What is the PCB Stencil Cost and Why You Need One?

The PCB stencil is a thin stainless-steel sheet with laser-cut openings that is mostly used to put solder paste on a bare PCB board. Once the solder paste has been placed on the PCB board, it is easy to surface mount different components for a successful PCB assembly. While the solder paste is spread over the PCB stencil, it is extremely important to make sure that the stencil is perfectly aligned to the PCB board. If not, solder paste will be distributed unevenly and you might need a rework. To prevent this issue from occurring, many people fix the PCB stencil into a frame using some glue. However, there are many electronic stores online that sell stencils that don't require a frame to hold. The PCB stencil cost also depends on the accessories that it comes with.

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Take, for instance, you made an online search like "buy PCB stencil online". Now you will get different results with different pricing on the first page. The reason? Some PCB stencils also have a squeegee blade and board holders in the package and some don't. Not just that, the PCB stencil cost also depends on your requirement, whether you need readymade or custom-made stencils.

How to order a custom-made PCB stencil?

The first and foremost thing you need to do to order a custom-made PCB stencil is to find a site that sells the same. Once you are on the desired site, you will have to fill up the details that they ask for. For instance, you will have to upload Gerber or CAD files, choose stencil thickness, enter the overall size, select stencil side, describe stencil frame pattern, indicate quantity, and many more. Upon getting these details, the seller will get an idea of what type of stencil you want. Then, they will create a customized PCB stencil based on your specifications and dispatch it to your address. That's why I said earlier that the PCB stencil cost depends on a lot of variables if you remember.

Another thing you need to keep in mind while buying a PCB stencil is that whether it supports hand printing or not. Because the one that does will be easier to operate while printing solder

paste onto printed circuit boards. Besides that, bear in mind to buy frameless stencils over framed ones as they are less expensive yet offer the same kind of result.

In case, you have a second thought before placing the PCB stencil order, it is recommended to get in touch with the seller and get more clarification on your queries. Once you got the answer you can proceed with the order unhesitatingly. Most of the time potential customers are concerned about the check plots, that's why some online electronic stores prefer to ship orders only after the approval of the check plot. Usually, they dispatch the item to your address within 24 hours of check plot approval.

What to look for before placing a PCB stencil order online?

1 – Is the site a trusted one?

2 – Do the stencils have laser-cut openings?

3 – Does it support faster printing on printed circuit boards?

4 – Does it advocate reduced PCB assembly time?

5 – Is the stencil pre-made or custom-made?

6 – Is the stencil frameless or with the frame?

7 – Does it have a squeegee blade?

8 – Does it have board holders or blue painter's tape?

9 – Does the stencil material is of high-quality stainless steel?

10 – Does it have smoother aperture walls?

11 – Does it have cleaner release characteristics?

12 – Does it offer excellent print performance?

13 – Does the seller deliver to your zip code?

14 – Does the seller offers a money-back guarantee?

15 – Is the seller willing to guide or advise you on printing issues?

16 – Is the seller interested in solving your printing problems?

17 – Is the seller ready to take up the rework and PCB assembly challenges?

18 – Does the seller have adequate experience assisting the PCB stencil clients?

Once you have gathered answers to these questions, you can move forward with your [stencil order placement online](#).

Conclusion

Shopping online feels great but it has its positives and negatives too. That means you can't really blame the platform if something goes wrong or didn't happen as you expected. This is why you must check out the site, seller, and credibility before you place an order. You don't know exactly what your actions could result in. As far as the stencil ordering is concerned, be sure that the product you are ordering matches the specifications in your mind. If not, simply give a ring to the customer care representative and clarify your doubts. If they confirm that they don't have the stencil that you are expecting, just bounce back and visit another site. However, the best you can do is order custom-made PCB stencils from a reliable site that perfectly suits your needs.

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