

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Washington, DC 20405

FAS 2901.1
November 23, 2020

GSA ORDER

SUBJECT: HB, Supply Operations, Volume 2, Commodity Management

1. Purpose. This Handbook transmits the revised HB, Supply Operations, Volume 2, Commodity Management (FAS 2901.1).
2. Background. The Federal Property and Administration Services Act of 1949 established the Federal Catalog System. The Defense Cataloging and Standardization Act of 1952 further provided for the coordination of cataloging and standardization activities between the General Services Administration (GSA) and the Department of Defense (DoD). It established a single catalog system and a related supply standardization program which was instrumental in establishing a uniform National Supply System. GSA is responsible for providing catalog and management data for items it manages as part of the National Supply System. This handbook establishes policy and provides guidance to Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) personnel who perform cataloging and standardization functions relating to items-of-supply across the National supply chain.
3. Scope and Applicability.
 - a. This Handbook contains policies and procedures to be followed by FAS personnel in carrying out the functions of standardization, specification management, technical support, and supply determination.
 - b. The provisions of this Handbook are applicable to all FAS personnel engaged in the functions of standardization, specification management, technical support or supply determination. Certain chapters that relate to supply determination and the integrity of GSA and the DoD databases are also applicable to FAS personnel engaged in the functions of procurement and requisition processing.
4. Supersedes. This Handbook supersedes GSA Order FSS P 2901.11B, which was cancelled on July 24, 2019.

5. Authority.

- a. Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (63 Stat. 377).
- b. Defense Cataloging and Standardization Act (10 U.S.C. 2451-2456).

Policy.

6. Responsibilities. Responsibility for the guidance and management of items across the supply chain is under the direction of FAS Office of General Supplies and Services and the Office of Policy and Compliance. Each Division/Branch has the responsibility of cataloging and standardization functions for items related to their functional areas.

7. Revision. As a result of Executive Order 12861 requiring all executive departments and agencies to eliminate internal management regulations that are not required by law, this Handbook has been significantly reduced.

- a. The update includes the addition of Chapter 3 (Hazardous Material Management).

- b. This update also includes the removal of the following Chapters which are no longer part of the Supply Operations program or have been included in other operational areas:

- (1) Chapter 15 (New Item Applications);

- (2) Chapter 16 (Permanent Placement Method of Supply Determination for New Item Introductory Schedule (NIIS) Items)

8. Signature.

/S/ _____
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Commissioner
Federal Acquisition Service

HB, SUPPLY OPERATIONS, VOLUME 2, COMMODITY MANAGEMENT
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CHAPTER 1. DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF FEDERAL PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS

1. Scope. This chapter contains general policy to be followed when developing, coordinating and maintaining Federal Product Descriptions (FPDs). The purpose of the FPD is to satisfy the users' needs. Detailed procedures are contained in the Federal Standardization Manual.
2. Responsibilities of the Technical Document Preparer. The technical document preparer is responsible for the following in support of FPD development:
 - a. Conduct market research;
 - b. Determine the type of FPD to be used and/or developed;
 - c. Draft and coordinate the FPD;
 - d. Maintain FPD files; and
 - e. Monitor the FPD to keep it current.
3. Market Research. After user need has been ascertained, the specification manager will conduct market research to determine the range and quality of available commercial products and to see if they meet user requirements. The market practices of firms engaged in producing, distributing, and supporting such products will also be examined.
4. Order of Precedence. When developing a new FPD or reviewing an existing one and after market research has been conducted, select the type of document needed using the criteria in the following order of precedence:
 - a. Voluntary standards;
 - b. Commercial Item Descriptions (CIDs);
 - c. Federal specifications; and
 - d. Technical Purchase Descriptions (not FPDs but may be used in certain circumstances).
5. Development and Maintenance of an FPD. Consider the following when developing and maintaining an FPD:
 - a. Full and Open Competition. FPDs are developed using market research in a manner designed to promote full and open competition with regard to the nature of the supplies or services to be acquired. They include restrictive provisions only to the extent

necessary to comply with applicable laws, regulations or agency policy; and to satisfy GSA customers.

b. Commercial Products. FPDs describe and allow procurement of commercial products to the maximum extent practicable consistent with satisfactory performance in meeting GSA customer needs and with legal requirements for full and open competition.

c. Quality Level Required. FPDs contain sufficient requirements to ensure that the items described have the level of quality necessary to meet GSA customer needs. The level of quality required and the quality levels of available commercial products are normally determined in the market research phase of the FPD project. All customer needs are analyzed, as well as available products that meet those needs. An appropriate balance must be struck between broadened competition, cost, environmental impact, and performance.

d. Environmental Compliance. An FPD must be in compliance with applicable environmental laws, regulations, and Executive Orders. Consideration is given to the environmental impact of the item with respect to its production, useful life, and disposition. Products that meet Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines (CPG) for items made from recycled post-consumer materials, Energy Star certified and Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) designated products, BioPreferred products, and environmentally preferable products as recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are preferred or required in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 23. Refer to the Green Procurement Compilation at sftool.gov/greenprocurement for a complete list of covered products and associated requirements. General Services Administration Manual (GSAM) clause 552.238-72 requires the identification of products that have environmental attributes in printed commercial catalogs, brochures, and pricelists for items purchased from a GSA Schedule contract.

e. Metric Preference. The metric system of measurement is defined by Federal Standard 376B (Preferred Metric Units for General Use by the Federal Government) and is the preferred system. Use the metric system of measurement in all FPDs consistent with security, operations, economical, technical, logistical, and safety requirements. Conversion of documents to metric is not required when its use is impractical, significantly reduces competition, or is likely to cause significant inefficiencies or loss of markets to United States firms.

f. Performance Requirements. FPDs must state agency requirements in terms of functions to be performed or performance required to the maximum extent practicable. Detailed design requirements should be used only when absolutely necessary, such as to satisfy interface or interchangeability needs. If a detailed design FPD is deemed necessary, approval from the technical service director is required. The technical preparer should include documented justification and approval in the specification file. An FPD is considered to be a performance document when it states requirements in

terms of results, with criteria for verifying compliance but without specifying the methods for achieving those results.

g. Regulatory Requirements. The requirements in FPDs must be consistent with the FAR and other applicable regulatory requirements promulgated by other Federal agencies. Implementation of these requirements must be accomplished by specifically referencing the applicable regulation in the FPD and, if necessary, stating the applicable requirement.

h. Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT). Eliminate HAZMAT from FPD requirements to the maximum extent feasible (refer to Chapter 3).

i. Packaging, Packing, Marking and Palletization. Packaging, packing, marking, and palletization only appear in an FPD on an exception basis. Normally the requirements are as consistent as possible with common commercial practice, while providing for the protection, handling and identification needs of the Government. Packing to comply with common carrier requirements is usually considered adequate for direct delivery shipment to the end user. The quantity per unit pack (QUP) is specified and where a predominant commercial practice for the quantity per shipping container exists, a standard pack is also specified.

j. Shelf-life. FPD requirements are designed to maximize shelf-life as far as is practicable (refer to Chapter 4).

k. Cancellation of Duplicate Documents. Two fully coordinated FPDs may not exist for the same item. One must be cancelled in favor of the other.

l. All Changes to Printed Documents Must be Published. All exceptions to printed FPDs intended for use in more than one procurement must be printed and published. This may be done by use of amendment, interim amendment, or revision of the document. CIDs must be revised, not amended.

m. Periodic Document Review. All FPDs must be reviewed at least every 5 years and revised, validated, or cancelled.

6. Recordkeeping. Since FPDs are legal procurement documents, the technical document preparer is responsible for keeping an orderly historical record of each FPD in their area of assignment.

CHAPTER 2. ASSIGNED AGENCY PROGRAM

1. Scope. This chapter contains the responsibilities of the FAS technical services divisions in implementing the assigned agency program. The program provides for GSA/FAS leadership in the development and issuance of FPDs. The program includes assignment of responsibility for projects to develop, coordinate and maintain these documents.
2. Authority. The assigned agency program is organized and managed by GSA/FAS in accordance with Federal Property Management Regulation (FPMR) 41 CFR 101-29.
3. References.
 - a. FPMR 41 CFR 101-29; and
 - b. Federal Standardization Manual.
4. Responsibilities. In their assigned commodity area, FAS technical services divisions are responsible for:
 - a. Offering, approving, and revoking assignments;
 - b. Requesting and approving requests for FPD project initiation;
 - c. Discontinuing projects when necessary;
 - d. Reporting approved project initiations to the Engineering and Cataloging Division;
 - e. Forwarding consolidated FAS comments to the assigned agency;
 - f. Ensuring that the document complies with the policy and format prescribed in the Federal Standardization Manual;
 - g. Preparing activities, with DoD, to forward the final draft to the Defense Printing Service for printing at the same time that a copy is sent to the technical services divisions. If the technical services division(s) needs to see the final draft prior to printing to ensure that comments are incorporated, they must inform the preparing activity in the letter forwarding the consolidated FAS comments on the proposed draft; and
 - h. Forwarding a copy of the approved final draft to the Engineering and Cataloging Division for printing.

CHAPTER 3. HAZARDOUS MATERIAL MANAGEMENT

1. Scope. This chapter provides information to the engineering and other areas of the supply operation pertaining to management of HAZMAT including information on Safety Data Sheets (SDS).
2. Authority. The SDS is authorized by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in 29 CFR 1910.1200, Hazard Communication; and GSA in Federal Standard 313 (Material Safety Data, Transportation Data and Disposal Data for Hazardous Materials Furnished to Government Activities).
3. References. Certain topics related to this chapter are discussed in more detail in this and other documents, including:
 - a. OSHA in 29 CFR 1910.1200;
 - b. GSA in Federal Standard 313; and
 - c. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 23.303 and clause 52.223-3.
4. General. GSA requires its HAZMAT contractors to provide GSA with a SDS to ensure that GSA customers have access to this vital data. As prescribed by the latest revision of Federal Standard 313, the SDS must be sent to the Engineering and Technical Services within the Supply Operations Branches. The Supply Operations Branch shall forward a copy to the Central Office Policy, Standards, and Engineering Branch. The Supply Operations Branch and Central Office have a shared responsibility and shall work cooperatively on entering received SDSs into the DoD Hazardous Materials Information Resource System (HMIRS). HMIRS is the central Federal repository for all SDS and DoD activities that, in particular, depend on it for new SDS information.
5. SDS. A SDS is a data sheet required by OSHA regulations. It was conceived to protect those who work with or handle HAZMAT and/or personnel responding to emergency situations (e.g., fire, police or medical) involving HAZMAT. It identifies the product, manufacturer, an emergency point of contact for further information, the hazards presented by the product, and protective measures necessary for dealing with the product. A SDS that complies with Federal Standard 313 also contains transportation and disposal data and Government-unique identifiers such as the contract number and the NSN.
6. Federal Standard 313 (Material Safety Data, Transportation Data and Disposal Data For Hazardous Materials Furnished To Government Activities). Federal Standard 313 establishes requirements for the preparation and submission of SDS by contractors who provide HAZMAT to Government activities. The requirement for a SDS is dependent on a hazard determination of the Supplier or the intended end use of the product. Data

obtained will be used for Government employee safety and health programs of hazardous materials by Government activities.

