

1. MECHANICAL DEFECTS

1.1 Stitching

Stitching is a defect which can be detectable both visually and acoustically. Silver dots can be seen in the reflection of the record, forming clusters and chains. This generally happens when records are incorrectly removed from the mould (usually occurring when both sides of the mould release at the same time). The visual defect is acceptable, unless it also affects the audio properties.



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

An audible defect is not acceptable.

1.2 Non-fills

These are visible silver lines in the reflection on the record, known as nests of fine depressions. This results in the grooves of the record being incorrectly copied and the compound material is missing on the upper edge of the groove. The issue usually occurs at the edge of the record, and in lead-in and lead-out areas. They are not always audible.



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

A critical defect that is almost always unacceptable if audible.

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1.3 Scratches (damaged stamper)

A visible scratch on the record that appears on each record in the same place. This occurs when the stamper has been damaged during the pressing process.

WHEN DEFECT IS ACCEPTABLE

The defect must not affect the audio quality. Hairline and fine scratches must only occur outside of the audio area.

The length of the scratches must not exceed 20mm and the thickness must not exceed 0.5mm.



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

All scratches that affect the audio quality. Scratches that exceed 20mm long and 0.5mm wide are unacceptable.



1.4 Scratches (damaged by handling)

There are visible clusters of parallel grooves on the record surface. The principal cause is from rough handling.

OTHER RISKS: Surface scratches are largely influenced by the inner sleeve used, which can impact and cause damage to the record.

RECOMMENDATION: In terms of protecting the record from damage, the most effective option is the poly-lined sleeves, after this we recommend a microtene or PE sleeve, then a PREMIUM printed sleeve which uses a laminate on the inside.

The lowest protection of records is offered by standard white/black inner sleeves which can cause hairline scratches on the mirror area and in the grooves. In addition, these sleeves can release fine paper particles from the edges.

Next is printed paper sleeves and card discobags without the inner lamination, which can also cause fine scratches on the mirrored area and in the grooves, due to releasing paper residues from the edges. Although these defects have no influence on the sound quality, they are undesirable.

The least suitable material are card stocks and art paper that can cause scratches to vinyl records. These are especially problematic if the inside of the sleeve is also printed.

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WHEN DEFECT IS ACCEPTABLE

The defect must not affect the audio quality. Hairline and fine scratches only on the vinyl surface, especially on the non-groove/mirror area. The length of the scratches must not exceed 20mm and the thickness must not exceed 0.5mm.



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

All scratches that affect the audio quality. Scratches that exceed 20mm long and 0.5mm wide are unacceptable.



1.5 Cold Centre

Due to insufficient heating, the centre of the record is deformed and becomes too thick, and or indented the incorrect way. The centre hole will then be too small.



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

All defects in this case are unacceptable.

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1.6 Dirt and other residues

The record contains a particle that creates a protrusion or there is paper particles visible on the surface. This defect is caused by processing of contaminated pressing material (such as burnt pieces of paper).



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

All defects in this case are unacceptable.

1.7 Warped records

The root cause of warping is high inner tension during the maturing process or long-term unsuitable storage.



WARPING STANDARDS

There are two ways of measuring warping:

1. With a special device similar to a record player, that has a laser deviation gauge which measures the height difference between minimum and maximum values during rotation from lead-in to lead-out. Both dish warping and propeller/saddle warpage can be measured with this device.

2. With a manual device similar to a ruler. The record has to lie on an even surface and the distance between the surface and the record is measured in the centre hole. Only dish warping can be measured with this method.



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1.8 Stains and smudges on records

The vinyl material (puck) contains extraneous ingredients, most often black material. We distinguish two types of stains/spots – visible dotted stains, mainly black and smudges.

WHEN DEFECT IS ACCEPTABLE

The accepted area of these spots shall not exceed 6 mm² of the total area for compact, homogeneous stains whose colour is distinctly different from the rest of the record and 350 mm² of the total area for spots (smudges) that are not compact, but more like a different shade of the same colour as the rest of the record.

