



The Global Language of Business

Getting your products ready to sell in-store



Your six step guide to getting started with GS1 standards

Identify your products. Create barcodes. Get set for sales.



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Your six step guide to getting started with GS1 standards

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Step 1:

Using your company prefix

You'll need a unique number for every type of product or item you wish to sell – and each number must start with your GS1 Company Prefix.

Although this unique number is often referred to as a barcode number, its full name is a Global Trade Item Number – or 'GTIN' for short. The barcode is simply a visual representation of the number itself.



As a GS1 UK member, we allocate you a unique Company Prefix as a 'base' for you to create GTINs to identify your products. The example here shows a typical barcode and GTIN with the Company Prefix highlighted.

How are company prefixes used?

Your Company Prefix will contain between 6 and 11 digits – depending on how many GTINs you need. You can use your prefix to create different types of numbers depending on whether you're identifying products, cases, pallets, assets, locations or other items.

Once your prefix is live, no other organisation may use it to create numbers. It is yours to uniquely identify your products – so they're ready for trading.

And if you need more GTINs then you just contact us to licence an additional Company Prefix.

How do I manage them?

You can manage and maintain all your company prefix numbers using the secure online service called My Numberbank.

You will find this at www.gs1uk.org/mynumberbank.

Step 2: Identifying your products, cases and pallets

Unique numbers help you – and your trading partners – to identify, track and trace items anywhere in the supply chain. They also help streamline processes such as automated ordering or invoicing.

The numbers can be represented in a barcode that's usually printed on the product or case packaging (using a GTIN) or on a pallet's logistics label (using a different type of number called a Serial Shipping Container Code or SSCC).

Products (consumer level) requiring unique identification

You'll need a GTIN for each type of product or item that needs unique identification for pricing, ordering or invoicing. For example, GTIN 5012345678917 could be a 330ml bottle of fizzy drink.

Each time you produce a new type, or variation, of a product you must use a new GTIN to identify it to prevent confusion – something that's especially helpful when retailers are ordering from you. For example, for 330ml bottle of **diet** fizzy drink could have a GTIN 5012345679013.

Where a product is too small for the usual-sized 13-digit barcode you'll need to use a special 8-digit GTIN and barcode. These are limited and you must apply to us to get one.

You can do this at www.gs1uk.org/additional-numbers.

Find out more about the rules for allocating GTINs for products in Step 3 overleaf.

Outer cases (traded level)

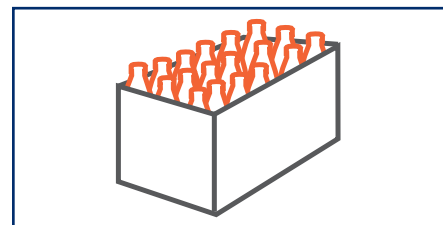
You'll usually need different GTINs to identify outer product cases (or traded units that do not cross a retail point of sale). For example, you may sell cases of 24 bottles of fizzy drinks. You would need to identify this case differently from each individual bottle.

GTINs used to identify cases are usually 14 digits long, but in some cases, can be 13 digits. You can create GTIN-14s in My Numberbank using your GTIN-13 as a base.

GTIN-13



GTIN-8

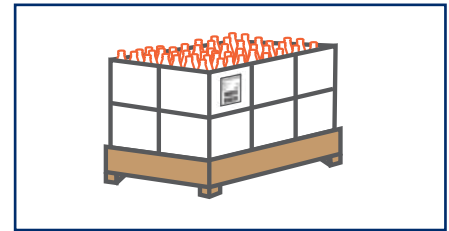


Step 2 (cont): Identifying your products, cases and pallets

Pallets

Throughout the supply chain, pallets and other logistics units are used to transport your products. These each require a different type of unique GS1 number – an SSCC – that's displayed on a GS1 Logistics Label. These are always 18 digits long and like GTINs, start with your unique Company Prefix.

You can find out more about using SSCCs and Logistics Labels at www.gs1uk.org/how-to.



Where can I create and store my numbers?

The secure My Numberbank service allows you to keep an accurate record of what GTIN 8, 13, 14s you have assigned to which product or case – all in one place. It means you can quickly add and edit products and their descriptions at any time (with the exception of GTIN-8, which you can't edit online, as you must tell us their descriptions when you order the numbers).

Step 3: Understanding GTIN rules

A new product will always require a new GTIN, but you will also often have to allocate a new GTIN when you have made changes to a product, for example, if the ingredients have changed significantly, or its size or colour.

Specific rules for retail

There is a specific set of allocation rules and practices that applies to retail – and it's important to follow them. If you don't, you could add unnecessary costs to your business, by having to replace all the packaging on a certain product. In extreme examples where important ingredients have changed you could find yourself trading illegally, or it could even affect people's health.

Review the GTIN allocation rules in full at www.gs1uk.org/how-to.

Step 4: Understanding barcode rules

A barcode visually represents numbers, letters (and other characters) using combinations of light and dark bars so scanners can read them quickly and accurately. Black and white bars create the most effective barcode images, although some other combinations can be used.

In retail, barcodes are printed on product packaging or labels for scanning at the point of sale. When the barcode is scanned the GTIN is decoded, identifying the product and providing access to further product information stored on the retailers' computer systems, such as the product price.

There are different barcode types for consumer units, cases or pallets. Here is a quick overview of commonly used ones.

Barcode types

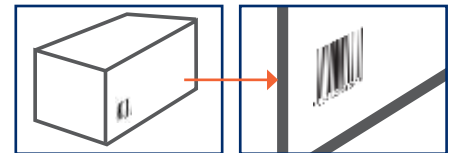
Products

Items scanned at the retail point of sale are usually identified using an 8- or 13-digit GTIN. This is then displayed in a GS1 barcode – also known as an EAN-8 or EAN-13 barcode.



