

• Design for Open Making •





Design for Open Making is a term we use to describe the principles, values, considerations and standards that should influence ones design process. We as Opendesk, want to be as unbiased as possible, whilst providing the resources and information to educate our growing community of creative followers in the principles of 'good' design for Open Making. This guide is our first designer resource pack. Consider it version 1 and an open conversation. Feedback from you can helps us make it better! We have compiled all the design information, experience and insights we have gained since the founding of Opendesk, and shared it publicly in the form of this guide. Why have we done this? To better serve our community of independent designer and creative boffs.

Our knowledge, becomes yours!

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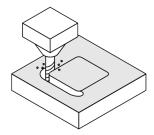
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Capabilities

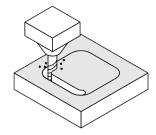
cut types

The capabilities of Digital fabrication tools, namely CNC routing, impose boundaries on ones design approach. It is essential to find ways to stay within these boundaries whilst allowing your design creativity to flourish. Listed below is a selection of common cut types you will find in Opendesk hosted design files. This is intended to give a broad overview of CNC routing and help direct design outcomes. Refer to this section alongside the 'standards, layer naming' conventions section to understand how a cut type is indicated in your design drawing.



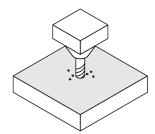
01 cut-outside-line

Tool cuts through sheet material, running along the outside of a closed vector.



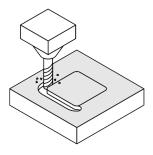
02 cut-inside-line

Tool cuts through sheet material, running along the inside of a closed vector.



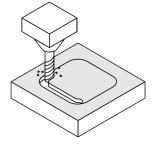
03 hole

Tool finds centre point of closed circle vector and drills to desired depth at specified diameter.



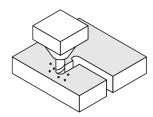
04 pocket-outside-line

Tool pockets to specified depth through sheet material, milling area outside closed vector.



05 pocket-inside-line

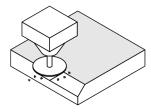
Tool pockets to specified depth through sheet material, milling area inside closed vector.



06 dog-bones*

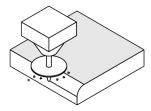
Tool cannot cut sharp inside corners and instead must leave a semi-circle, matching the diameter of the tool.

*more on 'capabilities, dog-bones'.



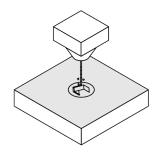
07 chamfer-online

Chamfer tool mills to desired depth and runs along an open or closed vector line, leaving a 45 degree chamfer at desired depth.



08 fillet-online

Fillet tool mills to desired depth and runs along an open or closed vector line, leaving a rounded edge at desired radius.



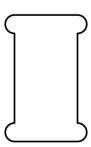
09 engrave-online

Tool of smaller diameter mills to shallow depth and follows open or closed vector lines. Often produced with a smaller tool bit (1mm / 2mm).

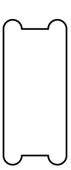


Capabilities dog-bones

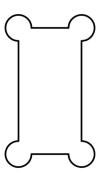
CNC routing has some ground rules. Tool bits used to cut shapes from sheet material will be round and spin axially. Therefore it is not possible to cut sharp inside corners. It is necessary to place round semi-circles on inside corners. They are commonly called dog-bones. Ask yourself - limitation or possibility? Many designers take pride stylising their own dog-bones. Illustrated below is a selection of dog-bones commonly found in Opendesk hosted designs.



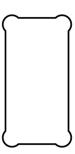




02 A simple dog-bone style, popular on concealed parts.



03 A more eccentric dog-bone style and a great way to celebrate them as a design feature.



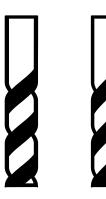
04 A more minimal dog-bone style, popular on visible faces where a larger dog-bone type **01** / **02** / **03** would be visually disruptive.

*The diameter of a dog-bone must match the diameter of the tool used to cut a specific object / tool path.



Capabilities tool pallet

Whilst there are many different tool types, only a smaller subset consistently appear in workshops around the world. When designing your furniture piece, consider the tools a maker will need to produce every detail. Consider universal make-ability and its associated principles / values. Below is a list of tool bits that are regularly used on Opendesk hosted designs. Don't worry about the detail of the tool, such as flute type, down cut/ up cut. What's important is a general understanding of the tools, particularly diameter, the type of applications they have and how this relates to a design drawing.



