

A Glossary of Swiss File Terminology

AURIFORM FILE A die sinkers' file having a cross section that combines 1/2 of a pippin file with 1/2 of a crossing file.

BACK In a half round, barrette, cant or files of similar cross section, this is the convex side.

BARRETTE FILE Cut on wide flat face and safe on sides and back. Tapered in width and thickness.

BENCH FILING MACHINE FILE Parallel files of various cross sections for use in filing machines.

BLANK A steel forging from which a file is made. The basic shape of a file before teeth are cut or etched.

CANT FILE Triangular in cross section with one side wider than the other two. Cut on three sides tapered.

CHECKERING FILE Rectangular in cross section and parallel in width and thickness. Teeth cut at 90° angle with edge. Safe on edges.

CHISEL CUT A method of cutting teeth into the surface of an annealed file blank by striking it with a series of repeated blows as the blank is moved beneath a chisel at a uniform speed. In the cutting operation, the chisel is placed obliquely to the length and is inclined to the surface of the file. This is done either by hand or machine. Generally used to produce files of No. 2 cut and coarser.

CROCHET FILE Rectangular in cross section with rounded edges. Cut on both faces and edges. Tapered in length and slightly tapered in thickness.

CROSSING FILE Oval cross section with same radius as half round files on one side and other side curved to a larger radius. Cut on both sides. Tapered in width and thickness.

CUT The number of teeth per inch, the degree of coarseness of a file's teeth, from No. 00 to No. 8 in Swiss precision files. Also used to describe the type of file such as single cut or double cut etc.

DIE MAKERS' RIFFLERS Various cross sectional shapes. Teeth cut on a small area of each end leaving a long middle portion as a handle. The cut ends are of various designs. Length is overall. Originally designed and hand forged by die makers for their specific purposes now a generic term for this particular group of rifflers.

DIE SINKERS' FILES A group of files of various cross sections designed for use by die sinkers and tool makers. Tapered in width and thickness.

DIE SINKERS' RIFFLERS See Die Makers' Rifflers. This group of rifflers has smaller cross sectional shapes.

DOUBLE CUT The arrangement of file teeth formed by two series of cuts. The first is the overcut which is followed by the upcut at an angle to the overcut.

EDGE The narrow cross section or side of a file.

EQUALLING FILE Thin rectangular cross section, parallel in width and thickness and cut on both faces and edges.

ESCAPEMENT FILE Also called Square Handled Needle Files. A group of files of various cross sectioned shapes with a length of cut varying from 3/4 to 2-1/2" and long square handles. Widely used by jewelers, watch makers, die makers, and fine mechanics.

ETCHED CUT A method of cutting teeth into the surface of a file blank by drawing an etching tool, under sustained pressure, obliquely across an annealed file blank in a series of cuts. This may be done either by hand or machine. This method of cutting is used where it is necessary to retain the true cross section to a file. Generally used to manufacture files finer than a No. 2 cut.

FACE The working surface of a file upon which teeth are cut.

FILING BLOCK A block of wood, soft metal or other material used to protect the material being filed from damage from the jaws of a vise or other holding device. It may contain a series of grooves to hold work securely.

FLAT FILE Also called a Warding File. A form of escapement or square handled needle file. Parallel in thickness. Cut on four sides, tapered in width.

HANDLE A wood or plastic piece that is placed over the tang of a file to protect the hand of the user.

HALF ROUND FILE A cross section that is flat on one side and has a radius (not half circle) on the other side. Cut on both sides. Width and thickness taper.

HALF ROUND SLIM FILE. Also called Ring Files. Same as half round except thinner in width.

HEEL The end of the file at a location where the body ends and the taper leading into the tang begins. Also called the shoulder.

JOINT FILE ROUND EDGE Rectangular cross section with rounded edges. Cut on edges only. Parallel in width and thickness.

JOINT FILE SQUARE EDGE Rectangular cross section. Cut on edges only. Parallel in thickness and width.