7. HAZMAT. Hazardous material is commonly referred to as HAZMAT or dangerous goods by industry and the U.S. Government. The OSHA in 29 CFR 1910.1200 and GSA in Federal Standard 313 define HAZMAT as any item or chemical which is a “health hazard” or “physical hazard.” HAZMATs are regulated by agencies such as OSHA of the Department of Labor, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Transportation and others for the hazards associated with their use, transportation or disposal. Detailed definitions are found in both references mentioned in this paragraph.

8. Unique Government Identifiers. Federal Standard 313 was developed so the Government could link the HAZMAT to the correct SDS as the material moved through the vast Federal logistics system and enabling the Government to have the transportation and disposal data needed to effectively manage the material. Industry has also recognized the need for this data and, except for the Government identifiers; many commercial SDSs now contain essentially the same information. Some of the identifiers include but are not limited to:

- a. Contract number;
- b. Manufacturer’s Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code;
- c. Contractor/distributor CAGE code (if applicable);
- d. NSN;
- e. Government specification;
- f. Department of Transportation proper shipping name;
- g. United Nations identification number;
- h. Department of Transportation hazard class;
- i. Department of Transportation packaging group; and
- j. Chemical abstract service numbers and percentage by weight of constituents.

9. Hazards Determination. Determining if a material may contain hazards is the responsibility of the engineering areas within the Supply Operations Branches. Guidance may also be obtained from Federal Standard 313, Appendix A, Table I and II. These tables are not intended to be inclusive of all hazardous items but to identify the major classes/groups which contain hazardous items. However, not all items in these classes/groups are hazardous.

10. Applicable Clauses/Provisions for HAZMAT. If it is determined that an item being procured may contain hazards, the solicitation/contract must contain the proper clauses and provisions. If the material to be delivered to the Government contains HAZMAT, FAR 23.303 prescribes that FAR Clause 52.223-3, Hazardous Material Identification and Material Safety Data, must be included in the solicitation/contract, ensuring that HAZMAT is identified and a SDS will be included with each item. Other clauses may be appropriate for inclusion in the solicitation/contract, i.e., GSAR 552.223.73, Preservation, Packaging, Packing, and Marking and Labeling of Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) For Surface Shipment; GSAR 552.223-70, Hazardous Substances; and GSAR 552.223-72, Hazardous Material Information, in solicitations where delivery is Free on Board origin.

CHAPTER 4. SHELF-LIFE ITEM IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT

1. Scope. This chapter contains general policy for the identification, designation of useful life, and establishment of controls for shelf-life items to minimize loss and ensure maximum use prior to deterioration.
2. Authority. The shelf-life item management program is authorized and required by the FPMR, 41 CFR 101-27.2.
3. References.
 - a. FPMR, 41 CFR 101-27.2;
 - b. DoD Manual 4140.27-M (Shelf-Life Management Manual); and
 - c. Federal Standard 793B (Depot Storage Standards).
4. Compatibility with the DoD Shelf-Life Program. GSA shelf-life item management procedures shall be as compatible as possible with the DoD Shelf-life program, as described in DoD 4140.27-M (Shelf-Life Management Manual) for GSA.
5. Representative to the DoD Shelf-Life Committee. The Supply Chain Management Division shall appoint a representative to the DoD Shelf-Life Committee. The representative shall attend committee meetings, represent GSA on shelf-life item management, and be the point of contact within GSA for shelf-life issues.
6. Assignment of Shelf-Life Codes. Each Supply Operations Branch must analyze and determine the deteriorative characteristics of all GSA-managed items of supply in their commodity assignment area. Shelf-life codes must be assigned to those items of supply possessing deteriorative or unstable characteristics to the degree that a storage time period must be assigned to ensure satisfactory performance in use. Because shelf-life items require special management controls and reinspection, with attendant additional costs, the shelf-life assigned to each item must be for the longest available period that is consistent with satisfactory performance of the item when issued and used.
7. Review of Shelf-Life Code Assignments. The shelf-life code assigned to each item must be reviewed every time an FPD for a shelf-life item is revised or amended and the effect of the change upon the shelf-life of the item must be determined.
8. Challenge by a Using Agency. The Supply Operations Branch will review the shelf-life codes assigned to all NSNs that are challenged by the user. The Supply Operations Branch must respond, in writing, to the challenger within 21 business days of receipt of a written challenge.

9. Changes in Shelf-Life Codes.

a. Coordination. Shelf-life code changes must be coordinated with the contracting officer and commodity manager.

b. Review of Similar Items. When the shelf-life of an item is changed, the shelf-life of items described by the same FPD and items with similar deteriorative characteristics and container types must be reviewed to see if they need to be changed also.

10. Preparation of Storage Standards. Each Supply Operations Branch must prepare storage standards for each GSA-managed shelf-life item in its commodity assignment. Storage standards shall be developed for each new shelf-life item within 6 months of GSA becoming the integrated materiel manager of the item. The storage standards shall be published in Federal Standard 793B (Depot Storage Standards) and, if applicable, DLAR 4155.37 (Material Quality Control Storage Standards). The storage standard shall contain:

a. Instructions for the inspection (including testing, if necessary) of the item to determine its serviceability;

b. The period of time the shelf-life can be extended for Type II (extendible) items; and

c. Special storage requirements for the items, if needed.

d. Providing Storage Standards to Requesting Activities. Storage standards must be provided, in writing, to requesting Government activities within 10 business days of receipt of a written request. Replies may refer the requestor to Federal Standard 793B for items covered by the standard.

11. Marking of Shelf-Life Items. All contracts for shelf-life items must require that the items be marked with the date of manufacture and the expiration date (for Type I items) or reinspection date (for Type II items).

12. Labeling of Extended Items. Extended items shall be labeled with a detailed extension label comparable in size and content to DD Form 2477 (Shelf-Life Extension Notice).

13. Maximum Age on Delivery. All item purchase descriptions for shelf-life items must specify a maximum age on delivery; that is, the period of time from the date of manufacture to the date of receipt by the first Government activity. The maximum age on delivery should be tailored to the commodity and must be kept as low as practical to maximize the shelf-life remaining for the Government. It is recommended that GSA require the shelf-life remaining be as close as possible to that of the DoD requirement better known as the eighty-five percent (85%) rule. This rule requires that contract documentation (or FPDs) specify that shelf-life items will have not less than 85%,

rounded to whole months of shelf-life remaining, at the time of receipt by the first Government activity. To support GSA customers' needs, the Supply Operations Branch (at its own discretion and in unique situations) may deviate from the maximum age on delivery requirements.

CHAPTER 5. SUPPLY SUPPORT REQUESTS AND OTHER NEW NATIONAL STOCK NUMBERS

PART 1. INTRODUCTION

1. General. Supply Support Requests (SSRs) are the best way that the GSA has to keep abreast of new technologies and the developing needs of our customers. Market research conducted by specification managers is also valuable in this regard. It is important, therefore, that SSRs and other transactions discussed in this chapter be handled with care and sound judgment.
2. Scope. This chapter provides a brief discussion of how new NSN items enter the GSA supply system. This chapter also provides rules and procedures for GSA personnel to handle new items. The types of items covered are:
 - a. SSR requests from military and civilian agencies;
 - b. Item Management Coding (IMC) transactions;
 - c. Logistic reassignments; and
 - d. New NSNs requested by GSA personnel.
3. Applicability. The provisions of this chapter apply to commodity managers, supply catalogers, specification managers, and procuring contracting officers throughout FAS.
4. References. Certain topics related to this chapter are discussed in more detail in this and other documents, including:
 - a. Coded transactions to GSA's Federal Logistics Data System Desk Guide FSS-19.8;
 - b. Method of Supply (MOS) determinations (see Chapter 7);
 - c. Logistic reassignment (see Chapter 6); and
 - d. Assignment of NSNs to items of supply FPMR 101-30 (Federal Catalog System).
5. Basic Rules.
 - a. Public Law 82-436 requires that "a single item identification (NSN) will be utilized for each item repetitively used, purchased, stocked or distributed, for all functions of supply from original purchase to final disposal." This is the statutory authority for the Federal Catalog System and it requires GSA to establish an NSN for every identifiable item of supply that is managed by GSA and/or repetitively procured by GSA.

b. Every item new to GSA must be described in the Federal Logistics Information System (FLIS) as accurately and completely as possible, within the constraints of processing timeframes and resource limits. Follow-up maintenance and enhancement of FLIS records must be accomplished expeditiously to ensure that accurate information is provided to all FLIS users.

c. Every NSN new to GSA must be assigned a MOS, expressed by an Acquisition Advice Code (AAC); and method of procurement, expressed by a Method of Purchase (MOP) code. The MOS and MOP must be the most responsive to customer requirements and most economical and efficient for the Federal Government as a whole, consistent with the integrity of available data, GSA operating procedures, resource limits and interagency agreements.

d. New items to GSA are generally assigned AAC J (special order, buy-on-demand). Since demand for new items has not been established, AAC J allows the demand for new items to be tested.

6. Commodity Assignments to the FAS Supply Operations Branches.

a. Responsibility for MOS determination, specification management and procurement are assigned in FAS by FSCs to the appropriate Supply Operations Branch. These assignments are maintained by the Central Office Supply Chain Management. The assignments are used to identify the correct managing center for each transaction discussed in this chapter.

b. Based on the following criteria, NSNs should be periodically reviewed for possible deletion of all users:

(1) Item has zero demand;

(2) Item has been in the Federal Catalog System for 4 years;

(3) Item has been in the Federal Logistics Data File (FLDF) for more than 1 year based on MOS date; and

(4) The item's last MOE-RL (user) registration is over 1 year.

c. If none of the above criteria apply, then it is not deleted. However, if any one of the above criteria is applicable, the proposal is sent to all recorded military users and designated civilian agencies for proposed deletion by all users. All users must concur that the NSN will be coded inactive; otherwise the item will be retained in the GSA system.

PART 2. HOW NEW ITEMS COME TO THE GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION FROM MILITARY ACTIVITIES

7. DoD 4140.26-M (Defense Integrated Materiel Management for Consumable Items).

This manual provides the procedures for SSRs, IMC, logistic reassignment and recording user interest. By virtue of the "Agreement Between the Department of Defense and the General Services Administration Governing Supply Management Relationships Under the National Supply System," entered into by GSA and the DoD in 1971, GSA is bound by the procedures in this Handbook.