01 6mm / 8mm tool

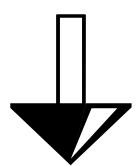
The tool size used for cuts and pockets will reflect on the diameter of the dog-bones* in the design drawing. As a rule of thumb, tool bits can cut to a depth of X3 their diameter. Consider this when selecting a sheet thickness.

Opendesk recommends using an 8mm tool, unless the designed object is small, where a 6mm tool may be more appropriate.



02 1mm / 2mm tool

These tools are typically used for engraving / fine details. They are delicate and should go no deeper than 3mm. Dog-bone* diameters can be much smaller as a result of the smaller tool diameter.



03 chamfer tool 45 deg.

The chamfer tool will give a consistent 45 degree angle bevel to the edge of a component. The chamfer tool should go no deeper than the thickness of the material into which it is cutting.



04 fillet tool

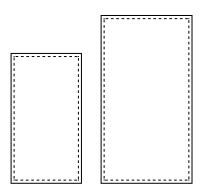
The fillet tool will give a consistent radius to the edge of a component. The fillet tool should go no deeper than 6mm. It is commonly used to softly round the edges of components such as table tops.

This is information should not be taken as a technical specification for tool bits.
*Dog-bones explained in section - 'capabilities, dog-bones'.



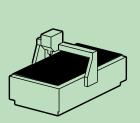
design considerations

New design considerations come into play when designing for digital fabrication. Manufacturing across a distributed network of independent makers imposes new social boundaries and considerations. A designed object could be made by a fabricator on the other side of the world. We call this design for Universal make-ability and it urges design considerations around the principles of accessibility and inclusivity. In short, simple solutions are often the best. Listed below are some important considerations to take into account when designing for Open Making.



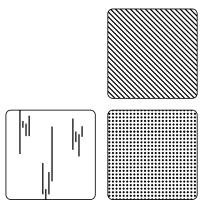
01 sheet size

Consider the size of the components that will form your furniture piece and choose a standard sheet material accordingly. 2440mm x 1220mm is the most common sheet size. Most Opendesk hosted designs nest comfortably onto this sheet size. Some larger items require a 3050mm x 1525mm sheet. They are not as widely available and less fabricators can process sheets of this size as they require larger machines. Evaluate the impact this consideration has on universal make-ability.



02 universal make-ability

This consideration underpins every other design consideration in this section. A designed object could be made by a fabricator on the other side of the world. Complex designs that use material / hardware of limited availability may alienate a large number of fabricators. Its less matter of fact and more focused on principles and values of openness, accessibility and inclusivity. This should influence your design thinking. The short but sweet response to this is - often, the simplest solutions are the best solutions and the most universally makable.



03 material

There are many sheet materials available including plywood of various types and levels of quality, laminated plywoods, and other materials such as Valcromat and Corian. You will notice almost all Opendesk hosted designs are showcased in Birch faced plywood. This is in the interests of universal make-ability. Birch faced plywood is widely available across multiple continents. This is not to say we only accept Birch faced plywood. We are expanding our library to include laminates and other veneered plywoods and want to become more experimental.



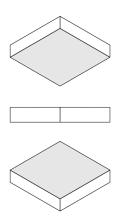
04 sheet thickness

There are many sheet thickness's available. They differ according to the material type but tend to be consistent across similar materials such as plywood. As an example, Birch face plywood is commonly available in metric thickness's of 6mm, 12mm, 18mm, 24mm. Consider the thickness of your material in line with the function of your furniture. Generally speaking, 18mm thickness is the most common and therefore the most universally available.



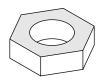
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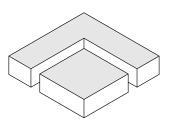
05 double sided cutting

It is possible to cut on both sides of a sheet material. This requires fabricators to flip a sheet and accurately re-locate it on the machine bed. Double sided cutting is a great way of adding detail and more complex junctions / joints, but adds to the end cost of the item. Evaluate the impact this consideration has on universal make-ability. Designs that require only single sided cutting are often regarded as more universally makable.



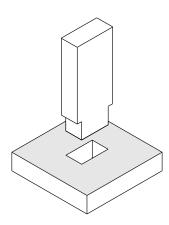
05 hardware

A smaller subset of Opendesk hosted designs incorporate hardware including (but not limited to) screws, threaded inserts and bolts. There is a huge selection of hardware available that can benefit the stability of a design. Consider universal make-ability. Hardware components often differ in size and features across different countries. Whilst hardware can result in a more sturdy end product, it will not necessarily be the most accessible / inclusive design. Opendesk is by no means against hardware. We are open to it. As a personal stand point, we are passionate about hardware-less products which we feel best celebrate values of openness, accessibility and inclusivity.



