

# How to check for bright blow outs in Photoshop (PS).

by Steve Potashner

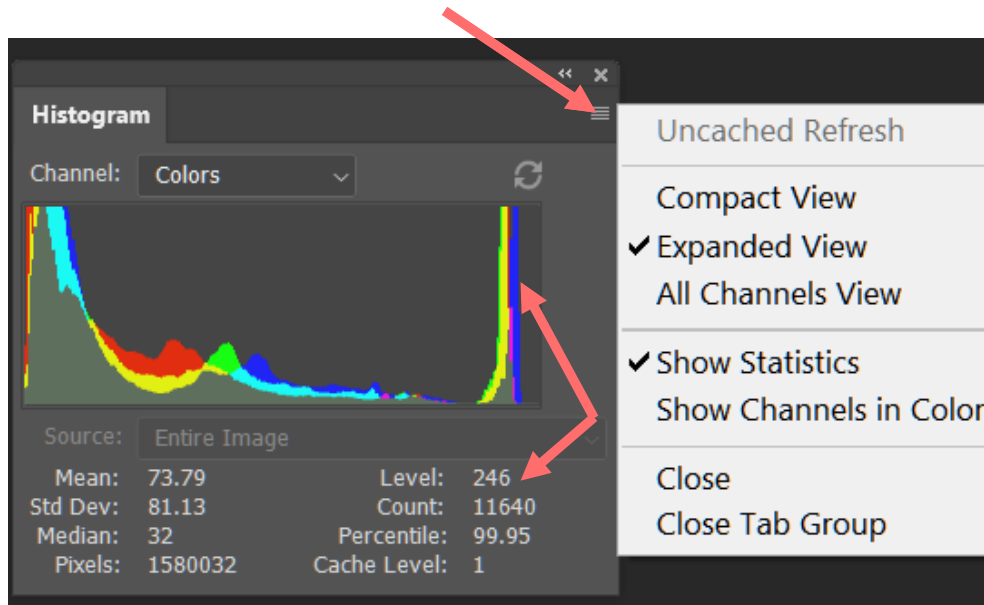
To ensure that the brightest areas of your photo still contain detail, RGB levels each should be less than the pure white level of 256 in the RGB color mode. Four methods are described that enable monitoring of RGB levels in PS in the brightest areas of the photo.

## 1. Use the Histogram.

A) To make the Histogram visible, in the PS menu, select WINDOW > HISTOGRAM.

B) Click the 3 line logo (top right) and choose items in the menu as illustrated in the figure below.

C) Click in the histogram to report the “Level” reading in the statistics below. In this case, I clicked on the right-most blue peak in the histogram, which reported a level of 246, well below the pure 256 white blow-out point.



## 2. Use the Eyedropper Tool.



The Eyedropper Tool reports RGB values to the INFO PANEL, while the tool is selected. Select another tool and the values in the INFO PANEL disappear.

A) Make sure the INFO PANEL is visible. In the PS menu, select WINDOW > INFO.

B) Select the Eyedropper Tool. In the top toolbar set the Sample Size to 5×5 Average or larger, and the Sample to All Layers.

C) Drag the Eyedropper Tool to the place of interest on the image. The RGB levels will be reported in the Info Palette.

## 3. Use the Color Sampler Tool.



This tool deposits a permanent point on the image that reports RGB levels to the INFO PANEL, even after other tools are selected.

A) Make sure the INFO PANEL is visible. In the PS menu, select WINDOW > INFO.

B) If the tool is not visible, select the tiny triangle in the bottom right corner of the Eyedropper Tool and then select the Color Sampler Tool from the drop-down menu. In the top toolbar set the Sample Size to 5×5 Average or larger, and the Sample to All Layers.

C) Click on a point in the image to report the RGB values. To move the point, simply drag it.

D) To remove the point, ALT-click (Windows) or CMD-click (MAC) on the point.

Color Sampler Tool Tutorials:

<https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/how-to-use-the-color-sampler-tool-in-photoshop/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FIUhKH3Cfk&t=13s>

#### **4. Use Real-Time Clipping Warnings (by Blake Rudis)**

This method mimics the clipping warnings provided in Adobe Camera Raw and in Lightroom. This method adds clipping warnings to your PS workflow by using an action to create two layers in the Layers Panel. One layer provides a red overlay that indicates near white blowout areas and a second layer provides a blue overlay that indicates near black block-up areas. These layers must remain at the top of the layer stack, so any additional adjustment layers added by the user during the workflow must be placed beneath them. At the end of the workflow, the Clipping Warning layers can be turned off or removed.

The action and its installation instructions can be downloaded here ...

<https://fantastic-pioneer-3195.ck.page/a819fbb3b7>

A tutorial video is available here ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RXkwjdEGGU&t=163s>

The Photoshop section of the video begins at the 2:00 min mark.

NOTE: This method belongs to a group of techniques called “Check Layers”, which are layers used to detect and analyze areas of imperfection in an image that are often not obvious. In this case, the check layers detect clipping. Other check layer techniques are available to detect and analyze banding, and inconsistencies in hue, saturation and luminosity etc. A discussion of several check layers is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Na-9tGvjuEw> and at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKc4VHY0vAI>