The reference area is the entire record area including the label. The coverage of stains is calculated as a whole. The total area of all stains on one side may not exceed the values stated above.

WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

The area of the spots exceeds 6 mm² of the total area for compact spots and 350 mm² of the total area for not compact spots (smudges).



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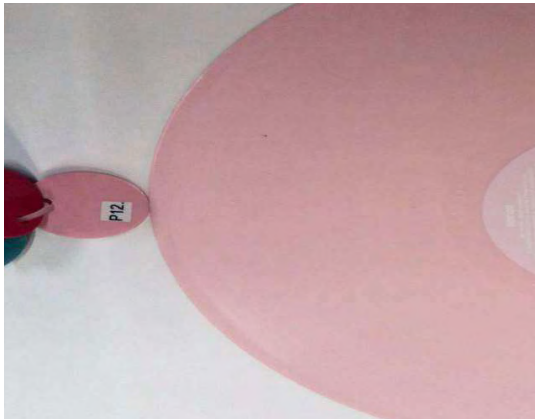
1.9 Vinyl colour

The colour does not correspond with the vinyl colour chart.

METALLIC COLOURS - These colours are composed of pigments and metallic particles. The mixing of these elements can cause different shades or 'waves' within one record which can be particularly noticeable in the non-audio areas. This is a characteristic of the colour and cannot be subject to claim.

WHEN DEFECT IS ACCEPTABLE

The maximum colour deviation can be judged as being within two Pantone colour grades.



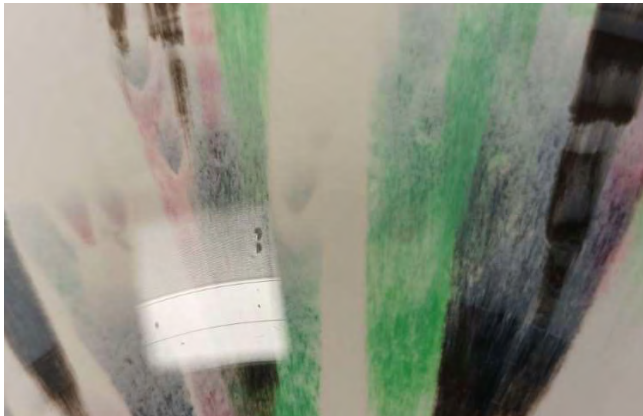
WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

A colour deviation of more than two Pantone colour grades.



1.10 Blisters

Blisters usually occur during the process of adding splatters to the puck. When there is insufficient melting of the different materials during pressing, bubbles can occur on the vinyl surface, causing an acoustic issue.



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

The defect is unacceptable in any case when the blister exceeds the vinyl surface.

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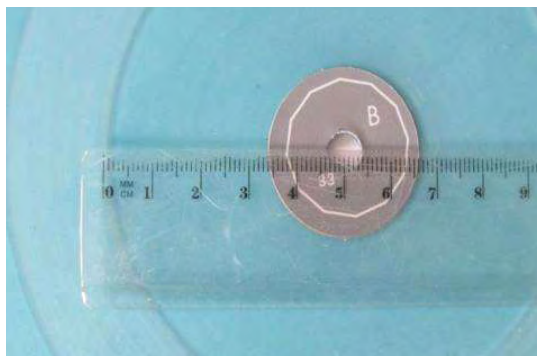
2. LABEL DEFECTS

2.1 Label cut

The label design is off centre by more than 2mm and or cropped differently to the proofs.

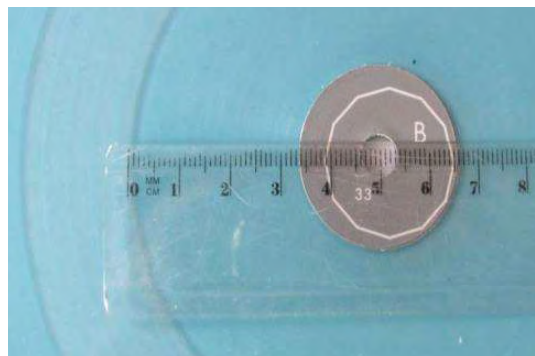
WHEN DEFECT IS ACCEPTABLE

The cut is off centre by 2mm or less and without cutting the label text.



