NATIONAL BLOOD AUTHORITY
AUSTRALIA

Frequently Asked Questions for Suppliers of Manufactured Batch Products

Q: Do the implementation dates apply to products available to market or coming off the manufacturing line?

The implementation dates relate to products coming off the manufacturing line. We recognise the long-lead times and significant in-country stock-holdings that many suppliers have in place and that it will take time for products to move from the production line to being distributed to health services.

Q: What is a transition label?

A transition label is a temporary label design that contains both the current barcode symbology (usually a linear barcode in a Codabar or EAN/UPC symbology) and the new GS1 DataMatrix format.

Q: Do I really need a transition labelling phase? Why can't I change to the new barcoding standard immediately?

The transition labelling phase is mandatory. This requirement recognises the work that healthcare providers may need to make to adjust their equipment and systems to ensure they can read the new barcodes and enables these providers to do so within a set timeframe.

Q: I already have GS1 DataMatrix barcodes on my products; do I need to have a transition phase?

If your products already have **only** GS1 DataMatrix (i.e.: 2-dimensional) barcodes on them, there is no need for you to return to using 1-dimensional barcodes. However, if your products are not in compliance with the GS1 DataMatrix requirements, a transition period is still mandatory.

Q: Will I be able to fit both new and current barcodes on my product for the transition phase?

Yes – noting that it is possible to have very small compliant GS1 DataMatrix barcodes. The NBA is happy to look at specific issues where suppliers believe that this may not be possible.

Q: I don't think I can have my product/s ready before the deadline, what can the NBA do to help?

The NBA appreciates that this change may take time. Suppliers who believe that they are unable to meet one of the deadlines should talk to their NBA Contract Manager.

Q: What level do I have to barcode down to? Does it have to extend to the product vial?

Any standardised packaging of your product must have a unique barcode, the levels of which are specified at www.blood.gov.au/barcoding . This extends to the items that contain the active ingredient, such as vials, and not additional items that can be/are removed in preparatory unpackaging, such as syringe attachments.

Q: I have a barcode on a pack that contains a single vial. Do I need a different barcode for the vial inside?

No, the barcodes should be identical.

Q: We supply products internationally, so won't this level of serialisation make my Australian operations needlessly complex?

The current timeline has been carefully coordinated to take US and EU serialisation implementation plans into consideration. This has been done to minimise difficulty for companies that supply internationally, as you will be implementing the same standards and will not need to alter serialisation needs across major jurisdictions.