8. SSRs.

a. Defined as those aspects of supply operations involving requirements determination, procurement, storage, and shipment of supplies, plus related or supporting functions such as cataloging, standardization, quality control, and preservation and packaging, which are necessary in support of the supply needs of an agency or specific programs within an agency.

b. An SSR is a request from a Federal activity (other than GSA) that GSA provides supply support for an item of supply.

(1) Requests may be received for:

- (a) Existing GSA items for which the user has identified new requirements;
- (b) Existing NSNs not currently managed by GSA; and
- (c) Items of supply for which a new NSN must be assigned.

(2) The majority of SSR requests come into the Cataloging section as coded data transmissions from military activities under DoD 4140.26-M.

(3) Other SSRs come to GSA through additional channels, such as Standard Form 1303 (Request for Federal Cataloging/Supply Support Action). While this form is obsolete, it is still being utilized by several civilian agencies.

9. Integrated Materiel Management (IMM). When a military service determines that an NSN should be assigned to an item, the service goes through the IMM process to determine whether they will retain IMM of the item or will turn it over to the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) or GSA.

a. DLA and the military services review many items previously retained by the services, with the objective of reassigning as many as possible to DLA or GSA. Therefore, items with existing NSNs may be transferred to GSA. These transfers are called IMC transactions.

b. It must be emphasized that an IMC is accomplished by the military services. GSA cannot by itself change an assigned IMC. If it appears that a GSA-managed item should have a different IMC, a logistic reassignment must be negotiated between GSA and the military service that would manage the item. The Federal cataloging system only permits the service or agency that would gain management to enter the logistic reassignment transaction.

c. DoD 4140.26-M consists of the titles of all IMCs plus explanations of those IMCs most likely to be of interest to GSA.

10. Logistic Reassignment. Logistic reassignment is a change of IMM responsibility for an existing NSN. A Logistic reassignment can be negotiated or may coincide with an FSC change. Usually it involves transfer of supply management and procurement responsibility to the gaining IMC agency. It is also used to eliminate dual management by assigning all management to one agency. See Chapter 5 for procedures for negotiated logistic reassignment.

11. Technical Data for New Items from the Military. DoD 4140.26-M requires that every item involved in an SSR, logistic reassignment or IMC transaction include enough information to identify the item clearly and distinctly. However, data sufficient for identification often is not sufficient for GSA procurement and DoD 4140.26-M does not allow GSA to reject a transaction if all procedures given are observed. If the data cannot be developed, the specification manager can request to make the NSN inactive, transfer management to DLA or recommend exception management by DLA.

a. Writing Product Descriptions for New Items. Military activities often request new NSNs for items that may not be needed for months or years after the initial NSN assignment.

b. Sole source Justification. Justification is required for ALL sole source SSRs; however, the online SSR process doesn't allow for attachments and the required justification. Sole Source SSRs should be processed via email.

c. Technical Data for SSRs. Technical data for an SSR item should be sent to GSA at the same time the automated transaction is entered, but only sufficient data to catalog the item is required. If only a part number reference is provided in an SSR, the technical data justification code may indicate the reason that supplementary data is not provided (the codes are explained in DoD 4140.26-M).

d. Technical Data for Logistic Reassignments. Logistic reassignment procedures (DoD 4140.26-M) call for extensive data to be provided to the gaining manager before the effective date of the transfer of management responsibility. Central Office Supply Chain Management monitors and forwards transfer requests to the applicable Supply Operations Branch. There are two types of logistic reassignments:

(1) Non-Negotiated Logistic Reassignments. At the time that an automatic logistic reassignment is collaborated (generally 120 days or more before the effective date), GSA has no information other than the DLA Logistics Information Service Total Item Record (TIR) for the item. The transaction cannot be challenged by the supply cataloger except on the basis of an incorrect rationale for the proposed cataloging action (e.g., incorrect FSC change).

(2) Negotiated Logistic Reassignments. This type of transaction does give GSA an opportunity to request better information before accepting management. The negotiators may require an advance examination of the technical and procurement data and any necessary improvements in the data.

Note: When the result will be adding an item new to the GSA system, the Engineering Section coordinates either type of logistic reassignment with the commodity management activity in the appropriate Supply Operation Branch before agreeing to the collaboration or negotiation.

e. Technical Data for IMC Transactions. An IMC transaction can be challenged only if screening identifies a possible alternate item or if the procedures in DoD 4140.26-M have not been observed. However, for IMC transactions, the supplementary technical data (if any) and sole source justification (if any) are handled according to logistic reassignment procedures. Thus, as with most logistic reassignments, GSA does not know whether the sole source justification and/or technical data is adequate until after the transfer is locked in.

PART 3. PROCESSING RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

12. Initiating New Item Requests.

a. Activities within GSA. Requests for new items should be requested through the applicable Supply Operations Branch.

b. Military Activities. Many of the new items discussed in this chapter are SSRs and IMC transactions from military activities. These are initiated by military personnel at various levels, from small bases to large inventory control activities.

(1) Military requests for new items come to GSA through the established, automated military channels which vary from service to service. If these channels are violated, it is likely that the customer with the requirement will not be able to requisition the item because internal service files will not carry the proper logistics information. Therefore, the importance of using the automated channels should be emphasized in discussions with military activities.

(2) The basic procedures for preparing and processing military SSRs and IMC transactions are contained in DoD 4140.26-M.

c. Civilian Agency Activities. Requests from civilian activities are sent to the Engineering and Cataloging Division on Standard Form 1303.

13. Notifying the Submitter.

a. Insufficient Data. If the data included with an SSR or IMC transaction are not adequate to process, any GSA official may contact the submitter.

b. Notification of Final Action.

(1) For routine military and civilian SSRs, the supply cataloger notifies the submitter of the final action taken, including the new NSN if one is assigned;

(2) Part 4 of this chapter provides routing instructions for special cases.

14. Correcting Data Already Entered. Data entered incorrectly may be corrected as shown in Chapter 6.

15. Regional Cataloging Responsibilities. SSR processing by the supply cataloger usually occurs in two separate stages.

a. Stage 1.

(1) Identify the proper item name and FSC;

(2) Screen other NSNs for duplication of salient characteristics and manufacturers' part numbers;

(3) Validate manufacturers' part numbers by telephone or letter when a catalog page or similar validation is not provided with the request;

(4) Determine if a SDS and a copy of the product label were submitted with the SSR for items in the FSCs listed in Federal Standard 313. SSRs for items in the FSCs listed in Federal Standard 313 may be sent for technical review without a SDS or label; however, processing will be delayed while the Supply Operations Branch obtains the necessary information;

(5) If the request is found to be valid, prepare a technical package and forward the SSR, technical data (if any), contact records and technical package as directed in Part 4 of this chapter. Return invalid request to the originator with an explanation; and

(6) SSRs received that meet any of the following conditions will be processed for NSN assignment; however, GSA will pursue DLA to manage the item by exception due to not being able to support procurement of the item.

(a) The manufacturer will not provide technical data and/or they will not sell directly to GSA.

(b) Military unique items needed to maintain specific equipment or systems.

(c) Requests for a modified tool.

(d) NATO NSNs with no stateside source of procurement.

b. Stage 2.

(1) If a more responsive MOS has not been identified the supply cataloger will assign AAC J and MOP Code 8 (the second position of the MOP code identifies the GSA procuring office);

(2) Submit the request for NSN assignment (or for addition of GSA management data to an existing NSN) to the Logistics Information Services;

(3) Notify the submitter of the action taken; and

(4) Forward a complete set of all documentation to commodity management.

c. SSRs on Items Already Managed by GSA.

(1) If an SSR is received on a GSA-managed AAC L item, change the AAC to J, add the submitter as a user when required and notify the Commodity Management Lead of the action taken. If the item was changed to AAC L within the past 2 years, do not change the AAC.

(2) If an SSR is received on a GSA-managed item with an AAC other than L, add the submitter as a user and inform the submitter of the current AAC.

d. Civilian Agency Requests for Federal Cataloging.

(1) Most Federal civilian agencies are required to submit Standard Form 1303 to GSA; however, most requests submitted are not for GSA supply support.

(2) If a Standard Form 1303 is submitted for Federal cataloging only and the item is similar to items managed by GSA or if the supply cataloger believes GSA should manage or support the item for any other reason, the Standard Form 1303 should be referred to the Commodity Management Lead.

e. AAC L Items Offered as Alternates. If the supply cataloger identifies an alternate item that is acceptable to the submitter of an SSR and the alternate item is assigned

AAC L, the supply cataloger must change the AAC to J and notify the Commodity Management Lead of the action taken.

16. Specification Manager Responsibilities.

a. Mandatory Timeframe. SSRs from military activities must be returned to the supply cataloger within 15 workdays so that GSA's agreement with DoD can be fulfilled. If the SSR cannot be reviewed within 15 days, it should be returned to the supply cataloger without being reviewed. The supply cataloger will determine if an NSN should be assigned. If the specification manager must obtain technical information for a proper review, the specification manager may retain the SSR until the necessary information has been obtained.

b. Specification Manager Review. The review by the specification manager consists of examining the technical data furnished with the request, adding relevant characteristics and/or reference data whenever possible and completing the technical package.

c. Assigning Other AACs. Assigning any AACs other than J must be carefully coordinated with the procuring contracting officer.

d. Creation of an IPD. If the specification manager has determined that the demand for a new item is probable or if the contracting officer has requested an IPD be developed, the specification manager will create an IPD. When demand warrants or when needed for a competitive procurement, a specification manager might decide that a Federal Product Description (FPD) (specification standard or CID) should be developed or modified. In these instances, the specification manager initiates a GSA Form 3583 (Standardization Project Record) and forwards it to the Engineering and Cataloging Division. The supply cataloger will receive and prepare the characteristics data for the new NSN via initial technical information submitted on the Supply Support Request (SSR) technical package from Engineering.

e. Maintaining New Item Files. The specification manager retains the complete new item package, forwarded by the supply cataloger, after the new NSN is assigned for reference when requisitions are received.

17. Regional Cataloging Responsibilities. The SSR coordinator is not required to review automated SSRs from military activities after the supply cataloger completes the process of NSN assignment or adding GSA management data. Review of other types of SSRs by the SSR coordinator consists of:

a. Verifying the demand data which is a critical factor in the MOS determination process;

b. Determining the proper MOS and developing an implementation strategy (see Chapter 7); and

c. Providing the basic GSA management data to the supply cataloger on MOS changes, submit GSA Form 3535 via the National Cataloging Action Log (NCAL). Basic data includes:

- (1) AAC;
- (2) MOP code;
- (3) Shelf-life code;
- (4) Unit price (selling price);
- (5) Unit-of-Issue (U/I);
- (6) Quantitative Expression (QE);
- (7) Publication Indicator Code (PIC);
- (8) QUP; and
- (9) Effective date.