06 nesting

Material efficiency is an essential consideration for any designer looking to create a ethically mindful design. Designers often dedicate much of their attention to this consideration, as it is widely regarded as the most challenging. Your design process should be informed by the material from which it will be cut. The best designs, maximise material usage and leave the least possible waste material.



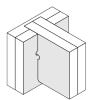
05 assembly

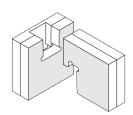
This consideration is often approached as an afterthought. The reality is, it should be baked into your design process. The best designs approach assembly as part and parcel of the product experience, not an irritating step to reach an end goal. Ever heard the phrase, 'its not about the destination, its the journey'. This is very relevant here. Consider the experience of assembling a design. How simple is the process, how intuitive and how enjoyable.



joints and features

Opendesk's current manufacturing capabilities namely CNC routing, have resulted in a diverse array of joints and features. Some reference traditional wood joints and re-master them for digital fabrication. The 12 joints featured in this section have be sourced from a number of designs currently hosted on Opendesk. To learn more about each example, download the cutting files for furniture listed in the "Features in" box. **Use these joints to inform / develop your own design.**

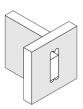


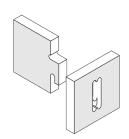


01 Beam joint

A temporary joint used to mount beams into vertical uprights such as a table leg. Illustrated with double laminated 18mm components.

Features in : Lean Desk, Slim Desk, Breakout Table

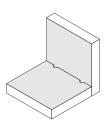


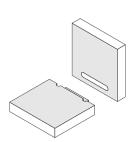


02 hook joint

A often used to mount beams into a vertical upright. Can be concealed if using double laminated material.

Features in : Divide, Kuka Chair



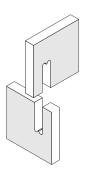


03 Hidden mortise and tenon

Used to join panels together at a 90 degree angles. Can be a permanent join if used with glue.

Features in : Pedestal, WikiBooth





04 Slotting joint

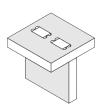
A simple joining solution for beams meeting at a right angle. Often combined with another joint to add rigidity.

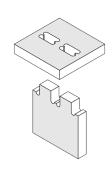
Features in : Layout Table, Lean Desk, Slim Desk, Valovi Chair



joints and features

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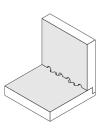


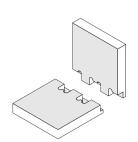


05 Throughole finger tenon joint

A simple but strong permanent join using teeth and through holes. Can be concealed by pocketing through holes and reducing height of teeth.

Features in : Unit Table

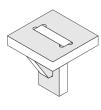


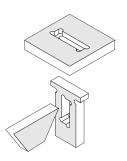


06 Hidden fingertip tenon joint

Commonly used when a user wishes to conceal joint details. Visible end grain is reduced. Provides a strong finish when glued.

Features in : Fin Lockers, Unit Table

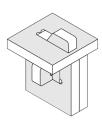


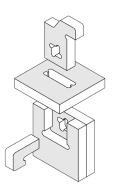


07 Wedge joint

A joint that creates tension as a wedge is crushed through a hole. Wedge will fatigue over time if furniture is regularly assembled / disassembled.

Features in : Cafe Table





08 E-clip locking joint

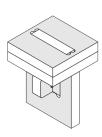
Originally designed as a locking mechanism for the Lean Desk. This joint is perfect for clamping horizontal surfaces to uprights such as legs.

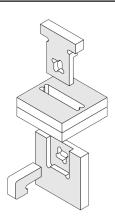
Features in : Lean Desk



joints and features

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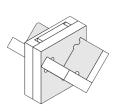


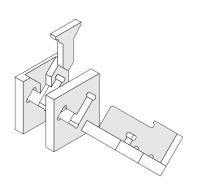


09 T-clip locking joint

Originally designed as a locking mechanism for the Lean Desk. Perfect for clamping horizontal surfaces to uprights such as legs.

Features in : Lean Desk

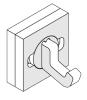


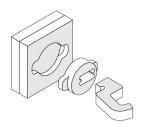


10 V-clip locking joint

Originally designed as a locking mechanism for the Lean Desk. Used to lock beams into vertical uprights such as table legs.