Outer cases

For cases scanned in a **warehouse or distribution** centre you may use any of the following coding symbols – depending on the type of outer case packaging material or the type of information required by trading partners. These include:



EAN-13

This is for printing on a separate case label OR for direct printing on to high quality casing material.

✓ *This barcode will also scan at point of sale.*

ITF-14

This is for printing directly on to poor quality case material such as fibreboard and certain types of cardboard.

✗ *This barcode will not scan at point of sale.*

GS1-128

This enables you to encode additional information such as best before dates or batch numbers, as well as the GTIN. It can also represent other types of GS1 identification numbers, such as SSCCs.

✗ *This barcode will not scan at point of sale.*

Step 4 (cont): Understanding barcode rules

Logistics units and pallets

These are identified with an SSCC usually encoded in a GS1-128 barcode – and then printed in a standard GS1 Logistics Label.

Your trading partners will usually tell what type of barcode and label you need to use on your cases and pallets so make sure you ask them.

How do I create my barcode images?

You can do this either through GS1 UK or by getting in touch with one of our accredited solution providers. Go to www.gs1uk.org/mynumberbank to find out more.

Barcode image rules

It's vital that you print barcodes accurately so that they scan as they should at point of sale and point of delivery. If you don't, you may face problems such as:

- Costly re-packaging
- Unnecessary delays at retail stores
- Lost sales

Each barcode image must meet guidelines that specify:

- Bar height
- Barcode position on the label or packaging
- Barcode colour and background
- Barcode print quality

Your packaging designer or provider will normally be familiar with these rules and will make sure the barcode is compliant. But if you need more information, you can view our detailed guide 'Barcoding: getting it right'. You'll find this at www.gs1uk.org/how-to.

How do I make sure my barcode works?

You can either validate your barcodes to check their format accuracy, or verify them for consistency at the point of production.

Validation

Our validation service checks a PDF version of any barcode images you create – using a barcode verifier that meets our latest global standards. This process checks:

- The GTIN is in the right format showing correct use of the company prefix
- Colours are used appropriately
- The barcode is within the right range of sizes and proportions
- The barcode is positioned correctly on your product

Verification

You can also physically send your product in its barcoded packaging to one of our accredited solution providers who will verify it to make sure it is printed correctly.

You can even go one step further and install specialist verification equipment on your production line to check barcode quality and consistency as your products are made. Contact one of our solution providers for more information.

You can find out more about validation and verification services at www.gs1uk.org/mynumberbank.

Step 5: Managing invoices, orders and shipments using EDI

So far, we've shown how you can use GTIN and SSCC numbers to identify physical items including products, cases and pallets, using barcodes. But they do much more.

Retailers are increasingly using EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) to automate many processes that are critical for trading, including:

- Ordering
- Invoicing
- Goods in
- Stock control
- Purchasing

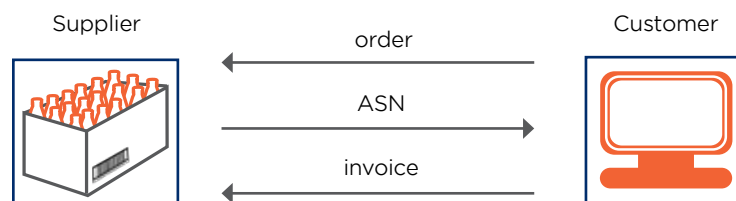
Your unique GTIN and SSCC numbers are used in these processes, to ensure the right products are ordered, delivered and invoiced. Without this accuracy ordered and payments may be delayed or refused – or your customers may even cancel orders and choose not to return.

Automating your processes with EDI

EDI means you can exchange business documents faster, more accurately and at a much lower cost – removing the need for human intervention.

As most major retailers use EDI, they will generally require you to be set up to receive EDI orders, as well as send EDI invoices. Increasingly, retailers also insist on you sending ASNs (Advanced Shipping Notices) prior to product delivery.

The EDI data flow



To understand what you need to do, you'll first need to understand your retailers' requirements and then choose a solution provider who can help you implement the right system. We have a range of GS1 UK accredited Industry Partners who can help you do this; you can find these at www.gs1uk.org/finder.

We also offer comprehensive EDI training – highlighting its benefits and the ways you can use it to trade with retailers. You can read more about training in our next section or at www.gs1uk.org/training.

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Step 6: Training

At GS1 UK we can deliver a range of training courses online, onsite or at our offices in London.

We know that understanding all of the standards around getting your product to market can be confusing.

Perhaps you're after a short, focused introduction? Or would like to attend a more tailored workshop to suit your exact business requirements? Either way, our experts can help you to understand, implement and use GS1 standards and barcodes successfully.

Visit www.gs1uk.org/training for more information and the latest courses and dates.

Further help and support

We have all the support and services you need available online at www.gs1uk.org.

Some specific resources and services that will help you include...

My Numberbank

Assign GTINs to your products, create barcodes – and more.

www.gs1uk.org/mynumberbank.

Find a solution provider

Create and verify barcodes, implement EDI – with the help of 100+ accredited solution providers.

www.gs1uk.org/finder.

How to guides

We have a range of guides to help you use our standards. You'll find them all at

www.gs1uk.org/how-to including:

Bar coding - Getting it right

Your in-depth guide to creating and applying barcodes on products, cases and pallets.

GTIN Allocation Rules

Everything you need to know to make sure you comply with GS1 standards.

EDI for new users

An in-depth guide to understanding how you plan and implement EDI Common errors.

And of course you can always contact our
Member Support Team on Freephone 0808 178 8799
or alternatively call +44 (0)20 7092 3501.
We're open from Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.30pm.

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