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

The cut is off centre by more than 2mm and or the label text is cut off (providing the text is not within the recommended safety areas)



2.2 Colour change of label

All labels are subject to a drying process at high temperatures in order to remove excess moisture which is required to prevent the labels bubbling during pressing. Due to the drying process the labels may change colour. This effect is more visible on areas of white, light colours and Pantone colours. Below are some examples (please note, not all eventualities are shown here).

Colour before drying and pressing



Colour after drying and pressing



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2.3 Wrong labels

The labels do not match the label proofs. Different labels have been used or the labels of each side have been switched.



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

A critical defect that is always unacceptable.

2.4 Double labels

The label is blown throughout the entire surface and is doubled.



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

The defect is unacceptable in any case.

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2.5 Cracked label

The labels can crack during the pressing process and label parts are shifted.

RISKS TO BE AWARE OF: Cracked labels occur mostly on multi-coloured records with effects. The unpredictable paper tension during pressing can cause cracks or label folding issues, due to the use of different compound materials which can have varying properties.

WHEN DEFECT IS ACCEPTABLE

Hairline splits, where the text is still legible.



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

The vinyl material is visible through the label split. The label text is illegible.



2.6 Blisters on labels - Picture Discs

The picture disc foil incorrectly adheres to the label causing a blister.

WHEN DEFECT IS ACCEPTABLE

The total area of all blisters does not exceed 100mm² and or the blisters are in the centre of the label.



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

The area of all blisters is greater than 100mm² or blisters are located outside of the centre.



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2.7 Blisters on labels

Insufficiently dried ink can bubble on the hot stamper surface during pressing, which then causes the labels to stick to the stamper surface. When opening the pressing machine, the printed surface can be torn off or the paper can split in layers resulting in blisters.

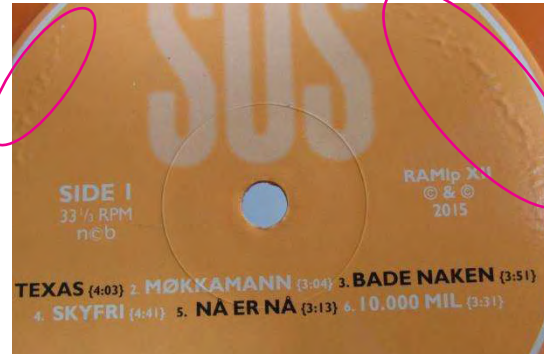
WHEN DEFECT IS ACCEPTABLE

The area of all blisters is up to 100mm²



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

The area of all blisters is greater than 100mm²

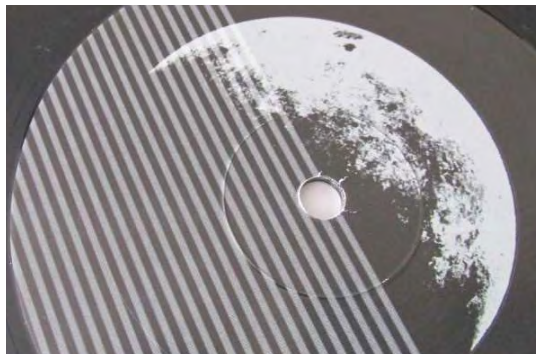


2.8 Torn label at the centre hole

The label is torn by the centre pin when it is inserted into the press.

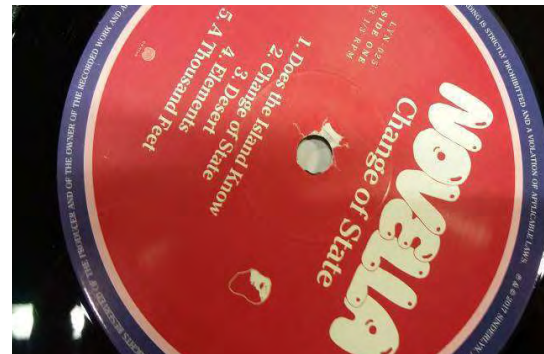
WHEN DEFECT IS ACCEPTABLE

The tear may only be of a hairline nature. The top layer of the paper must not be torn off. The tear size is up to 5mm at the centre hole.