Features in : Lean Desk, Slim Desk, Breakout Table

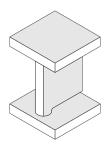


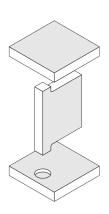


11 Key hole lock

A fun joint which can be used to add features such as hooks as illustrated here.

Features in : **Breakout Table**





12 Hinge joint

A simple CNC hinge solution which allows square teeth to rotate within circular pockets.

Features in : Pedestal, Fin Lockers



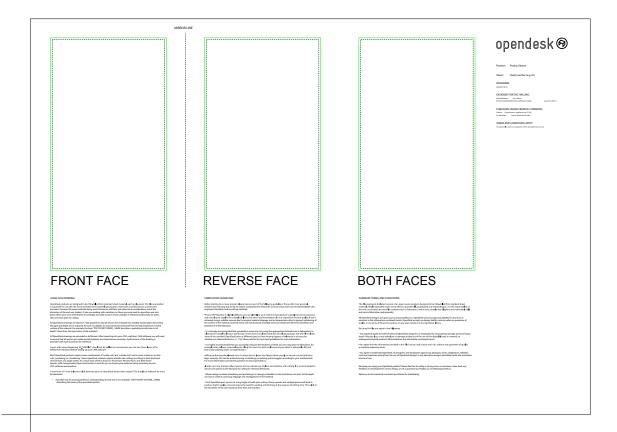
Opendesk drawing template

The Opendesk drawing template is designed to make it easier for designers to follow a set of conventions. These conventions are intended to bring consistency to design files, in the interest of better communication with makers. Our conventions, we hope, will make it easier of for makers to work with us, but more importantly, enjoy it!

opendesk design template



The Opendesk drawing template is shared publicly as a .dxf file, which is compatible with most CAD software packages.



01 Opendesk drawing template - overview

Our drawing template is designed to serve both designers and fabricators, making it easier to design, and interpret Opendesk hosted designs.

Contained in the template are 3 sheets. These will match the dimensions of the material from which your design will be cut (2440mm x 1220mm , 3050mm x 1525mm). These 3 sheets in-fact represent 1 sheet. Notice how the first sheet in the order of 3 is titled **FRONT FACE**. If your design requires only single sided cutting, your vectors will appear here. The second sheet, titled **REVERSE FACE**, is used to differentiate vectors that are cut on different faces of the sheet material. If your design requires double sided cutting, some of your vectors will need to be nested on the reverse face. The mirror line (located between sheet FRONT FACE, and sheet REVERSE FACE), is used to mimic the act of flipping the sheet on a machine, and allows the maker to see how vectors nested on separate faces relate to one another. The final sheet, titled **BOTH FACES**, is used to combined the vectors on FRONT FACE and REVERSE FACE and overlay them. This is used to show how the vectors relate to one another. If a design requires only single sided cutting i.e. cutting on the FRONT FACE only, the BOTH FACES sheet will only show the vectors on the FRONT FACE.

Additional information in the template, such as the text beneath the drawing area, is for the benefit fabricators and communicates information such as maker guidelines, terms of use, and how to use the drawing.



Opendesk drawing template

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opendesk information box



The information box contained in the design template .dxf file can be filled in as indicated below. Or it can be left blank and we will fill it in for you.

opendesk ©

Product: Product Name

Sheet: sheet number (e.g. 01)

DESIGNERS: Designer Name

DESIGNED FOR CNC-MILLING:

Sheet thickness: (e.g. 18mm)

Recommended drill bit (unless otherwise noted): (e.g. 6mm, 8mm)

PUBLISHED UNDER CREATIVE COMMONS:

Licence: License name / type here (e.g. CC-BY)
For full terms: Link to license terms (URL)

TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY:

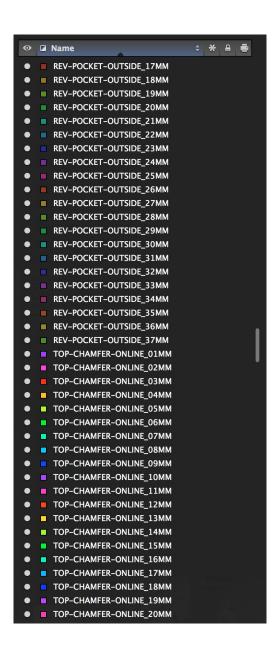
Saving this file serves as acceptance of the Opendesk terms of use

