

A Guide to “Selecting Sheet Protectors”



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Selecting Sheet Protectors

There are many different sheet protectors available in the marketplace. Most users are only concerned with size and loading style. Will my paper fit and how is it loaded in the sheet protector?

Some of the various considerations include:

Material

What type of material is used in producing the Sheet Protector? The three most popular materials used are Polypropylene (Poly), Vinyl and Mylar (Polyester).

- **Polypropylene Sheet Protectors**

This is the most popular sheet protectors on the market today. Its biggest benefit of this material is that it produces “no copy transfer.” Polypropylene is considered to be an archival material offering acid-free, permanent storage for documents.

The “No copy transfer” means that there should be no danger of toners, colors, inks or other materials “lifting” off the stored pages and sticking to the sheet protector. Polypropylene is thinner and more durable—a polypropylene sheet protector can be constructed of a lighter gauge than Vinyl while maintaining the same durability and toughness.

- **Vinyl Sheet Protectors**

Prior to the introduction of polypropylene, this material was the most popular.

Users are attracted to Vinyl because of its traditional look and heavy feel. It is not as durable as Polypropylene, but its heavy feel gives you a sense of “weight” to a presentation.

- **Mylar**

This material is excellent for sheet protectors, however the major drawback is the cost of the product. The average price of this material is \$1.00 per page. With the high cost, this product is seldom used by consumers or businesses for normal sheet protection.

Finish

What type of finish is used in producing the Sheet Protector? The three most popular finishes used are Clear, Non-Glare or Reduced Glare.

- **Clear Sheet Protectors**

This is the most popular finish for sheet protectors on the market today. A Clear Finish provides a sharp and translucent finish to the user. When storing your documents with this finish, presentations in color seem brighter and bolder.

Every Manufacturer has their term for a Clear Sheet Protector. These will include Clear, Polished Clear, Diamond Clear or Crystal Clear. In general terms, they all mean the same and you will not be able to see a difference between manufacturers.

- **Non-Glare Sheet Protectors**

These sheet protectors are designed to eliminate glare on your documents. In order to have a true non-glare protector, manufacturers must use special chemical resins combined with an embossing pattern to absorb the reflected light.

Sheet Protectors with this finish are ideal for harsh lighting conditions. Consumers using them for presentations find them extremely useful as they typically hide fingerprints, which might show up on Clear Protectors.

- **Reduced Glare Sheet Protectors**

These sheet protectors eliminate most glare for users. They are not manufactured with the special resins that Non-Glare protectors utilize. Generally, only an embossing pattern is used which keeps the glare lower when viewed under moderate to bright light environments.

Since these Sheet Protectors don't have the chemical resins added, these should be priced below a true Non-Glare Sheet Protector.

Weight

One of your primary considerations when selecting a sheet protector will be the weight and durability of the product. It must fit your intended application. Sheet protectors come in a variety of weights including super heavy weight, heavy weight, standard weight, and economy weight.

- **Super Heavy Weight**
This weight offers the user the maximum durability and protection while preserving and protecting high use presentation documents. These are also used when the user wishes to store several document in a single sheet protector.
- **Heavy Weight**
These Sheet Protectors are used when you need more durability for the permanent storage of documents that are frequently used than Standard Weight items. This weight provides a good balance of durability with a reduced cost over the Super Heavy Weight products.
- **Standard Weight**
This weight is used primarily for documents which need to be stored, but frequently viewed. They typically will not last as long as the heavier products, especially when the documents that they protect are used daily. It is well worth the price difference to go to a heavier sheet protector, than have to replace it often.
- **Economy Weight (Light Weight)**
These sheet protectors are thin and do not provide the protection necessary for daily use of the documents. They are quite useful when you have a large number of documents to store in a three ring binder and you are concerned with the width.

Because of the thickness of this Sheet Protector, it may be more difficult to insert a document. This weight product will also tear more easily, especially if you need to pull a document out often.

Loading Style

The most popular Loading Style for Sheet Protectors is the Top Loading product. However your application may find a different style to be more beneficial. These styles include Top Loading, Side Loading, Center Loading, Rapid Loading or the Traditional Sheet Protector.

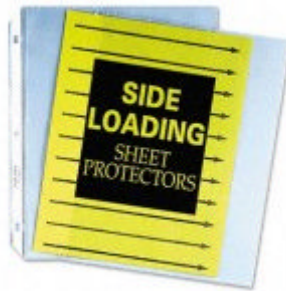
- **Top Loading**

This style of Sheet Protectors is the most common, because of their ease of use and protection value. These would be sealed on the sides and the bottom edge. Because the full document fits inside the Sheet Protector and a binding edge is added to the product, there is no need to punch holes.



- **Side Loading**

Less often used, however they provide a more secure storage of your documents. Since the top, right edge and bottom are sealed, the documents should not fall out easily. Because the full document fits inside the Sheet Protector and a binding edge is added to the product, there is no need to punch holes.



- **Center Loading**

This style provide a more secure storage of your documents which are typically used for panoramic fold out pages. Since the top, right edge and bottom are sealed, the documents should not fall out easily. A document is loaded from the center of the Sheet Protector. The typical size for this Protector will allow a user to store two 8.5x11 sheets or one 11x17 document



Because the full document fits inside the Sheet Protector and a binding edge is added to the product, there is no need to punch holes.

- **Rapid Loading**

A Rapid or Quick Loading Sheet Protector is only sealed on two sides. It offers much less protection, but its construction makes it extremely easy to insert or remove a document.



- **Traditional Sheet Protectors**

This product sometimes called Side Loading Sheet Protectors feature a sheet of black mounting paper which helps to give the document a more professional look. The top and bottom edge is open and a folded flap is placed on the binding edge. Because the document that is being stored in the Protector must be hole punched, their use in the marketplace has diminished.



Size

The most popular sizes in North America are made to store documents that are 8.5x11 (letter) or 8.5x14 (legal) sizes. For organizations that receive documents from other countries, you will find that the A4 size is required. Mini Binders (Executive style) uses a mini sheet protector, which holds an 8.5x5.5 document.



Capacity

Most sheet protectors will typically hold a few sheets, especially the Super Heavy Weigh and Heavy Weight products. However some users require the storage of magazines or presentations in a three ring binder. For this use, we would recommend a High Capacity or Super Capacity model.

- High Capacity product should allow 50 pages to be stored
- Super Capacity product should allow 200 pages to be stored



Index Tabs

These products are a two in one item – sheet protector and an index tab. They are designed to work with Top Loading Sheet Protectors. The tabs are either clear or colored, depending upon the model that is purchased. You will find 5 or 8 as the number of tabs which are the most common per set.



Reinforcing Strips

The reinforcing strip is an added layer of material which adds extra strength to the sheet protector at the binder or rings. In most Sheet Protectors, this strip is white, but can be multi-colored to allow for ease of sorting when a large amount of documents are stored together in a binder.

Users that create scrapbooks prefer to find clear reinforcing strips. This does not distract the viewer of their design viewing a color which was not purposely placed on the document.

Colors

Over 99% of all Sheet Protectors sold are clear. Color Coding makes it easier to find documents in a binder, and some manufacturers will provide protectors in colors.



Colored Edges

Just like colors of the individual Sheet Protectors can be used to identify different sections of a presentation in a binder, you may find colored edges will work in a similar fashion.



Recycled Sheet Protectors

These Sheet Protectors are typically made from 70% pre-consumer recycled material.

Biodegradable Sheet Protectors

These Sheet Protectors are manufactured with an additive which makes them biodegradable within landfills.