

# Contour Cutting with SignLab 5.0 <sup>TM</sup>

## Preparing the Image

Before taking a printed image and cutting a contour around that image, a line path or contour has to be created first. This line will have special line color that you set when creating the contour. Once this color is set, SignLab will treat this line as the cut line and it will not be printed.

Vector graphic images are fairly simple. The difficulty lies when creating a contour around a bitmap image or a certain portion thereof. Therefore, it is important to prepare your image correctly.

### 1. Apply the registration marks

Once the graphic is complete and correctly sized, click on the shape tool and click on the *Multi-registration Mark* button.

Refer to *Chapter 2 Shapes Tool* in your SignLab Users Manual.

This will place a registration mark on the four corners of your object or image.



## Printing the image

### 2. Rip and Print

Under the *File* menu, click on *RIP and Print*

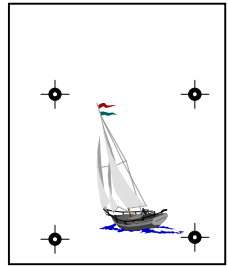
Click OK

SignLab will send the job to your printer. When it is finished you should have the image with four registration marks on the four corners. See the diagram below.

### 3. Remove the image from the printer.



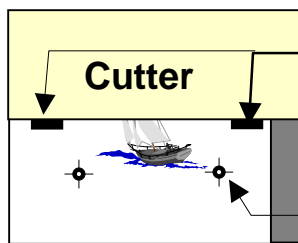
**Caution:** When removing the media from the printer, be sure to have plenty of media at the end of the image. If there is not enough, this could cause difficulties later when trying to cover the sensors.



Make sure there is plenty of media when removing media from the printer.

Print should have four registration points, one at each corner.

#### 4. Place the media with the image in the cutter.



Note: When placing the media in the cutter, be sure the **wheels** are outside the **image and registration points**.

#### 5. Latch the wheels onto the media and press ROLL-1.

This will find the lead edge and position the tool at that location.

## Creating the Contour

#### 6. Create the contour

There are two methods to contour an object.

**Method #1:** Select an object, and from the CUT menu, click CONTOUR CUT.

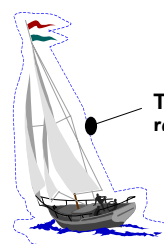
*This will automatically place a contour on the outside of the object at a pre-chosen distance. (See Chapter 10 Contour Cut of your SignLab Manual.)*

**Method #2:** This is when an object (vector only) has already been created and you want to convert the object into a contour line. This is accomplished by selecting an object and, from the CUT menu, pointing to MAKE CONTOUR CUT.

**Once the contour has been created, the image is ready to be printed.**



**Note:** When creating a contour, it will appear as a thin dashed line to distinguish it from other lines on the drawing. Be sure to make it a different color from all the other colors in the drawing).



The thin dashed line represents the contour.

## Contouring Bitmap Images

When creating a contour around a bitmap, only the image itself will be contoured. All white space will be ignored. If you want to create a contour around a specific element in the bitmap, you can use SignLab's tracing tools to create a vector around a specific element of the bitmap and then create a contour around the vector. (See *Chapter 10 Contour Cut of your SignLab Manual*)

## Aligning the Print and Cutting the Contour



**Tip:** Before plotting, the line needs to be isolate so **hold the ALT key** and click on the color of the contour line on the palette on the bottom of the screen.

### 7. Under the CUT pull down menu, click on plot.

The plot dialog box will appear.

**In order to cut the contour correctly, SignLab will need to know the location of three registration points:**

- The first registration mark is for determining the **location of the origin**.
- The second registration mark is for determining the **skew of the media**.
- The third registration mark will be for determining the **stretch of the material** that may have happened during the printing process.

### 8. Click on JOG.



***If you are communicating to the cutter via the serial port (COM1:, COM2:) continue below, otherwise start at step 14.***

### 9. Click the little radio button so that it appears next to the Plotter jog.

The first registration mark will start to blink.

### 10. Find the first registration point.

Move the pointer tool to the first registration mark, do so now *using the arrow keys on the cutter*.



**Note:** For the **FC4100 series** the light point will turn on. Other models should use a pen or the bombsight loupe.

**Click on GET POSITION.**

### 11. Find the SKEW registration point.

Place the radio button next to the skew point and, *using the arrow keys on the cutter*, move the point tool to the same registration mark that corresponds to the blinking mark on the screen.

Click on GET POSITION.

## 12. Find the 'stretch' registration point.

Place the radio button next to the third point (the point determining the stretch) and, *using the arrow keys on the cutter*, move the point tool to the same registration mark that corresponds to the blinking mark on the screen.

Click on GET POSITION.

*Tip: With the three points set, click on the WALK button. The tool will 'walk' on all the registration marks.*

## 13. If you have not done so already, place the cutter tool into the holder and click OK.

The software will now cut the contour.



*If you are communicating to the cutter via the parallel port (LPT1:, LPT2:) do the following:*

## 14. Click the little radio button so that it appears next to the Plotter jog.

The first registration mark will start to flash.

## 15. Find the ORIGIN registration point.

### Locating the point in this mode

The jog box now appears on your screen. A symbol (a circle with crosshairs) representing the plotter head will appear. Center the symbol (representing the plotter head) on the selected registration mark by dragging the mouse while holding the right mouse button. Make minor adjustments using the arrow keys on the computer keyboard.



*Note: For the FC4100 series the light point will turn on. Other models should use a pen or the bombsight loupe.*

Click on SET POSITION.

## 16. Find the SKEW registration point.

The jog box now appears on your screen.

Place the radio button next to the skew point and, repeating the above procedure “[Locating the points in this mode](#)”, move the point tool to the same registration mark that corresponds to the blinking mark on the screen.

Click on SET POSITION.

### **17. Find the STRETCH registration point.**

Place the radio button next to the third point (determining the stretch) and, repeating the above procedure “[Locating the points in this mode](#)”, move the point tool to the same registration mark that corresponds to the mark on the screen.

Click on GET POSITION.

### **18. If you have not done so already, place the cutter tool into the holder and continue by clicking OK.**

The software will now cut the contour.