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

The top layer of paper is torn off and a white area is created.



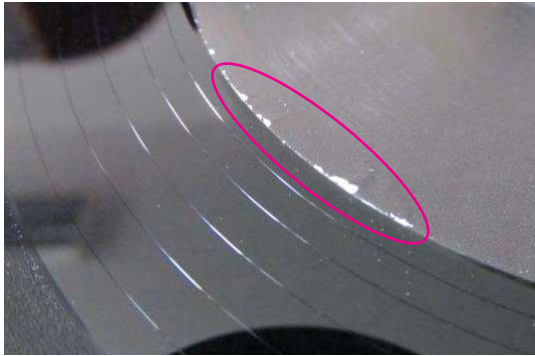
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2.9 Ripped print/surface on labels

Insufficiently dried ink bubbles on the hot stamper surface during pressings and sticks to the stamper surface. When opening the pressing machine, the printed surface can be torn off.

WHEN DEFECT IS ACCEPTABLE

The tear along the edge of the label may be no more than 3cm in circumferential length. The defect must not cause the text to be illegible or missing.



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

The tear in the edge of the label is larger than 3cm.



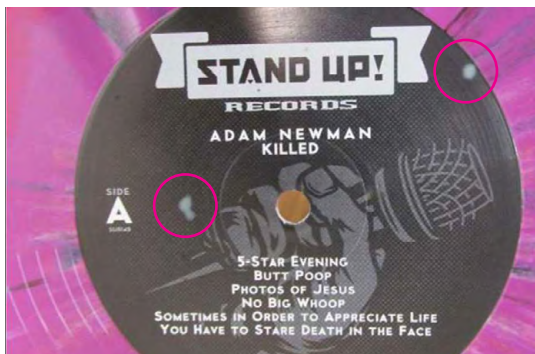
2.10 Label spots

Stains can occur on splattered records when some of the material gets on the label during the pressing process. These are supposed to be rejected only if the information content is damaged or the sum of the areas of the stain exceeds 1.5% of the label area.

1.5% of the label area = 100mm² which can be imagined as a 10mm x 10mm square.

WHEN DEFECT IS ACCEPTABLE

The sum of the areas of all spots must not exceed 100mm². Texts must be legible.



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

The sum of the areas of all spots is greater than 100mm² or the spots prevent the text from being legible.



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2.11 Scratches on labels

The defect is caused by rough handling. The label is rubbed against the centre pin when removing the record from the press.

WHEN DEFECT IS ACCEPTABLE

The mark on the label surface has not damaged the top layer of the paper. The total number of affected labels does not exceed 10% of the run.



WHEN DEFECT IS UNACCEPTABLE

The top layer of the paper is damaged.



2.12 Contamination of labels

Contamination can occur during handling or whilst packing the record to sleeves.



WHEN DEFECT IS ACCEPTABLE

Contamination is acceptable if the total area is not more than 100mm² and is contained to the centre of the label.

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3. COLOUR EFFECTS

EFFECT #1 - SPECKLES/SPLATTERS

The base colour can be either solid or transparent, however for best results the splatters should generally be chosen from the solid range of colours. You can use up to 3 splatter colours.

If using black or dark solid colours as the base, these can absorb the splatter colours. For best results we recommend light colours, ideally transparent as the base, with solid and or darker colours than used on the base.

Please note that speckles can appear on top of the label artwork, obscuring it slightly, the tolerance is 100mm² total surface area affected, providing text is still legible.

EFFECT #2 - HALF / HALF

This effect can be made from a combination of both transparent and solid colours. Great for split releases. The best combinations are two contrasting opaque, or two contrasting transparent colours. However, most combinations should work well, so please discuss with your account manager.

