



Acquisitions and Mergers, Partial Purchase, Split or Spin-Off

GS1 Company Prefix Allocation

GS1 Australia assigns a GS1 Company Prefix to each of its members, which is then used to create GS1 Identification Keys. Currently GS1 Australia allocates seven- to nine- digit GS1 Company Prefixes to its membership, however GS1 Company Prefixes of other lengths may be allocated in the future to further conserve numbers.

The GS1 Company Prefix allows for the allocation of a range of numbers. To obtain an additional GS1 Company Prefix or increase your range of available numbers, members should contact GS1 Australia. Additional fees may apply.

Individual Bar Code Number Subscriber members do not have a GS1 Company Prefix but are allocated an entire GTIN-13.

The GS1 Company Prefix cannot be sold, leased or given, in whole or part, for use by any other company other than the company it was allocated to. This requirement applies to GS1 Identification Keys which have been assigned individually by a GS1 Member Organisation to an individual user company.

Companies should notify their GS1 Member Organisation of any legal status change within one year of that change to facilitate a smooth transition.

The normal requirements on the re-use of GS1 identification numbers apply to all organisations at all times. The additional guidelines in the following sections apply when a company changes legal status as a result of an acquisition, merger, partial purchase, split, or “spin-off.”

Acquisitions and Mergers

If a company is being acquired by or merged with another company and has stock on hand, the stock's existing Global Trade Item Numbers (GTINs) should be kept. Products that are produced after the acquisition or merger may keep the GTIN allocated before the acquisition if the acquiring company maintains the GS1 Member Organisation membership.

A merger implies that someone has taken over a company and has assumed responsibility for the company's GS1 Company Prefix as well as their assets and locations. Products that the acquired company produced under its GS1 Company Prefix can still be produced using the same prefix after the merger, since the acquiring company has control of the acquired company's GS1 Company Prefix.

If it so desires, the acquiring company can label all acquired products using their existing GS1 Company Prefix. The importance of ensuring trading partners are informed of any changes in a timely manner cannot be overemphasized. A company should be careful when centralizing the allocation of all numbers under one GS1 Company Prefix, thus changing the GTIN of the existing products, which are otherwise unchanged. Centralizing the allocation of all numbers under a single GS1 Company Prefix should be an exception, as it results in additional work and data file maintenance for customers.

Partial Purchase

If a company purchases a division of a company whose GS1 Company Prefix is used in divisions not purchased, then the acquiring company must change the Global Trade Item Numbers (GTINs) for products in the purchased division as well as any related Global Location Numbers (GLNs), within one year.

The rules concerning the use of the seller's GTINs and other GS1 Identification Keys should be taken into consideration when drawing up the purchase contract.

At the earliest opportunity, the buyer should phase in new numbers from its own range of numbers for items whose brand name it has acquired. The buyer will be able to do this, for example, when packaging is redesigned or reprinted.

If a company sells an asset to another company, then the asset identifier should ideally be replaced by another Global Individual Asset Identifier (GIAI) or Global Returnable Asset Identifier (GRAI) within one year or be removed from the physical item.

During a company sale and for four years following the selling company must not reallocate the original numbers to other items.

Split or Spin-Off

When a company splits into two or more separate companies it is necessary for each GS1 Company Prefix assigned to the original company to be transferred to only one of the new companies. Any company left without a GS1 Company Prefix will need to apply to a GS1 Member Organisation to obtain one. The decision about which of the new companies should take the original GS1 Company Prefixes should be made in such a way as to minimize the number of additional Global Trade Item Numbers (GTINs) required. The decision should be part of the legal arrangements of the new companies.

It is not necessary for existing stocks of items to be renumbered. However, when any of the split or spin-off companies has trade items that are numbered with a GS1 Company Prefix that it no longer holds, the company should renumber those items using its own GS1 Company Prefix when new labelling or packaging is produced. Customers should be notified well in advance of the changes.

Split or spin-off companies that retain a GS1 Company Prefix must keep a record of the GTINs created that have been allocated to items they no longer own. They must not re-use these GTINs for a period of at least four years after the company that split away owning those items last supplied goods identified by those GTINs. Therefore, the company that did not retain the GS1 Company Prefix has to keep the company that now maintains it informed of the dates on which goods were last supplied using that GS1 Company Prefix or to guarantee a date by which the number change will be made.