18. Procuring Contracting Officer Responsibilities. The procuring contracting officer is seldom coordinated with during the initial review of SSRs. The responsibilities of the procuring contracting officer regarding SSRs may include:

- a. Supplying the cost price and MOP code when requested by the Commodity Management Lead. A price and MOP code generally will be needed only for civilian agency SSRs, new items initiated by GSA and insurance items;
- b. Requesting an IPD or FPD using email;
- c. Reviewing the MOS and MOP assigned; if the AAC or other data assigned is incorrect, coordinate updates through commodity management; and
- d. When an item is cataloged with a part number reference and inadequate characteristics data, it should be procured on a "brand name or equal" basis until a better product description is available.

PART 4. ROUTING NEW ITEMS WITHIN THE GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

19. Routing Automated Submissions from the Military. The routing for automated military SSRs and IMC transactions is:

- a. Cataloging Section Chief/Team Lead;
- b. Specification manager, if technical advice is needed;
- c. Supply cataloger, Stages 1 and 2;
- d. Cataloging Section Chief/Team Lead, who notifies the submitter, and
- e. Commodity manager.

20. Routing Non-Automated Military SSRs. Requests for supply support from military activities that come in the form of correspondence or other documents not using the established automated procedures should be routed as follows:

- a. Cataloging Section Chief/Team Lead;
- b. Specification manager, if technical advice is needed;
- c. Supply cataloger, Stages 1 and 2;
- d. Cataloging Section Chief/Team Lead, who notifies the submitter; and
- e. Commodity manager.

21. Special Routing Instructions for Military Submissions.

a. In lieu of sending a technical package to the specification manager, the supply cataloger may coordinate the SSR with the specification manager by telephone. The choice of telephone coordination is made according to the joint judgment of the supply cataloger and specification manager.

b. Exceptions to coordination between the supply cataloger and specification manager.

(1) By mutual agreement, the Engineering and Cataloging Sections can waive technical review requirements for SSRs.

(2) If the supply cataloger is certain that the references, drawings and/or characteristics submitted with the SSR are complete and accurate, the SSR need not

be referred to the specification manager. If there is any uncertainty about the adequacy or accuracy of the description, the SSR must be referred to the specification manager.

(3) If the user/requestor has expressed a need for expedited processing, coordination between the supply cataloger and specification manager may be eliminated from the process. Consider telephone coordination and annotate the package to show that expedited processing was requested.

22. SSRs from Civilian Agencies. When a civilian Federal activity submits a Standard Form 1303 requesting supply support, it is routed as follows:

- a. Cataloging Section Chief/Team Lead;
- b. Supply cataloger, Stages 1 and 2, plus notifying the submitter; and
- c. Cataloging Section Chief/Team Lead.

23. New Item Requests from Civilian Agencies in Other Formats. Any GSA office receiving such a request (CSD recommendation, SSR and/or memorandum requesting NSN assignment) should send it directly to the Cataloging Section Chief/Team Lead at the appropriate Supply Operations Branch for review and action.

24. Assigning NSNs to GSA Publications.

a. GSA activities prepare pamphlets and booklets intended for use by various Federal agencies. NSNs should be assigned to these publications only when they are intended for a wide audience within the Federal Government and will have substantial and continuing demand.

b. The originating GSA office that proposes to distribute a new publication through the FAS supply system must coordinate the proposal with the Standard Forms group at least 90 calendar days before the proposed publication release date. The Standard Forms group will review the proposal to determine if the publication should be distributed through the FAS system.

CHAPTER 6. MAINTAINING CATALOGING AND SUPPLY MANAGEMENT DATA

PART 1. INTRODUCTION

1. Scope and Applicability. This chapter describes the GSA supply management data elements and the Federal Catalog System data elements for NSN items and it prescribes responsibilities and procedures for processing cataloging and supply management data requests. It applies to all FAS personnel involved in commodity management and the processing of NSNs.
2. Reasons the Data Must Be Maintained.
 - a. Federal Catalog System. In 1952 Congress enacted Public Law 82-436, "The Defense Cataloging and Standardization Act," in order to provide a single, Government-wide identification program. The program requires that "a single item identification will be utilized for each item respectively used, purchased, stocked or distributed for all functions of supply from original purchase to final disposal."
 - b. FLIS. The FLIS is a centralized database that supports Federal civilian agencies, the DoD and foreign participants in the integrated logistics support program. It is the primary source of logistics information available to our customer agencies.
 - c. Problems Caused by Inaccuracies. Inaccuracies cause one item of supply to be assigned more than one NSN; lead customers into making unnecessary or erroneous procurements; and produce inefficient supply support to customers' orders.
3. Requirement to Maintain Continuous Procurement Support. GSA procurement offices must support customer requirements as indicated by the data elements in the FLIS. Support of customer requirements must continue even after a request has been made to update a data element discussed in this chapter.
 - a. Procurement support may be discontinued only after the cataloging or supply management data action is complete under this chapter or by decision of the director of the assigned Supply Operations Branch.
 - b. The only exceptions to this rule are:
 - (1) Item Not Procurable. Before concluding that an item cannot be procured, the procuring contracting officer must make a significant effort to develop sources or to find substitutes. Technical support from the engineering area within the Supply Operations Branch should be requested when needed. The amount of effort applied should be proportional to the annual call quantity and dollar value. Procurement support may not be suspended until the effort to develop sources has proven fruitless.

(2) Excessive Price. The procuring contracting officer has a statutory responsibility to ensure that the price paid is not excessive. Procurement support may not be suspended until the high bid price is explained and it is clear that the lowest offer is unreasonably high.

4. Relationship Between the FSS ONLINE System and the FLIS.

a. Most cataloging or supply management data actions to change the FLIS will concurrently modify the appropriate FSS ONLINE files. Some of those actions are:

(1) Supply management data:

(a) AAC

(b) Shelf-life code

(c) Unit price

(d) U/I

(e) Quantity Expression (QE)

(f) QUP

(g) Phrase code (for reinstatement you must manually remove from the National Item File (NIF)).

(2) MOE-RL (user) data

(3) Identification data

(4) Reference/part number data

(5) Standardization data

(6) Freight data

b. Except in special circumstances as defined in this chapter, cataloging and supply management data may not be changed in FSS ONLINE data files, especially the NIF, until action to change the same data is completed in the FLIS.

c. Changes made directly to an FSS ONLINE file, such as the NIF, are not transmitted to the FLIS (except Branch code on NIF) or other FAS files and are, therefore, not visible to customer agencies.

PART 2. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

5. Research Before Preparing Action Request. Most requests for action under this chapter must be carefully researched before they are prepared and submitted. In general, the person preparing the request may need to study the Logistics Information Services TIR for the item, its procurement history, the specifications, related items, the demand history data, commercial market and impact on the customer. To facilitate this research, it is recommended that the Supply Operations Branch have on-hand and readily available to all its personnel, the following:

a. On-Line Inquiry Programs:

(1) NSNDATA programs which provide for item/specification/name inquiry; managed item reports;

(2) Federal Supply Schedules;

(2) H2, Federal Supply Classification (FSC) and H6, Item Name Directory;

(4) FSS ONLINE On Line inquiry programs;

(5) Logistics On-Line Access (LOLA) Classic and Federal Logistics Information System Web Search (WebFLIS); and

(6) Item Name Code (INC).

b. Logistics Information Services Publications:

(1) Item Identification Guides (IIGs) for all GSA-managed items assigned to the Supply Operations Branch; and

(2) DoD 4100.39-M, Federal Logistics Information System Procedures Manual, Volumes 1, 2, 6, 10, 13 and 16.

6. Supply Management and Cataloging Data Coordinator. One person or office in each Supply Operations Branch should manage and control all requests prepared in the Branch under this chapter. This coordination point should ensure that requests have been properly researched and coordinated, that the requirements of this handbook are observed and that all affected activities within the Supply Operation Branch are notified when the action is completed.

7. Automated GSA Form 3535, (Request for Cataloging/Supply Management Data Action ([GSA 3535.pdf](#) [PDF - 588 KB])). Use of GSA Form 3535, via the NCAL, "Create GSA 3535" is mandatory when requesting a change to Federal cataloging data or supply management data elements discussed in this chapter.

a. Follow the general instructions in the User's Manual located on the NCAL website logon screen.

Note: Specific instructions are given in Parts 3 and 4 of this chapter.

b. Coordinate each request prepared under this chapter with all affected offices before transmitting to Central Office Supply Chain Management.

c. The "Originator's Name" listed will be contacted if there are any questions regarding the action.

d. Standard Form 1303, Request for Federal Cataloging/Supply Support Action, is intended for use by civilian agencies other than FAS. Standard Form 1303 is obsolete; however, it is still being utilized by some Federal agencies. Offices within FAS should submit requests through the applicable Commodity Center in lieu of Standard Form 1303.

8. Submission of GSA Form 3535 Via the NCAL.

a. All GSA Form 3535 requests are to be submitted via the automated NCAL process, which provides an automated logging and tracking system capable of creating, transmitting and maintaining the forms.

b. Numerous edits are programmed into NCAL to eliminate invalid or erroneous actions from being submitted. NCAL uses the managed items FLDF extract to verify supply management data actions. On-screen messages will appear when an error has occurred.

c. Each request will be automatically assigned a unique document control serial number (DCSN) by NCAL.

d. All technical information, justifications, and/or explanations required to initiate the action(s) should be entered in Section IV (Explanation, Justification and/or Additional Data) of the form. If it is impossible to include the needed information in Section IV (Explanation, Justification and/or Additional Data), the information can be emailed to the Office of Supply Chain Management. Indicate in Section IV of the request that email data is being sent and also annotate the DCSN record on the email data to ensure the information is connected to the request. Do not email TIR, MODEL runs or any of the NSNDATA program information (e.g., NSNREAD), etc.

e. All requests completed will be returned by Central Office Supply Chain Management to the appropriate Supply Operations Branch log notification using the "Return GSA3535" option via NCAL (see NCAL Version 4.0 for procedures). The name that is entered in the "Manager's Name" block is assumed as the point of contact within Central Office Supply Chain Management and may be contacted if there are any questions or problems that arise concerning the actions taken.

f. The Supply Operations Branches are responsible for the historical documentation of all actions requested. These files are considered the “official files” wherein the commodity managers should ensure that all research information, justifications and/or technical data is properly maintained for each request submitted.

9. Federal Catalog System Lead-Times. Most cataloging actions have lead-times imposed by the rules of the Federal Catalog System. Requesting offices must consider these lead-times when submitting requests.

a. Effective Date Processing (Notification to Recorded Users). Any changes to supply management data require effective date processing. Effective dates are always on the first of each month. An effective date must have a lead-time of approximately 55 calendar days after submission to the FLIS.