Please be aware, on rare occasions there can be a sound quality disparity as playback crosses one colour to the other.

EFFECT #3 - COLOUR IN COLOUR

Another two colour effect. This option produces a totally random effect on each side of the record. Please be aware that we cannot guarantee that both colours will be visible on both sides of the record. Also note that darker colours can dominate lighter colours, so we recommend making the darker one the small central one. It is best to use a transparent colour for the outside and a solid colour for the inside.

If you opt for two solid colours, the results are not guaranteed and could end up looking like side A/B effect.

This effect is not available for 7" vinyl, unless you specifically use a smaller centre label, otherwise the effect can be hidden under the standard sized labels.

EFFECT #4 - SIDE A/ SIDE B

Also known as swirl, merge or mix. Along with splatters, this is by far the most popular effect and gives a totally unique appearance for every single pressing. We generally advise that colours are chosen from the solid range, but some transparent colours do work too!

If using this effect for 7" vinyl, we would recommend using smaller centre labels to ensure the effect is as visible as possible.

EFFECT #5 - TRI-COLOUR (120° Segments or stripes)

This type of record can be made from any combination of both solid and transparent colours. The three colours can be positioned as 3 x 120° (approx.) segments around the vinyl or as stripes.

As with a Half & Half effect, there can on rare occasions be a sound quality disparity as playback crosses one colour to the other.

EFFECT #6 - QUAD

This effect uses two or three colours to create four segments around the vinyl. This type of record can be made from any combination of both solid and transparent colours. If choosing 3 colours, please specify the order and which colour will be used twice.

This effect can cause fine cracks or wrinkles to form on the label at the point of colour transition.

Not possible to add splatters.

Colours can merge at the transition. Again, on rare occasions there may be a sound quality disparity as playback crosses one colour to the other.

EFFECT #7 - TWISTED STRIPE

Possible as a 2 or 3 colour option, this is an interesting and diverse effect, made by laying a twisted snake like puck across any base colour.

It is recommended to use contrasting solid colours to make the effect stand out as much as possible, and the size of the central stripe is dependent on the combination of colours used. It is not recommended to use a solid base with transparent twist as the twist may not be visible on both sides of the record.

The effect may not always look like a small stripe across the record as some combinations of colours will create larger, morphing and entangled shapes as the various colours cross each other.

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Not possible to add splatters.

Available on 12" only.

EFFECT #8 - MARBLE

A set range of striking colour combinations are available to produce this effect. Other colour combinations may be achievable so please check with your contact to see if the combination of colours you would like are possible.

Available on 10" and 12".

EFFECT #9 - STARBURST

Similar in outcome to side the A/B effect or colour in colour, this effect is made by placing 3 pucks on top of each other. It is possible to use combinations of solid and transparent colours, but we generally advise solid contrasting colours to ensure all are as visible as possible.

Tip: Use a combination of primary colours which can mix to make even more colours.

This effect is not available for 7" vinyl, unless you specifically use smaller central labels.

Not possible to add splatters.

EFFECT #10 - ECO MIX / LUCKY DIP

For those on a budget and/or who wish to minimise ecological impact, for the same price as black vinyl you can have a completely Lucky Dip vinyl colour made using recycled materials!

What colour will it be? It's impossible to say. You cannot request a specific colour and we cannot predict it before it arrives on your doorstep! But we can tell you that the results are unique, not to mention ecofriendly!

One of the most interesting aspects of the Lucky Dip vinyl colour option is that in most cases the final product will feature a marbled effect where it has been mixed with other colours.

EFFECT #11 - CORNETTO

This effect can have up to six wedges. For best results, we recommend a solid base colour plus solid wedge colours, or a transparent base colour with transparent wedges though a contrasting darker solid will work too.

We generally do not recommend choosing a solid base colour with transparent wedge colours. Please be aware that the effect might only be visible on one side, and the other side will be random and unpredictable.

If you choose a transparent base colour plus a solid wedge colour, the solid colour may flood the transparent colour, especially if having five or six wedges.