- Product name e.g. Slim desk
- Sheet number e.g. 01, 02, 03
- Name of designer / designers
- Thickness of sheet material e.g. 18mm, 24mm etc
- Recommended drill bit e.g. 8mm (refer to capabilities, tool pallet).
- Chosen design license e.g. CC BY (refer to licensing section)



Opendesk drawing template layer list

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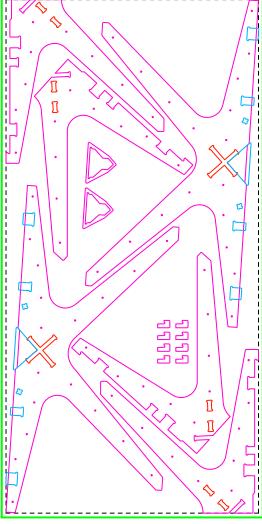


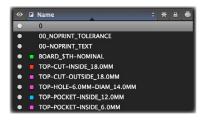
01 Opendesk drawing template - layer list

Contained in our template is a large layer list. This list enables you to select a layer from the list and easily associate the layer information with vectors in your design. Included in this list is the Opendesk layer naming convention and colour scheme. Just scroll, pick your layer and associate it with a vector in your drawing!



Designs hosted on Opendesk are very different and often authored by individuals on separate continents. Despite this, all designs adhere to the same drawing standards / conventions. Shown in this section is an example drawing from the Lean desk, the original Opendesk.





01 example drawing

Each vector line contained in the drawing is associated with a layer. A layer contains information including the Opendesk layer naming convention, and the Opendesk colour scheme. These layers tell a maker how to interpret vectors when programming his/her CNC machine. Refer to this section alongside the Opendesk drawing template .dxf file.





Colours are associated with every layer in the Opendesk drawing template .dxf and are consistent across every Opendesk hosted design.



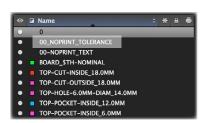
layer naming conventions

Working with multiple makes around the world has enabled us to create a set of drawing standards, informed by the people we are trying to serve - makers. These enable us to better design for those who will be manufacturing our designs. A single design file may have to be interpreted by makers on opposite sides of the world. These standards have been created in the interests of communication and consistency. Outlined in this section are essential standards that should be followed in the interests of Open making, and independent workshops around the world.

layer naming

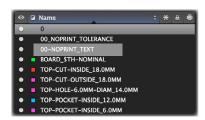


Layer names are applied to vector lines within your CAD programme that form your design (or) components of your design.



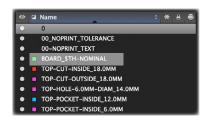
00_NOPRINT_TOLERANCE

This layer refers to the tolerance (20mm) which must be left around the perimeter of the sheet material.



00-NOPRINT_TEXT

This layer refers to all the information contained in the Opendesk template such as text, icons etc.



BOARD_\$TH-NOMINAL

This layer refers to the sheet material (either 2440mm x 1220mm or 3050 x 1525mm if standard size plywood). The **\$TH** field requires input as shown.

BOARD

Refers to the sheet material from which a design will be cut.

\$TH

Thickness of the sheet material to be entered by the designer e.g. 18mm

NOMINAL

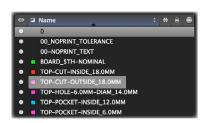
nominal - refers to the material thickness as sold by the supplier (not taking into account variation in actual thickness)



^{*}Note - the layer list as illustrated in this guide is taken from AutoCad and will look different in other software packages. The logic and general layout should be similar.

layer naming conventions

Working with multiple makes around the world has enabled us to create a set of drawing standards, informed by the people we are trying to serve - makers. These enable us to better design for those who will be manufacturing our designs. A single design file may have to be interpreted by makers on opposite sides of the world. These standards have been created in the interests of communication and consistency. Outlined in this section are some essential standards that should be followed in the interests of Open making, and independent workshops around the world.



TOP-CUT-OUTSIDE 18.00MM

This layer refers to a specific vector line and provides information on how it should be interpreted as a tool-path. All layers follow the same logic as outlined below, excluding holes which are explained separately.

TOP

Refers to which face of the material a vector line drawn is drawn. Options include: **TOP** or **REV** (reverse face). REV is used when double sided cutting is required.

CUT

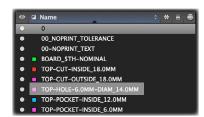
refers to the type of tool-path that should be applied to a vector line. Cut types include: CUT, POCKET, ENGRAVE, CHAMFER, FILLET.