- For example: a supply management data action requiring an effective date of June 1 must be submitted to FLIS by April 7 (55 calendar days prior) in order to meet the June 1 effective date. Lead-times are required to ensure that updates are made to the users automated systems.

b. Automated Supply Management Data Actions. NCAL will automatically create and process numerous supply management data changes. NCAL screens all incoming cataloging actions to identify requests qualifying for the automated process. NCAL will only automatically process the following action changes: AAC, MOP code, shelf-life, schedule number, unit price, QE (if edits allow), PIC, QUP and essentiality code. As a result, greater responsibility is placed upon the Supply Operations Branches to ensure the accuracy of the requested actions.

c. Collaboration with Recorded Users.

(1) Most cataloging actions, including NSN cancellations, deletions of recorded users, U/I changes, and major characteristics and reference changes must be collaborated with the recorded users. Collaboration allows 60-120 days for response from the recorded users.

(2) User collaboration allows any recorded user to object to the proposed action, in which case it cannot be implemented until the nonconcurrency is resolved. If a nonconcurrency cannot be resolved by the cataloger, the submitter has the responsibility of resolving the nonconcurrency. The cataloger will consult the submitter before any action can be changed.

d. Logistic Reassignment Lead-Time. Actions requiring transfer of management responsibility to or from GSA require 120 to 180 calendar days. The time required from initiation to completion of the logistics reassignment may vary from 175 to 235 calendar days. GSA does not accept transfer of assets.

PART 3. MAINTAINING CATALOGING DATA

10. Obtaining a New NSN. Activities within FAS should send a request to Commodity Management via email. Include an explanation for the need for the NSN.

11. Reinstating an Inactive/Cancelled NSN.

a. Explanation. An inactive/cancelled NSN may be recognized by the appearance of the New Item Identification Number (NIIN) Status Code 3, 4, 5, 7, or 8 in the NIIN status/cancellation data segment of the TIR. If it was cancelled in favor of an alternate, the alternate NSN will appear immediately after. An NSN that is cancelled can be reinstated if demand warrants and the NIIN Status Code is 4 or 8 (i.e., no replacement NSN).

b. Procedures for Reinstating an NSN. To reinstate an inactive NSN, submit cataloging action indicating GSA management data, descriptive data, and include a justification for the action. To reinstate a cancelled NSN, submit a cataloging action indicating item name, users, reference data, management data, characteristics, and include a justification for the action.

12. Logistics Reassignment.

a. Explanation. Logistics reassignment is the changing of the IMM for an NSN. GSA Engineering and Cataloging sections coordinate with Central Office's LR monitor who then coordinates with DLA.

b. Procedures. Submit requests for logistics reassignment via NCAL (include a justification for the request). Once an effective date has been established, the Supply Operations Branch should, with full coordination of the logistic reassignment monitor in Central Office, negotiate directly with the gaining or losing military activity concerning existing contracts, backorders, etc.

c. Acquisition Centers will periodically identify NSNs that are non-procurable to GSA because the vendor will not do business with GSA, but only with DLA. In these cases, the Acquisition Center will pursue Logistic Reassignment of the item to DLA.

13. Adding GSA Management Data to An Existing NSN.

a. Explanation. Adding GSA management data to an existing NSN makes GSA either the IMM or the Federal civilian agency manager of the NSN as explained below. In either case, management of an NSN requires GSA to maintain the cataloging and supply management data assigned to the NSN and to select the most appropriate MOS for the NSN. Supply management responsibilities are described below.

(1) IMM - MOE-RL G751. This level of supply management responsibility can apply under two circumstances:

(a) An item may be assigned MOE-RL G751 (listed on the Logistics Information Services TIR), if it is classified in one of the 67 FSCs assigned to GSA through agreement with DLA. If an item in one of GSA's 67 FSCs does not carry MOE-RL G751, it may be managed by a military service, DLA or a civilian agency.

(b) Any item with an FSC assigned to DLA may be assigned MOE-RL G751, provided GSA and DLA have agreed to assign it to GSA as an exception item. Exception items are listed in the DLA/GSA approved item exception list and are also identified by the exception item flag in the FLDF in NSN Data.

(2) Federal Civilian Agency Integrated Manager - MOE-RL G750. The second level of supply management responsibility can apply to any NSN item that is classified in one of the FSCs assigned to DLA and which, at the time, is not on the DLA/GSA exception list. MOE-RL G750 identifies GSA as the manager of the item only for civilian agencies. This level is the only way GSA can be identified as a supply source for items outside the 67 FSCs, unless the items have been approved by DLA headquarters for exception management.

(3) Dual management. An item may be managed by more than one agency or service as long as there is only one IMM. The most common type of dual management exists when a military agency is the IMM for DoD while GSA is the Federal civilian agency manager, using MOE-RL G750. Dual management is not encouraged and must be justified and kept to a minimum.

b. Procedures for Adding GSA Management Data to an Existing NSN.

(1) Specify MOE-RL G750 or G751. Determine the MOS (in accordance with Chapter 7), MOP, selling price, U/I, etc. Coordinate the request with affected offices. Submit NCAL cataloging action with a proposed effective date. Notify appropriate offices when action is complete.

(2) For items assigned MOE-RL G750 or GSA exception management (MOE-RL G751), regional commodity management or cataloging updates the NSN/Class/Group routing table. This assures requisitions are routed to the correct manager.

14. Changing a Federal Supply Class (FSC).

a. Explanation. The FSC is the first four digits of the NSN. Careful coordination of FSC changes is very important because changes may affect procurement and may change the Supply Operations Branch that manages the item or may result in logistics reassignment of the item to Veterans Affairs (VA), DLA or military services. FSCs are assigned under Cataloging Handbooks, "H2, Federal Supply Classification (FSC) and H6, Item Name Directory." Where an Approved Item Name (AIN) is used, the FSC depends entirely upon the FSCs that are permitted for use with that item name.

b. Procedures. Review all items in the family group and consider taking the action proposed for some or all members of the family group. Specify the item name to be used with the new FSC. Propose an effective date, include an explanation of the proposed change and coordinate with appropriate offices. Any FSC change request that would result in the transfer of management to another Supply Operations Branch needs to be coordinated and approved with the gaining Supply Operations Branch before submitting the request. Lead-time includes user collaboration and effective date processing under Paragraph 9. The submitter notifies appropriate offices when action is complete.

15. Changing an Item Name.

a. Explanation. The item name assigned to an NSN should be an AIN whenever possible. Where an AIN is used, the item must fit the definition of the name provided in Cataloging Handbook H-6, published by Logistics Information Services. Additionally, the FIIG alpha/numeric code, which is identified on the identification data line of the TIR, lists the characteristics data required to catalog an item using an AIN. The item name usually controls or limits the FSC assignment, as discussed in Paragraph 14.

b. Procedures. Review all items in the family group and consider taking the action proposed for some or all members of the family group and coordinate with appropriate offices. Lead-time includes user collaboration under Paragraph 9. The submitter notifies the appropriate offices when action is complete. If the item name change will result in an FSC change, specify the new FSC, discuss any resulting reassignment to another Supply Operations Branch or managing agency and follow the procedures in Paragraph 14.

16. Revising Characteristics Data.

a. Explanation. The characteristics make up the formal description of the item in terms prescribed by the IIG. They appear in the clear text characteristics segment of the TIR. Data elements include size, color, composition, end item application, etc. They must be compatible with the FPD or other description under which the NSN is procured. The characteristics data should not be changed to such an extent that the basic nature of the item is changed. If the characteristics change significantly changes the item of supply then you should obtain a new NSN. Revise characteristics data every time the item purchase description or FPD is revised.

b. Procedures. Review all items in the family group and consider taking the action proposed for some or all members of the family group. Coordinate any major changes with the engineering activity and procuring contracting officer. The submitter notifies appropriate offices once action is complete.

17. Revising Reference Data.

a. Explanation. The reference data is used to identify an item of production or an item of supply and appears in the reference data segment of the TIR. They include manufacturers' part numbers, drawing, model, type and specification controlling numbers and manufacturers' trade name when the manufacturer identifies the item by trade name only. Every FPD involved in describing an NSN and every manufacturer and part number that is known to match the requirements of an NSN, should be shown in the reference data. Whenever changes are made by industry or the engineer, the changes should be reflected in the reference data and/or characteristics data. The NSN should only be used as a reference when there is no known part number (p/n) that meets the IPD requirements. Once a p/n is determined to meet the IPD requirements, the NSN (if listed as a reference with the GSA cage code) should be deleted entirely (not coded as obsolete).

b. Procedures. Review all items in the family group and consider taking the action proposed for some or all members of the family group. The submitter notifies appropriate offices once the action is complete.

PART 4. MAINTAINING SUPPLY MANAGEMENT DATA

18. AAC.

a. Explanation. The AAC is a one character code assigned to an NSN to show how and under what circumstances, items are supplied to Federal agencies. Refer to the FAS Procurement Information/Code Caddy for a listing of AACs.

b. Procedures. Before proposing a new AAC, see the procedures in Chapter 7 for determining the MOS. Review all items in the family group, and consider taking the action proposed for some or all members of the family group. Submit NCAL cataloging action, including any additional data as required. Coordinate with the appropriate offices. Lead-time includes effective date processing under Paragraph 9. The submitter notifies appropriate offices when action is complete.

19. MOP Code.

a. Explanation. The MOP code is a two-position code that signifies the method by which an item is procured by GSA and, with some MOP codes, the assigned Supply Operations Branch. The MOP codes are in the FAS Procurement Information/Code Caddy. The MOP code is not a Logistics Information Service data element and, therefore, does not appear in the TIR, but it does appear in the FLDF and other FAS systems.

b. Procedures. First, determine if the proposed MOP code is in compliance with the permitted AAC/MOP relationships. If there is no conflict with the AAC, then propose an effective date and coordinate with the appropriate offices. Lead-time includes effective date processing under Paragraph 9. The submitter notifies the appropriate offices when action is complete.

20. Shelf-Life Code.

a. Explanation. The shelf-life code represents the expected storage life of an item subject to deterioration. It is a one position code that translates into the number of months during which a stored commodity remains effective, useful or suitable for consumption (e.g., Shelf-Life Code 6 equals 24 months).

b. Procedures. Review all items in the family group and consider taking the action proposed for some or all members of the family group. Coordinate with appropriate offices. Lead-time includes effective date processing under Paragraph 9. See Chapter 4 for further discussion of shelf-life.

21. Federal Supply Schedule Number.

a. Explanation. An NSN should not be associated with a schedule. NSNs are not loaded to MAS contracts. Schedule data is not included in the FLIS and, therefore, does not appear on the TIR. Schedule data do appear on the FDLF.

b. Procedures. Propose an effective date and coordinate with the appropriate offices. Lead-time includes effective date processing under Paragraph 9. The submitter notifies the appropriate offices when the action is complete.

