

How to Flatten a PDF

Overview

PDF plans created using software such as Adobe InDesign, Adobe Acrobat, or outputted by tools like AutoCAD can contain multiple layers with different content on each one. If someone tries to access one of these multi-layered PDFs from a different application (e.g., such as Kern County's internal electronic plan review software) the document does not render properly or cannot be properly reviewed.

The solution is to flatten the PDF, which merges these layers so that the PDF can be viewed or printed from any application.

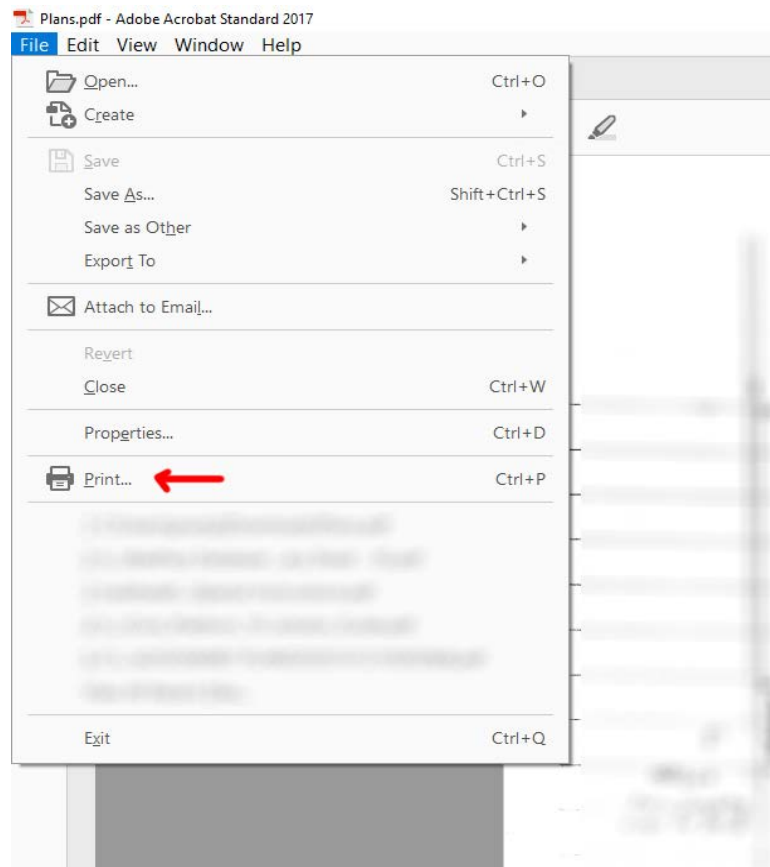
There are several methods for doing this, but the easiest way is to open the document in Adobe Reader or Adobe Acrobat and print the file to PDF.

If you don't already have Adobe Reader, it is a free download on Adobe's website.

Procedures:

1. Open the document in Adobe Reader or Adobe Acrobat.
 - a. If it is your default PDF viewer, it should open automatically when you open the PDF file on your computer.
 - b. Otherwise, do this to open the file in the correct application:
 - If you're using Windows, right click the file and select 'Open With' from the prompt, then select Adobe Reader from the list that shows up
 - If you're using Mac, Control click the file (hold the Ctrl key as you click the file) and click Open with, and then select Adobe Reader

2. Once you have the document open in Adobe Reader or Acrobat, click on the File option in the upper left and select Print



3. In the window that pops up, click the Printers drop down to see the printers available to you.

Print

Printer: **Microsoft Print to PDF (redirected 2)** Properties Advanced

Copies: 1 ☐ Print in grayscale (black and white) ☐ Save ink/toner ⓘ

Pages to Print

☒ All
☐ Current page
☐ Pages 1 - 5
▶ More Options

Page Sizing & Handling ⓘ

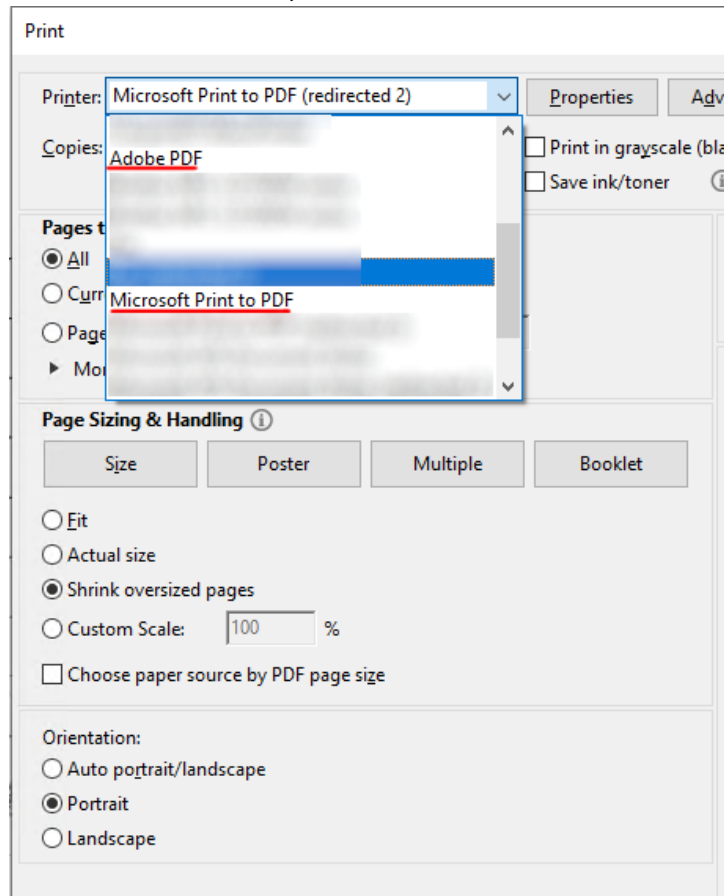
Size Poster Multiple Booklet

☐ Fit
☐ Actual size
☒ Shrink oversized pages
☐ Custom Scale: 100 %
☐ Choose paper source by PDF page size

Orientation:
☐ Auto portrait/landscape
☒ Portrait
☐ Landscape

Page Setup...

4. From the list of printers, select 'Adobe PDF' (if you're using Windows you can also use 'Microsoft Print to PDF')



5. After selecting one of the Print to PDF options, check to make sure that the other print settings are correct for the document, the most important being the orientation setting. You can see a preview of what the printed document will look in the lower right.
6. Click the Print button in the lower right.
7. A popup will appear asking where to save the file. Save it wherever is easiest for you, and make sure to give it a different name than your original plan document. One option would be to add "-flattened" to the file name.
8. After this, the program will go through the process of flattening the pages, which may take some time for larger plans. The progress bar may appear to go back and forth as it's showing the progress of flattening a given page as well as the overall progress of flattening all pages.
9. When the process is complete, the flattened version of the document is ready to upload to a website or whatever else you need to do.