Not possible to add splatters.

EFFECT #12 - GALAXY

Very similar to our Marble/Smoke effect, except with deeper colour diffusion due to increased composite ratios used during production. It is not possible to have splatters on top of this effect; two or three colours can be used though, and we advise contrasting colours for best results. We do not recommend using a combination of transparent colours.

Not possible to add splatters.

Available on 12" only.

EFFECT #13 - SPINNER

A similar effect to Cornetto, here you will see three spokes which works best with a combination of a lighter and darker colour; we advise a transparent base colour with solid or transparent spokes. If two solid colours are used, the effect will not be visible enough from both sides.

You can add up to two splatters to the second colour (not the base colour).

Available on 12" only.

EFFECT #14 - TRIPLE-BUTTONS

Yet another two colour effect that again works best as a combination of a lighter colour and a contrasting darker colour. The best colour combination to use is a transparent base with a solid middle colour. It can also work with two transparent colours but it is important to use contrasting colours. It is not recommended to use a solid base and transparent middle colour.

Not possible to add splatters.

Available on 12" only.

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EFFECT #15 - MOON PHASE

The final two colour effect that yet again works best as a combination of a lighter colour and contrasting darker colour; this one can also be adorned with additional splatter colours. It is not recommended to use a solid body colour with transparent moons, or a solid base colour and solid moons, as the effect will not be visible enough from both sides.

Available on 12" only.

EFFECT #16 - BUTTERFLY

Last of the three colour effects, it is essentially very similar to Quad, but with a thinner bulging centre to give the impression of wings. A combination of solid and transparent colours can be used, we recommend a light transparent base colour (body), with a darker second colour (wings). It is not recommended to use a solid body colour with transparent wings, as the effect may not be visible from both sides. You can have a maximum of two splatter colours added to the second colour (not the base colour).

Available on 12" only.

EFFECT #17 - GLOW IN THE DARK

Glow in the dark (GID) vinyl is available as a #14 or #15 clear base with added GID pigment. The GID pigment is a powder that turns the clear records milky white in the daylight, with a green glow in the dark. When viewed against the light, it is possible to observe a lack of colour spill which is caused by the luminous pigment. Added splatters are possible on this effect.

EFFECT #18 - CLOUDY

The cloudy effect offers a liquid like feel, which is created by merging a clear compound with two other colours (transparent ones work best). The first additional colour determines the overall colour of the record and the second colour determines the cloudy look. Please discuss the combination of colours carefully with your account manager.

Added splatters are possible on this effect.

COLOUR DISCLAIMER

Please be aware of potential audio problems when ordering #15 ultra-clear, #17 Slade Boot Silver and #18 Gold Digger. There is a risk that problems, such as audible clicks, will be present on the final pressed vinyl (even if not present on test pressings, as TP's are supplied on the black vinyl compound only). The reason for this is down to the compound material of these colours. Much of the time these issues can be disguised by the music, but we cannot guarantee this until the records are actually pressed. It is a small risk but can happen and it is your risk to take.

EFFECT DISCLAIMER

Sadly, there can always be audible issues on coloured vinyl with effects. Compared to black and frosted clear vinyl the colour compounds do have a degrading effect on audio quality and effects can cause audible clicks or pops and added hiss/surface noise. Sometimes it can be the specific combination of certain colours and effects that cause issues and it is not possible for us to know until the records are pressed, unless we have done that specific combination before.

Because of the nature of coloured vinyl compounds homogenous or heterogeneous structure, in cases of multicoloured configurations the combinations of different types of coloured compound can mean the audio quality may be affected in random and unpredictable ways, this may also vary across an entire run.

If in any doubt we recommend black vinyl for optimum sound quality.

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3.2 Etched vinyl

The etched area cannot be combined with audio so must be on a mirrored surface. A label must be used on both sides of the record to prevent warping (a small one can be used on the etched side). The etched surface is matt, and may have a patchy appearance.