22. Selling Price.

a. GSA Buy-on-Demand (AAC J) NSNs. For GSA Buy-on-Demand (AAC J) NSNs (e.g., special order), the selling price shown in the GSA management data is an estimated price, so the actual billing price may vary. Nonetheless, it is important that the selling price be as accurate as possible because customers use the FLIS selling price to obligate funds and GSA systems produce sales reports based on it. Buy-on-Demand (AAC J) items are no longer subject to automatic sell price updates via the Pricing Analysis and Schedule (PASS) program which is to adjust prices on a quarterly basis. Since PASS no longer analyzes the average purchase order cost plus markup from the previous quarter, Central Office may periodically provide manual reports that show pricing discrepancies between the sell price on the FLDF/FLIS and the calculated sell price based on the NIF cost price plus applicable markup. These manual reports should be reviewed and feedback provided to Central Office so that prices can be revised via a mass update. Since there is not a set time period for these manual reports, the Commodity/Product Management should review pricing for Buy-on-Demand items and enter updates via NCAL. For items on contract (AAC H), Commodity/Product Management should work with Acquisition to determine appropriate pricing to be posted to the FLDF/FLIS. Since FLIS updates can take up to 2 months to be effective, price updates for each NSN should be entered via NCAL as soon as they are known (this may be well before the contract is loaded into FSS Online). Also, please note that an NSN on a contract can have more than one price. The standard/highest price that would apply to most customers and the "average" buying/ordering scenario should be used.

b. Procedures. The selling price must sometimes be corrected by a supply management data specialist, based upon a request from the Supply Operation Branch. If a selling price needs to be corrected, use an average cost price plus markup if zonal pricing is present. Use the cost price plus markup for one U/I if there are quantity price breaks, propose an effective date and coordinate with the appropriate offices. Lead-time includes effective date processing under Paragraph 9. The submitter notifies the appropriate offices when action is complete.

23. U/I.

a. Explanation. U/I is a two-position alpha code assigned to an NSN to show the smallest unit available to the user by volume, physical measurement, weight or count. It is critical that the effective date of a U/I change coincides with the effective date of any contract amendments or new award for proper purchase order processing. For detailed procedures on U/I review and maintenance, refer to Chapter 8. For a listing of the U/I codes, see the FAS procurement Information/Code Caddy.

b. Procedures. Provide a quantity conversion from the existing U/I. Also provide the selling price for the new U/I, QE (if the U/I is nondefinitive) and a new QUP if needed. The supply management data specialist will establish the quantity conversion factor and propose an effective date. The justification should be detailed. Coordinate with the affected offices, including the specification manager, commodity manager, procuring contracting officer, and the current contracted vendor (if applicable). Final authority and oversight is assigned to the commodity management specialist. Lead-time includes user collaboration and effective date processing (see Paragraph 9). The submitter notifies appropriate offices when action is complete.

24. QE for Nondefinitive U/I.

a. Explanation. A nondefinitive U/I is one that does not show an exact quantity by volume, measurement, weight or count; examples are BX (box), PG (package), RL (reel) and DR (drum). A definitive U/I is preferred but when a nondefinitive U/I is assigned, the QE states the amount in one U/I (e.g., BX 18EA; PG 2EA; RL 15FT; etc.).

b. Procedures. QE changes should only be made when the FLDF/FLIS reflects a different QE than the QE which has always been supplied. When a QE is changed, you are in theory changing the quantity/amount that a customer will receive, therefore, affecting demand history, demand forecast and quantity on-hand. The conversion factor which converts demand history, demand forecast and U/I changes, respectively, cannot be input for QE changes. However, if a QE change has been determined appropriate as explained above, propose an effective date and provide a new quantity per unit pack, if needed. Coordination procedures are the same as for U/I changes. The submitter notifies the appropriate office when action is complete.

25. QUP. The QUP is the cataloging data element that shows the number of U/I's in one unit pack. QUP is the next level of packaging from the U/I. This can be the unit pack, intermediate pack or shipping container depending on the U/I. The QUP should be compatible with the "bulk pack" in supply distribution data files. QUP codes may be found in DoD 4100.39-M, Volume 10, Table 56.

26. PIC. The PIC is a one-position code assigned to an NSN. When requesting a new NSN assignment via the NCAL users must indicate a PIC code. These codes, while no longer used, are a required field for the FLDF. Although there are two options: "Y" or "N," it is recommended that "N" be the default option.

PART 5. MAKING NATIONAL STOCK NUMBERS INACTIVE

27. General Instructions. This part provides guidance for permanently or temporarily making an NSN inactive. It is intended for use whenever an NSN cannot be procured, should not be procured or has a suitable substitute NSN. This part applies only to GSA-managed items in the GSA managed FSCs. A justification and/or explanation must be included, which the supply cataloger will send to the recorded users when the action is collaborated. Explain the problem that generated the proposed action, the options and alternatives and, in terms of procurement and cataloging, the eventual outcome sought. The actions discussed in this part are:

- a. NSN cancellation;
- b. Deleting GSA management from a nonprocurable NSN (NIIN Status Code 1 or 9);
- c. Deleting GSA management from an inactive NSN; and
- d. Utilization of phrase codes.

28. Cancelling a NSN.

a. Explanation. An NSN should only be cancelled if it was established in error. If the item of supply already had another NSN, use cancel/duplicate. If the NSN was assigned in error and if it has a suitable replacement NSN, use cancel/use. If the item cannot be identified, use cancel/invalid.

b. Procedures. See below for specific procedures on the types of cancellation. Include a justification, which will be sent to the recorded users. Coordinate with the appropriate offices. Lead-time includes user collaboration and effective date processing under Paragraph 9. The submitter notifies the appropriate offices when action is complete.

(1) Cancelling a NSN as Invalid, Without Replacement. An NSN should be cancelled only if established in error and a replacement NSN is not available.

(2) Cancelling a NSN/Using a Replacement NSN. Commonly called a cancel/use action, this is used to cancel an invalid item for which there is a usable alternate. A cancel/use action erases the reference data on the cancelled NSN without transferring them to the replacement NSN. Therefore, any reference that should be shown on the replacement NSN should be submitted separately.

(3) Cancelling a Duplicate NSN. Commonly called a cancel/dup, this is done only when two NSNs represent the same item of supply. A cancel/dup action automatically transfers the reference data and users from the cancelled item to the replacement item.

c. Special Notes on Cancellation of NSNs.

(1) When the FLIS is queried about a cancelled NSN, the TIR will reflect the NIIN status code. If the item was cancelled with a replacement, the replacement NSN will also appear.

(2) As soon as an NSN cancellation is effective, all cataloging and logistics data is erased from the FLIS, except the standardization data, NIIN status cancellation data and catalog management data.

(3) Any recorded user of the cancelled item who expresses interest in the retained item (when responding to a collaboration action) is transferred to the retained item. Otherwise, all users are erased.

29. Deleting a Nonprocurable NSN.

a. Explanation. GSA management data is deleted from a nonprocurable NSN only if the item was once procurable. When GSA management data is deleted from a nonprocurable NSN, all recorded users are deleted. The AAC is changed to Y and the NIIN Status Code is changed to 1 (with NATO users) or 9 (without NATO users).

b. Procedures. Propose an effective date and identify a replacement NSN whenever possible. Include a justification, which will be sent to the recorded users. Coordinate with the appropriate offices. Lead-time includes user collaboration and effective date processing under Paragraph 9. The submitter notifies the appropriate offices when the action is complete.

30. Deleting GSA Management Data from an Inactive NSN.

a. Explanation. GSA management data may be deleted from an inactive procurable NSN that the Federal Government no longer has any interest in or from an NSN that GSA management officials have decided not to procure.

b. Procedures for Deleting GSA Management Data. Also see Paragraph 29 for limitations and further discussion. Coordinate with appropriate offices and submit NCAL cataloging action with justification, proposed effective date and identify a replacement NSN whenever possible. Lead-time includes user collaboration and effective date processing under Paragraph 9. The submitter notifies the appropriate offices when action is complete.

c. Special Notes on Inactive NSNs. This paragraph describes special rules and limitations in the FLIS and FSS ONLINE programs that control the processes discussed in this part.

(1) Once an item is made inactive, GSA management data is retained on the NIF indefinitely (unless manually deleted by the Supply Operations Branch).

(2) GSA management data is erased from the TIR 60-90 calendar days after the Phrase Code is changed to A, Z or V (inactive status).

(3) An NSN is removed from the managed items FLDF item extract on-line as soon as the inactive status is effective in the FLIS.

31. Phrase Code.

a. Explanation.

(1) A phrase code is a one-character alphabetic or numeric code that represents a statement or phrase that denotes changes to and/or relationships between NSNs and informational type data for NSNs. It appears in the catalog management data segment of the TIR, on the line that includes MOE-RL Code TG. The phrase codes recognized by the GSA system are listed in the FAS Procurement Information/Code Caddy. Most phrase codes indicate a relationship between one or more NSNs (e.g., Phrase Code F indicates when the subject NSN has been exhausted using the replacement NSN specified). Other phrase codes identify particular information about the NSN (Phrase Code K specifies a QE for a U/I). Phrase code changes are always associated with some other cataloging action, except as specified in Paragraph 33.

(2) Logistics Information Services does not recognize Phrase Code F, therefore, when the FLDF, and/or NIF shows Phrase Code F, Logistics Information Services will show Phrase Code H.

b. Procedures. For the actions described below, specify the AAC if it is to be changed and propose an effective date. Provide a justification and coordinate with the appropriate offices. Lead-time includes user collaboration and effective date processing under Paragraph 9. The submitter notifies the procuring contracting officer and specification manager when the action is complete.

32. When Should Interim Phrase Code Changes be Used?

- a. When GSA permanently substitutes one NSN for another and the substitution must be established before the permanent action (i.e., cancellation or NIIN status code change), can be fully collaborated, request collaboration of a Phrase Code change to F. Specify AAC V or Y, provide the replacement NSN and propose an effective date. Provide justification and coordinate with the appropriate offices. Lead-time includes user collaboration and effective date processing under Paragraph 9. The submitter notifies the appropriate offices when action is complete. This emergency action should be taken only in unusual circumstances.
- b. When the circumstance requiring substitution will last 4 months or less, record the phrase code and substitute NSN only in FSS ONLINE and change the NIF, as necessary.
- c. If the inability to support an item is expected to last 4 months to a maximum of 12 months, collaborate a change to Phrase Code F with a substitute NSN, without changing the AAC or other codes.

