

CLAIMS

1. A die responsive to a pressure applied thereto to cut a shape from a sheet material against which the die is pressed, said die comprising an inside opening that corresponds to the shape to be cut from the sheet material, an outside border that surrounds said inside opening, and a cutting edge that projects from said outside border to cut the shape from the sheet material, said cutting edge being located on said outer border such that said cutting edge surrounds the inside opening of said die, whereby none of said outside border extends past the cutting edge and none of said outside border lies between said cutting edge and said inside opening, so that said cutting edge is registered with the shape to be cut when said die is positioned on the sheet material and the outside border of said die surrounds the shape.
2. The die recited in Claim 1, wherein the cutting edge which projects from the outside border of said die is a cutting blade.
3. The die recited in Claim 1, wherein said cutting edge is located on the outside border of said die so as to lie exactly at the periphery of the inside opening of said die surrounded by said outside border, whereby said cutting edge exactly defines the shape to be cut from the sheet material.
4. The die recited in Claim 1, wherein the cutting edge of said die is located at the interface of said inside opening with said outside border.

5. The die recited in Claim 1, wherein the outside border of said die has a width of at least 2.5 mm.

6. A method for cutting a shape from a sheet material comprising the steps of:

printing the shape to be cut on the sheet material;

forming at least a first die having an inside opening that corresponds to the shape to be cut from the sheet material, an outside border that surrounds said inside opening, and a cutting edge that projects from said outside border to cut the shape from the sheet material;

locating said cutting edge on the outside border of said die such that said cutting edge surrounds the inside opening of said die, whereby none of said outside border extends past the cutting edge and none of said outside border lies between said cutting edge and said inside opening;

positioning said die on the sheet material so that the outside border of said die surrounds the shape printed on the sheet material, so that the cutting edge of said die is registered with the shape; and

applying a force to said die for pushing said cutting edge thereof through the sheet material to cut the shape outwardly therefrom.

7. The method recited in Claim 6, comprising the additional step of locating said cutting edge on the outside border of said first die so that said cutting edge lies exactly at the periphery of the inside opening of said die surrounded by said outside border, whereby said cutting edge is automatically registered with the shape printed on and to be cut from the sheet material.

8. The method recited in Claim 6, comprising the additional step of locating the cutting edge of said first die at the interface of said inside opening with the outside border of said die so that said cutting edge corresponds exactly with the shape printed on the sheet material.

9. The method recited in Claim 6, comprising the additional step of forming said first die such that said outside border thereof has a width of at least 2.5 mm.

10. The method recited in Claim 6, comprising the additional step of applying said force to said first die to push said cutting edge through the sheet material by means of a die press.

11. The method recited in Claim 6, comprising the additional step of forming said first die by means of chemically etching a flat piece of metal.

12. The method recited in Claim 11, comprising the additional step of forming at least a second die by means of chemically etching the flat piece of metal, such that the second die is nested within and spaced from the first die so as to lie at the inside opening of said first die, whereby the size of the inside opening of said first die is larger than the size of the inside opening of said second die.