OUTSIDE

refers to which side of a closed vector line a tool bit should run. Options include: **INSIDE**, **OUTSIDE**.

18.00MM

refers to the depth of the cut, pocket, engraving, chamfer, or fillet. Can be any metric value.



TOP-HOLE-6.00MM_DIAM_14.00MM

This layer refers to a specific closed circle vector line that should be interpreted as a hole which should be drilled. This is often used to identify dowel hole, for components that need to be glued together.

TOP

refers to which face of the material a vector line drawn is drawn. Options include: TOP or REV (reverse face). REV is used when double sided cutting is required.

HOLE

refers specifically to a closed circle vector which should be interpreted as a drill

6.00MM

refers to the required diameter of the hole. Can be any metric value.

DIAM

DIAM = diameter

14.00MM

refers to the depth of the hole. **Can be any metric value.**

*Note - the layer list as illustrated in this guide is taken from AutoCad and will look different in other software packages. The logic and general layout should be similar.



Standards good practice

Outlined here is a set of processes that we as Opendesk regularly use to inform our design process, the result being a better end product. These are by no means rules, every designer has their own process and way of doing things. This is our way of doing things. By sharing it, we hope it can help others without dictating a design work-flow.



01 3D model

Its always a good idea to test the construction of your design by 3D modelling it. This is a great way to check connections and the assembly process. We as Opendesk 3D model throughout our design process. Their are many CAD programmes you can 3D model in. SketchUp Make* is popular for its simple user interface and the availability of a free version.



01 model making

Get some cardboard or foam board and mock up your design at a smaller scale. Its a great way of testing the viability of your design. You will better understand proportions and fitness for purpose by doing this. Laser cutting is also a great way of making accurate scale models of your design.



01 prototype

Not everyone will have access to CNC routers so, whilst making a full size prototype is good practice, it is not essential. Its a great way to really interrogate your design and do some all important user testing. If prototyping is not possible, other techniques such as model making should be given more attention.



01 Sketching

It sounds obvious but its easy to undervalue sketching when designing for digital fabrication. Whilst CAD will likely dominate ones design process, try to keep sketching as this is where genuinely novel ideas are uncovered. The boundaries imposed by CAD software can limit ones creativity.



01 checks

Having a check protocol is an excellent way of confirming your design is mistake-free. See the standards checks section on the following page.



01 Nesting

The components that form a design should be nested as efficiently as possible to minimise material wastage. Refer to **Standards**, **checks** and **Considerations**, **nesting** for more information on the importance of this.



*SketchUp Make is available to download for free at: https://www.sketchup.com/ products/sketchup-make

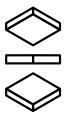


Outlined here is the check protocol we use at Opendesk to verify our design files are ready for manufacture / sharing. These are intended as guideline. We would suggest going through these check points once your have finished your design.



01 layers

Go through your layer list and check the layer information. Use the visibility button (common in most CAD software) to activate and deactivate layers individually and check vectors have been assigned to the correct layer.



02 double sided cutting

Designs that require double sided cutting should be checked to ensure vectors on the reverse face are positioned relevant to corresponding vectors on the top face.



03 faceting

Faceting is a common problem and often occurs when exporting your drawing. Some CAD software packages are unable to export curves. They interpret them as multiple straight lines. This is particularly apparent on dog-bones. Drawings that are faceted are generally deemed unsuitable for manufacturing. Its vital that drawings are checked for this.



04 exports

Export your final drawing as a .dxf file. Their are a number of format options within the .dxf file type. We recommend saving in **R12** and **autoCAD 2000/LT2000** format. Different software packages offer different options, some may not offer any options.



05 dog-bones

Check all inside corners have dogbones that matches the diameter of the tool that will be used during manufacturing.



06 polylines

The way polylines are drawn is very important. Polylines will run between points. Ensure that your lines are drawn correctly and do not contain extra points.



07 nesting

Components should be nested with a minimum gap of 20mm between parts. Its also important to leave a 20mm gap between components and the material edge as indicated by the tolerance line in the Opendesk drawing template.





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02 non-commercial

Not having a commercial objective; not intended to make a profit / commercial gain.



03 share-alike

Copies or adaptations of work must be released under the same terms / licence as the original.



04 no-derivatives

No derivative (something that is based on another source) works to be created and shared.



Licensing

creative commons license types

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