3.3 Picture discs

RISKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: : The vinyl record with a full or shaped label on both sides covered by a plastic foil with pressed-in grooves. Two labels are used.

If recording is required on one side of the PD only, then there cannot be a “mirror” (smooth surface without recording) on the other side, but there must be a “silent groove” (groove without signal). The addition of a ‘silent groove’ is required even if the record does not cover the entire surface of the record (prevention of label tearing, elimination of foil wrinkling and record curling). 12” PDs are produced as heavy vinyl only. The PDs may show defects in the form of smudges (folded, wrinkled foil).

Wrinkled foil occurs particularly in areas where there is no label between the foil and the compound. If the legibility of the text is not affected or the label design is not significantly deformed, this cannot be the subject of a claim. Furthermore, as a result of the recording being made in a non-standard material, this type of record may exhibit impaired acoustic properties, in particular increased noise and crackling. These deteriorated acoustic properties cannot be the subject of a claim. Nor can a PD record containing moiré be classified as defective, because the moiré effect is caused by interference between the grooves on the foil layer and the printing grid of the label, which is printed by offset litho printing with a CMYK colour model using standard grids (175lpi).

3.4 Picture discs with full-width labels

If they are to be oriented according to the customer’s wishes, they must be specified in order (head to head).

3.5 Picture discs with shaped labels

The shape of the labels is limited. Please be aware that as the labels fit on top of each other some movement can occur between each side. The tolerance of mutual shift of labels is 5mm on the edge of the label furthest from the centre. Production will try to limit this, but are not able to guarantee it. Because we are not able to guarantee the exact position of both labels, if a clear or ultra-clear material is to be used, we recommend that the label graphics on the reverse of the lead side, be matched in

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colour to the face of the opposing label, which will help to minimise the visibility of label shift.

Some special records have a shaped label on one side and a circular label with a maximum diameter of the inscribed circle (in the shape of the shape label) on the other.

3.6 Shaped discs

RISKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: A record that is cut into various geometric shapes by milling. The shapes of the record are determined by the customer through a drawn file. The minimum radius of a shape/angle that can be used is 3mm. When determining the shape of the record, it is usually necessary to base the record on a 12" or 10", format, leaving intact a minimum diameter of 175mm centric with a central hole (see following figure). In the case of a shaped PD, these are only produced as 12" heavy weight vinyl.

3.7 Shaped picture discs

The semi-finished product for a shaped PD is PD with shaped labels, see section 3.5. In case of a variant with two identical non-circular labels, these must be a minimum of 8mm smaller than the required cut. The trimming is governed by the label on side A. Due to the tolerance of label positioning, this means that the label on side B does not need to be centred to the trimming. This asymmetry in the distance of the edge of the label from the edge of the record cannot be the subject of a claim. In case of the variant with one shape and one circle label, the shape label must be 2-3mm smaller than the required bleed. The trimming is governed by the shape of the label. These records are subject to all the exceptions to the properties listed in Section 3.3. Also note that the record area limitations result in a proportionately shorter playing time.

3.8 Shaped disc - classic disc

The blank for the moulded record is a conventional record (meaning not PD) of 10" or 12" size, standard weight or heavy records.

3.9 Picture disc shape

RISKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: : The records have degraded acoustic properties, for example increased noise and crackling. Classical music or music with long quiet passages is not suitable for this type of record.

The PD label must be at least 3mm smaller than the required shape. Only one-sided PDs can be shaped, which always leads to deformation of the record. The shape of the label shall not contain radii smaller than 3mm. The shape of the label should not contain narrow areas which risk cracking of the label. The curvature of double-sided label records can be up to 5mm maximum. For complicated shapes, the label profile must be tested by the pressroom technologist before the main production is ordered.

NOTE: For the production of records according to 3.3 and consequently 3.7, TPs with white labels of the shape corresponding to the order must be ordered and the main production must match the sample production exactly, with no alterations or additional testing would be required.

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STANDARD

Label does not contain fine detail.



POSSIBLE ISSUE

The label is too narrow and has cracked/split.