KNIFE FILE Knife shaped cross section that is tapered in width and thickness. Edge has same thickness from point to shoulder.

LENGTH OF CUT The length of a file measured between the shoulder or heel and the point.

LOZENGE FILE Diamond shaped cross section parallel in width and thickness.

MACHINE FILE A file made specifically for use in a filing machine. Various cross sectional shapes. Parallel in width and thickness.

NEEDLE FILE SQUARE HANDLED Also called an escapement file. A group of files of various cross sectional shapes with a length of cut varying between 3/4" and 2-1/2" and long square handle.

NEEDLE FILE ROUND HANDLED A group of files of various cross sections with a knurled round handle. Knurling gives the file a positive, non-slip grip for precision filing.

OVAL FILE An oval cross section tapering in width and thickness.

OVERCUT The first of a series of cuts in a double cut file. Its function is to act as a chip breaker. The second or upcut is made over this cut.

PARALLEL MACHINE FILE A group of parallel files of varying cross sectional shapes made specifically for use in reciprocating filing machines.

PARALLEL ROUND FILE A round cross section parallel in width.

PARALLEL SQUARE FILE A square cross section parallel and thickness.

PILLAR FILE A rectangular cross section with thickness greater relative to width, than in other types. Cut on face or flat sides only. Parallel in width, tapered in thickness. Also demi-narrow, narrow and extra narrow widths.

PIN OR PINNING The tendency of small particles of materials to fill or clog the gullets between the teeth of a file. When the teeth become clogged the file causes scratches on the work. When this occurs the file is pinned.

PIPPIN FILE A section that combines the cross section of a round file with that of an equaling file. Tapered in thickness and width.

POINT The front end of a file as contrasted with the tang end.

POINTED BACK BARRETTE FILE A triangular cross section with one side wider than the other two sides out on wide or face side only tapered in width and length.

RASP CUT A cut used on wood rifflers that is made by a punch raising a series of individual cutting teeth.

RIFFLERS From the German riefeln, to channel, chauer, flute or groove. Originally used and hand forged by die sinkers, die makers, silversmiths and other skilled artisans in shapes and cross sections appropriate to their work. Teeth are cut on small areas on each end that can be shaped like everything from trowels to button hooks. A long middle portion serves as a handle.

RING FILE Also called a half round slim file.

ROUND FILE Round in cross section tapered in width.

ROUNDING OFF FILE An escapement or square handle needle file half round in cross section. Cut on flat side. Parallel in width.

SAFE The side or edge of a file that has no teeth cut in it so as not to mar a work surface that does not require filing.

SCREW HEAD FILE A narrow diamond shaped section with short bevels to form sharp edges. Cut on beveled edges, safe on flat sides. Parallel in width and thickness.

SECTION The cross section or end view of a file if it were cut squarely at the place of greatest width and thickness from the tang.

SILVERSMITH'S RIFFLERS A group of various cross sectioned shapes originally designed for use by silversmiths. Teeth are cut on small areas of each end leaving a long middle portion as a handle. The cut ends are of varied designs.

SINGLE CUT The teeth formed on a file by a single series of cuts.

SLITTING FILE A flat diamond shaped cross section. Cut on all sides. Parallel in width and thickness.

SQUARE FILE Square in cross section. Cut on all sides. Tapered.

TANG The part of the file that tapers from the shoulder that is intended to be fitted with a handle.

THREE SQUARE FILES Equilaterally triangular in cross section. Cut on all sides with sharp corners. Tapered.

TOOL MAKERS' RIFFLERS Various cross sectional shapes with teeth cut on a small area at each end leaving a long middle portion as a handle. The cut ends are of various designs to meet the needs of tool makers.

UPCUT The second series of teeth cut in double cut files made over the first series of cuts called the overcut. This cut is made of an angle to the overcut.

WARDING FILE A rectangular cross with teeth cut on all sides up to 4" in length and on 3 sides with one safe edge on files 6" and longer. Tapered in width, parallel in thickness.