

BINDERY HANDBOOK – MISTAKE, COSMETIC, OR STRUCTURAL PROBLEM?

Rationale: The purpose of this section is to give those inspecting library bound materials a means of readily understanding the differences between some of the problems that may occur in library binding. They are divided into three categories: Mistakes, Cosmetic Problems, and Structural Problems.

I. Definitions

- A. Mistakes:** Errors that the librarian and the binder would readily agree upon. Some can and should be corrected either by the binder or at the bindery, others are not correctable and still others may not warrant the time and expense of correction.
- B. Cosmetic Problems:** Errors that affect the appearance of the volume but not its functionality or durability. They may signal a need for more careful workmanship or quality checking at the bindery, but there is no need to correct these problems.
- C. Structural Problems:** Errors that are serious. They are problems that have damaged the text block or may damage it in the future, ones that have made the volumes less durable than it should be, or ones that have made it more difficult to use than is necessary. Some structural problems can be corrected, some cannot.

II. Examples

A. Mistakes:

1. Spine lettering is incorrect.
2. Wrong text block matched with wrong case.
3. Covering material is not the color or type specified.
4. Parts of text or periodical issues are out of order or mis-arranged.
5. Library's instructions not followed regarding leaf attachment methods or other options (e.g., no trim, flush binding, covers in or out, placement of replacement pages).
6. Wrong edge of text block bound.
7. Text block cased in upside down.

B. Cosmetic Problems:

1. Covering material, endpapers, or text block are dusty/dirty, or show excess adhesive, debris, or bindery markings under pastedowns.
2. Flaws in covering material.
3. Text block nicked or burred by damaged guillotine blades or sloppy hand-trimming.
4. Turn-ins are uneven in width, crooked, or not turned in smoothly.

5. Covering material is “wrong” color or does not match previously-bound materials.
6. Spine lining is crooked.
7. Spine lining extends beyond text block at head or tail.
8. Squares are unusually wide or narrow.
9. Edges of leaves stuck together by adhesive (usually seen at outer edges of text block at head and tail).
10. Spine lettering crooked, positioned improperly, or of a less than optimal size.
11. Endpapers torn due to excessive adhesive on leaves.
12. Endpapers not smoothly adhered to boards.

C. Structural Problems:

1. Leaf attachment method is inappropriate for the volume.
2. Sewing not done correctly or done well (e.g., too few stitches, broken threads).
3. Adhesive not applied well on double-fan adhesive bound volumes – especially head or tail; leaves may be loose as a result.
4. Spine of recased volume not cleaned adequately before application of new spine lining.
5. Spine lining not smoothly and adequately adhered.
6. Spine lining on double fan adhesive bindings stops more than ¼” short of the head and tail edges.
7. Spine lining on other bindings stops short more than ½” short of the head and tail edges.
8. Spine lining extends onto the front and back boards less than one full inch.
9. Spines of large or heavy items not reinforced with an additional layer of material (either paper or extra spine lining cloth).
 - a. 1 ½” thick for sew through fold or recased items.
 - b. 2 ½” for all other volumes.
10. Endpapers are not attached properly, or as agreed upon for the particular leaf attachment:
 - a. Recases: Endpapers shall be sewn onto the text block in a manner compatible with the original sewing structure.
 - b. Sewn through fold: Endpapers shall be sewn onto the text block as if the signatures were the outermost signatures.
 - c. DFA: Endpapers shall be adhesive bound with text block.
 - d. Oversewn: Endpapers shall be sewn onto the text block with outermost leaves.
11. Board thickness inadequate for size and thickness of volume.
12. Text block cased in crookedly.
13. Spine not properly shaped.
14. Joints not parallel, evenly wide and deep, and firmly impressed.
15. Text block not flush with bottom of case, if the option was specified, or if the volume was:
 - a. Over 3” thick.

- b. Exceedingly heavy.
- 16. Text along binding margin is invaded by adhesive, notching, or sewing.
- 17. Text, illustrations, or fold outs are trimmed or caught in binding.
- 18. Text obscured by adhesive that has flowed between pages.
- 19. Text is covered or pulled off by adhesive portion of binding slip.
- 20. Poor adhesion in joint/hinge area.
- 21. Spine of volume to be double-fan adhesive bound is not milled entirely free of original adhesive or folds.
- 22. Are the edges straight and smooth?
- 23. Text trimmed.
- 24. Fold-outs bound in.

This document is based on "Binding Problems to Watch Out For: Mistakes, Cosmetic Problems, Structural Problems" by Carol E. Eyster. It was produced for Mercer University.