CHAPTER 7. DETERMINING AND IMPLEMENTING METHODS OF SUPPLY

PART 1. INTRODUCTION

1. General. A MOS is a procurement and distribution process that the GSA uses to provide items of supply to Federal agencies and other authorized users. Many factors must be considered to determine the best MOS and to implement the determination. The cost and demand for the item, cost of Government operations, shelf-life, commercial availability, Government unique manufacturing and distribution processes, delivery time and the limitations inherent in Government procurement are just some of these factors. The procurement and distribution process that takes all factors into account at the lowest overall cost to the Government is the preferred MOS.
2. Scope and Applicability. This chapter prescribes guiding principles that should be considered when making MOS decisions for items supplied by the FAS. It applies to all FAS personnel involved in making MOS decisions, including procurement, engineering, and supply determination.
3. MOS Coordinator. Each Supply Operation Branch should have one individual or activity designated as the MOS coordinator. All proposed actions that affect the MOS of items managed by the Branch, including AAC changes, changes to Federal Supply Schedules, cancellations, etc., should be reviewed by the MOS coordinator. The responsibilities of the MOS coordinator include ensuring that all affected activities, within and outside the Supply Operations Branch, are consulted or informed as necessary and that all procedures are observed.
4. Relationship Between the MOS and Retail Supply. This chapter concerns MOS decisions for items managed by GSA. Retail supply decisions are commonly made on a local basis by the GSA Retail Stores and by similar activities in the military services, without review by the GSA commodity manager. This chapter does consider the impact of MOS determinations on retail distribution processes and vice versa.
5. Industrial Fundings. MOS decisions affect FAS resource allocation, revenue, and cost. MOS decisions consider the industrial impact and maintain the delicate balance between resources, revenue, and cost.

PART 2. METHOD OF SUPPLY CHOICES

6. Special Order, Established Source (AAC H). AAC H is used whenever all customer requisitions should be placed by GSA directly with a vendor, as a result of a FEDSTRIP/MILSTRIP requisition. AAC H tells the customer that requisitions will be filled relatively quickly (as opposed to AAC J, which suggests much longer delivery time because purchase/procurement time is included). Specifically, AAC H has three uses:

a. Special Order Term Contract. A sealed-bid or negotiated-term contract with zones, used with MOP Code 32, 36 or 37.

b. Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) or Standing Quote. Used with MOP Code 42. May be used whenever there are no requirements for formal contracting.

c. Agency BPA or Term Contract. A contract or agreement written by GSA for special order items that will be used exclusively by one Federal agency. Generally, the customer orders directly from the vendor using MOP Code 21 (except if written for the VA, use MOP Code 23).

7. Special Order, Buy-on-Demand (AAC J). Procurement begins when a FEDSTRIP or MILSTRIP requisition is received. AAC J tells the customer to expect a long delivery lead-time. Since it entails a long lead-time to the customer and high procurement costs to GSA, use of AAC J should be restricted to:

a. Testing the demand level for new items and items formerly carried as local purchase (AAC L); and

b. A permanent MOS only for items when noneconomic constraints clearly mandate centralized procurement but no other MOS is possible.

8. Local Purchase (AAC L). An item is assigned MOS AAC L when a determination has been made that the item can be procured locally. Local purchase items are managed by GSA, in the sense of maintaining a record in the Federal Catalog System. However, they are not purchased by GSA except under special circumstances.

a. Federal agencies may purchase AAC L items themselves.

b. GSA will purchase an AAC L item for a customer only if the requisition carries Advice Code 2A (not locally obtainable) or if the requisition comes from an overseas Federal user (except for requisitions from overseas Navy activities which should be processed through Navy Supply Centers).

9. Semi-Active (AAC X [No Replacement]). The definition of AAC X is misleading due to the words "no replacement." It does not mean the item is obsolete or non-procurable, only that it is semi-active.

10. Cataloging Actions That Affect the MOS. In addition to changing the AAC, other cataloging actions affect the MOS. They are discussed in Chapter 6.

PART 3. STEPS FOR MAKING THE DETERMINATION

11. Discussion.

a. The MOS determination is a process of research, analysis, planning and judgment. The steps discussed in this part should be taken in most cases. The order in which they are taken may be varied and additional steps may be necessary.

b. Every MOS determination requires substantial effort. Consideration must be given to the potential benefits of MOS determinations in order to prioritize the workload and to determine the level of effort to put into each determination.

Step 1: Collect the Basic Data. Basic item information is necessary to make an informed and rational decision. Listed below are some of the data elements that may be required to perform a review. See Chapter 9 for a more detailed discussion of many of the data elements listed below:

- AAC;
- MOP code;
- Item standardization code;
- Phrase code, if any;
- Substitute NSN, if any;
- Shelf-life or shelf-life code, if assigned;
- Item name;
- Unit price;
- U/I;
- QE (for non-definitive units of issue);
- Annual calls, quantity, value;
- Current acquisition status;
- Item description (e.g., FPD, Federal Catalog System characteristics data, manufacturer and part number);
- Customer;

- Weight and cube (transportation and storage concerns); and
- Current contract

Step 2: Look for Previous MOS Actions. Check the NCAL history files and TIR data to see what action(s) have been taken on the subject item in the past.

Step 3: Look for Family Groups and Possible Substitutes. A family group includes all items that are parts, components, and accessories or that is in a range of colors, sizes or styles. Find the other items in the family group and identify the MOS assigned to them.

Step 4: Review for Non-economic Considerations. See Part 4.

Step 5: Prepare an Implementation Strategy.

- The implementation strategy is the process by which the item is placed into a new MOS. The most important implementation issues are discussed in Part 5. Reviewing these issues often reveals difficulties that call for changing the strategy or the MOS itself.
- Review the implementation issues and prepare an implementation strategy before the MOS determination is finalized. The implementation strategy should be written. For simple MOS changes, such as changing AAC L to AAC J, it may be represented entirely by the implementing document (e.g., GSA Form 3535 (Request for Cataloging/Supply Management Data Action), which shows the explanation and the effective date.
- If data collected during MOS research are not already part of the catalog system database, provide the new data to the supply cataloger (see Chapter 6 for procedures).

PART 4. NONECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

12. Frequently Encountered Noneconomic Considerations. Listed below are some of the more frequent noneconomic considerations encountered. The reliance of each of the considerations is dependent upon the nature of the item(s) and/or commodity under review. Thorough review and consideration of both economic and noneconomic factors will lead to a sound and rational MOS decision that best serves the customer, the taxpayer and GSA.

- Is the Item Covered by Interagency Agreements?

(1) GSA has special support agreements with many other Federal agencies. The most important is the 1971 DoD/GSA agreement, which identifies the Federal supply classes for which each agency is the IMM.

(2) Many agreements commit GSA to a specific MOS. These must be observed in making MOS determinations. The Office of Customer and Stakeholder Engagement (CASE) maintains the agreements and publishes an index. Send any request to change an agreement to CASE.

b. Does GSA Procure Items That Have a Family Relationship to the Item Under Review? A family group includes all items that are parts and accessories or that are in a range of colors, sizes or styles. Consider placing all members of a family of items (or a subgroup) in one MOS. Consolidating related items allows GSA to issue fewer solicitations, which reduces the workload on GSA and the bidders and thereby reduces operating and commodity costs. Consolidation also makes it easier for Federal users to find the right items to service their needs.

c. Must Federal Agencies Procure the Item from a Mandatory Source? Federal agencies by law must obtain certain items from noncommercial, mandatory sources. Procurement of these items from other sources is permitted only if cleared by the mandatory source. Identify mandatory source items by checking the following sources. The priority assigned to the mandatory sources is indicated.

(1) Federal Prison Industries (FPI). FPI (also known as UNICOR), which is part of the U.S. Department of Justice, publishes the "Schedule of Products made in Federal Penal and Correctional Institutions," which lists the products that must be procured from FPI under FAR 8.602.

(a) FPI has first priority for supplies; that is, if FPI is the mandatory source for an item of supply, the other mandatory sources must defer to FPI.

(b) FPI has second priority for services.

(2) AbilityOne. AbilityOne is a program that offers nonprofit products from the National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and National Industries for the Severely Handicapped (Source America). The Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled operates under the authority of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act (41 U.S.C. 46-48C) and FAR 8.704. The Committee publishes the procurement list that shows the items available from AbilityOne and identifies items that are available from GSA, DLA, etc.

(a) AbilityOne has second priority for supplies and first priority for services.

(b) Commercial sources have third priority for both supplies and services.

(3) Government Printing Office (GPO). Procedures and requirements for paper items, printing and binding are governed by rules and agreements between GSA and GPO.

d. Would the Cost to the Customer of a Long Delivery Time Make a Higher MOS More Appropriate? A customer request for a more responsive MOS must be given thorough consideration.

e. Is the Item Produced Under a Government-unique Design or Manufacturing Process So That It Is Not Readily Available from Commercial Sources? The Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act (FASA) of 1994 states a preference for the acquisition of commercial items. Where market research has determined that no commercial or modified commercial item suitable to meet the customer's need is available, then it may be necessary to procure the item in accordance with a Government specification (Federal or military). Every effort should be made to modify requirements so that a commercial item can be procured.

(1) Many items bought by the Federal Government have both commercial and Government-unique characteristics. GSA and the military services require bar code marking on virtually all containers but the items inside the boxes may still be essentially commercial. Furthermore, limited competition does not necessarily imply that the item is Government-unique. For example, certain items (particularly specialized tools), may be available to the general public as well as the Government but at the same time may be produced and distributed by only a few suppliers.

(2) If Government-unique requirements cannot be avoided, local purchase usually is not an acceptable MOS because most local purchasing offices do not have the skills to prepare and maintain the FPDs that Government-unique items must have.

f. Are Supplier Minimum Order Limits Larger Than Most Customer Requisitions? This often occurs when it is cost prohibitive for contractors to deliver small quantities or because the minimum production run is fixed by the manufacturing process.

g. Is the Item a Preprinted Form? As a general rule, NSNs are not assigned to forms and they are managed outside normal supply channels. There are four classes of forms to which GSA-managed NSNs are assigned and with few exceptions.

h. Are the Demand Data Ambiguous or Incomplete?

(1) Determining the annual calls or dollar value of an item or predicting its future demand may be impossible in (at least) the following circumstances:

- (a) The item is new to the Government or new to GSA;
- (b) The design or specifications are greatly changed;

- (c) The demand for the item is rapidly rising, falling or fluctuating; and
- (d) The item is on a MAS.

