buy, and operate batteries of them.

However, for those with the problem of using present equipment still before them, there are ways. A helpful way of bolstering up a sheet which sticks out on the sides is to use a piece of stiff cardboard on the tympan which projects a little beyond the sheet on each side. You can get your side gauge in the cardboard as well. Some printers form up a piece of wire in a loop to hold up the stock, others use celluloid or pressboard in place of the cardboard before mentioned.

To give additional room at the bottom, people have placed thin brass or copper under the platen band and used that for the bottom gauges. Others fit under the band and bend it down a little to get additional space. One man wrote that he used old, single edge razor blades under the band for gauges.

When the sheet gives trouble at the top, brass or copper strips may be formed up to give the paper something to rest against. We recall one man who took care of both sides and the top with a very well made auxiliary platen which he built and fitted around the top and sides of the smaller one on the machine. It was quickly removable when not needed.

Another variation of the same idea on the part of one reader was the making of two ell-shaped pieces of metal which were slotted and one mounted on each side of the platen. The slots enabled the screws which held the pieces to be loosened and the strips slid in and out on either side as required.

Rubber Bands Around Forms

This is not a new idea, and we have published it before, but a reader reminds us that a supply of heavy rubber bands of various sizes is very handy for tying up forms instead of string, and recommends that three be used per form. This reflects the importance of getting enough tension on the form so you don't lose part of it when you pick it up. That's the main thing, whether you use string or rubber bands.

Seconds The Motion

One of our readers, having seen in a recent issue the remarks on the importance of either letting cleaning solution evaporate or drying it up in some other way before the ink rollers pass over the form, writes:

"You certainly are right about the trouble caused by unevaporated cleaners. I use kerosene for all cleaning and find that even using slugs too soon after they have been taken from a freshly cleaned form will cause no end of trouble in the kerosene creeping down the type and diluting the ink. In printing forms where frequent changes are required, I change as much of the type, leads, slugs, and furniture as possible each time."

We strongly recommend using something that will evaporate faster than kerosene on type forms, for this very reason. Print-O-Clene or even gasoline is better. Do not, however, use gasoline on your rollers unless summer humidity has swelled them so that you want to take the moisture out. Print-O-Clene will not injure rollers.

Examination of samples from people who need advice or help has convinced us that much more of the trouble with inking and good impression is caused by ink dilution than is commonly realized.

File Your Helpers for Reference

Punch marks are put on the edge of the Helper to aid you in putting them in a loose leaf binder, and we strongly advise keeping them that way. Once lost they cannot be replaced, because the edition each month is run to fit exact requirements, and the few extras go out the month following as samples.

We appreciate all the nice things readers say about the Helper, and only wish the time available in our printing department might be greater, so that we could run more pages. However, it just can't be done without interfering with vital work, so we will try to make up in quality for the lack of quantity.