(2) It is important in such cases that demand be monitored closely, if the likelihood of substantial demand is not high assign AAC J or H to develop a demand record.

i. Has the NSN been in the FLDF or GSA Supply Catalog Less Than 2 Years? If yes, the product and demand information may not be reliable because customers may not know the item, potential vendors may not be on the bidder's mailing list and specifications may not have been refined. The 2-year limit is merely a guideline; these issues should be addressed for any relatively new item.

j. Is There a Schedule Available? It is much easier to place an item onto an existing schedule than it is to create a new one.

k. Are Commercial Distribution Channels Inadequate to Serve Government Needs? All MOS rely entirely on commercial channels to deliver supplies to the customer within the Contiguous United States (CONUS) (e.g., AAC J, AAC H and AAC L are acceptable for commercial items if they meet Government needs.

l. Is Technical Assistance, Service, or Installation Required To Set Up or Use the Item? If an item requires technical assistance, service or installation by the vendor or other outside expert, an NSN should not be assigned. If the NSN exists, it should be cancelled. An NSN should stand on its own without the requirement of customization. NSNs cannot be customized as they are a unique item of supply. If asbestos might be released, GSA may not manage or procure the item.

m. Does the Item Have Only One Using Federal Agency or One Using Location? GSA must support all items that are referred to us by a military service, regardless of the number of users.

n. Is It a Sole Source or Single Bid Item? A sole source item is one for which the procuring contracting officer knows from the beginning that there can be only one vendor. A single bid item, by contrast, is one that more than one vendor could bid on but for which only one bid is received. The authority and procedures for procuring sole source items are in FAR 6.3. GSA must try to reduce the need for both kinds of items. However, if a sole source or single bid item is needed by Federal customers, it may be procured by GSA under any MOS.

PART 5. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

13. Changing the AAC. Most MOS changes will be expressed in an AAC change. To change the AAC, as stated in Chapter 6, submit NCAL cataloging action. Specify the new MOP code and propose an effective date. Coordinate with the procuring

contracting officer and specification manager. The submitter notifies the procuring contracting officer and specification manager when the action is complete.

14. Selecting the Best Effective Date. Award dates for new contracts and effective dates for supply management data changes can have a major impact on whether an MOS change works or not.

a. The proposed dates should be coordinated with the procuring contracting officer.

b. More than one date may be involved.

c. The factors listed below are generally the most important in selecting dates; they are not in order of importance, as the order will vary.

(1) Expected contract award date under the new MOS (see Paragraph 25);

(2) Expiration date of contract coverage under the outgoing MOS (see Paragraph 29);

(3) FPD availability date;

(4) Most cataloging actions have long lead-times imposed by the rules of the Federal Catalog System. Lead-times are discussed in detail in Chapter 11. In general, the lead-time for changing an AAC is 55 calendar days. AAC actions must be effective on the first day of the month.

15. Procurement Status of Related Items. In this context, related items are those in family groups and those included together on multi-item solicitations. If there is a procurement production plan to which the item may be added, work out a plan to add it, consulting with the procuring contracting office. Implement at the beginning of the Next Procurement Cycle. The disadvantage is that implementation may be suspended for as much as 2 years.

16. Contracts and Solicitations for the Item.

a. If a solicitation for the item has already been issued and it conflicts with the MOS change, one solution is to halt or cancel the solicitation, provided there is no major expense to the Government.

b. If a solicitation for the item cannot be halted under paragraph a., above, the implementation strategy for the MOS change must be altered (e.g., delaying implementation).

c. Any existing contract for the item must be cancelled or allowed to expire before the new contract is effective.

17. Mandatory Sources. If GSA is procuring the item through FPI or AbilityOne, the MOS change must be coordinated with the source before implementation begins. It is the responsibility of the Contracting Officer to notify the current vendor of impending MOS changes that would affect the contract. MOS changes for items procured from GPO have to be coordinated with GPO.

18. Small Business Administration (SBA) and Minority Vendors. Many items are obtained by GSA through arrangements with the SBA under their minority enterprise, 8(a) and small business programs. Other items come directly from small businesses. The impact of an MOS change on such vendors must be considered, including the impact on the multi-year eligibility of 8(a) vendors. If the SBA is involved, the MOS change must be coordinated with them.

19. FPDS. FPDs include Federal specifications, interim Federal specifications, qualified products lists for Federal specifications, Federal standards, and commercial item descriptions. When an MOS change involves new or revised FPDs, they must be ready for use before a solicitation is issued in the new MOS. (See Chapters 1 and 6 for additional procedures.)

20. Publicity. Often the most critical step in implementing an MOS change is publicizing it. Inadequate or misdirected publicity may cause vendors not to bid or customers to go to sources outside of GSA. Even GSA personnel may hinder the implementation if they are not informed. A few ways to publicize an MOS are discussed below. There are many other possibilities.

a. GSA Supply Catalog. Make sure the item is completed in the Product Information and Communications System and marked to be available in GSA-Advantage!© and GSA Global Supply.

b. Notice to Ordering Offices. Publications detailing FAS offerings and solutions are prepared by the Office of Customer and Stakeholder Engagement (CASE) and distributed to interested parties. Publications are available for order or pdf download at the GSA Centralized Mailing List Service online ordering website (www.gsa.gov/cmls). Publications are free of charge to ordering activities.

21. Documentation and Filing. To facilitate review before or after implementation, the MOS determination and its implementation strategy must be fully documented.

a. The MOS case file must include, at a minimum:

(1) The initial request for an MOS review;

(2) NCAL cataloging action or other document (such as the Logistics Information Service TIR or WebFLIS that includes the basic data;

(3) Other basic documents gathered, such as FPDs, correspondence, contact records, etc.; and

(4) Implementation strategy and implementing document(s). In simple cases, the implementing document is sufficient.

b. Keep MOS case files in the commodity management area in an inactive file on disapproval of entry of the item into or on deletion of the item from the supply system. Cut off all inactive files at the end of the fiscal year, hold 2 years and destroy.

CHAPTER 8. UNIT-OF-ISSUE REVIEW AND MAINTENANCE

PART 1. INTRODUCTION

1. Scope. This chapter establishes and provides overall policy direction and guidance governing the selection and modification of the U/I for an item of supply and the ongoing maintenance thereof. The U/I quantifier used by GSA denotes the physical measurement or count of an item for purposes of requisitioning that is issued to the end user. That U/I, in conjunction with its QE, is the element to which the unit price is ascribed. Various factors must be evaluated to determine the best U/I and to implement any changes to the original U/I. Current contract coverage and end dates, commercial packaging practices, customer ordering trends, overall cost estimates of Government operational procedures, shipping costs are some of these factors. The key in selecting any U/I is to try to take all these factors into account and to make the entire ordering and shipping process as simple and efficient as possible. U/I review can be completed in conjunction with a MOS review.

2. Responsibility. Although the commodity management area in the Supply Operation Branches are responsible for conducting and implementing U/I reviews, any FAS office can request that a review be initiated. Within the Supply Operation Branches, approval to change a U/I must be obtained from the responsible specification manager and the Commodity Manager. Establishing policy and procedures regarding U/I changes, along with program oversight, resides with the Central Office Supply Chain Management Division.

PART 2. UNIT-OF-ISSUE REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGES

3. Review of Items for Possible Change. A U/I review can be conducted on any item. If at all possible, reviews should be designed to include entire family groups or similar items. These groups can be as small or as large as necessary but should include as many items in the family group as possible. From a customer standpoint, maintaining a degree of consistency in the U/I for a group of similar items may alleviate confusion.

4. Determination of U/I. The following factors play a key role in determining the most appropriate U/I:

a. Commercial Packaging Practices. Vendors should be contacted to determine their standard commercial pack(s) and minimum order requirements. Suppliers' catalogs and websites, as well as GSA Advantage should also be used as a comparison. If industry has standardized a unit package, economic advantages can accrue at the procurement and wholesale distribution levels by utilizing these same established commercial practices.

b. Is the Product Consumable? Will There be Repetitive Purchases?

c. Is the Product Durable? Will There be a Long Span of Time Before Another Purchase?

d. Effect on Customer Ordering Activities. Using the Business Objects Enterprise Program (CART), run a MIS query to determine demand history. The report provides an overview of the customer's past ordering patterns and is helpful in projecting the potential impact on the customer of a U/I change. In some cases, the report may show that the majority of customers usually order more than the quantity contained in the U/I. This may substantiate the fact that the majority of customers would not be adversely affected by changing the U/I to a greater quantity. Increasing an item's U/I may allow customers to order fewer times during the span of a year while still obtaining the same aggregate amount, thereby reducing customer ordering and GSA operational costs. However, close attention must be paid to items with limited shelf-life or hazardous properties. Before changing any U/I, a CART report should be obtained and the impact on customers determined.

e. Unit of Measure. The unit of measure is a universally recognized physical measurement of an item. When considering a U/I change, the commodity manager should consider adopting a definitive unit of measure (i.e., EA, DZ) over a non-definitive U/I for which a QE will have to be used (i.e., BX, CN). This will help alleviate customer confusion.

f. Unit Cost. The unit cost of the item should be taken into consideration when determining the U/I. Although the review of customer demand may support changing the U/I from "PR" to "DZ" (\$30 to \$360), a change to "BX/6 PR" (\$180) may be a more reasonable cost increase for the customer.

5. Effect on Current Contracts. Before an item's U/I is changed, confirmation of any outstanding contract coverage must be made. If there is current contract coverage for an item being changed, timing of the change must coincide with the anticipated start date of the next contract period or with the effective date of the contract modification. If there is no current contract coverage, the U/I can be changed as soon as possible after concurrence has been obtained from all responsible offices.

6. Submission of GSA Form 3535 (Request for Cataloging/Supply Management Data Action). Once a determination has been made to change an existing U/I, the Supply Operations Branch must submit the request via NCAL automated GSA Form 3535 with proposed effective dates. All necessary concurrences for each of the offices listed in Paragraph 2 should be obtained before submitting the request. The commodity management activity within the Supply Operations Branch is responsible for maintaining all documentation.

7. Implementation and Effective Date. The date chosen for the U/I change is the most critical part of the process. All responsible offices (Paragraph 2) **must** be notified and fully informed of the impact that these dates will have on their respective program areas. Specifications and/or purchase descriptions must be updated, FLIS TIRs changed,

solicitations and/or contracts changed, marking requirements verified. Vendors must be aware of the fact that an item's U/I will change and their prices affected accordingly (if the U/I change takes place during a contract period, notification will be achieved formally by the modification). Vendors may also have to change their labeling procedures since most contracts require that the FAS U/I be included on all labels. Once all parties have agreed to an appropriate effective date, it is imperative that all files having a direct impact on this process are updated in accordance with already-established procedures. All offices involved in this process must ensure that their respective responsibilities for the U/I change are implemented in a timely manner to meet the agreed-upon date.

8. Coordination with Users. Regional Cataloging will coordinate any U/I change with all recorded military and/or civilian users. FAS is responsible for U/I assignment and must balance user requirements with other economic considerations, such as demand history, unit price, packaging and overall cost effectiveness. The coordination process is primarily to make the user aware of the change being made.

9. Finalizing the U/I Change. Central Office Supply Chain Management is responsible for notifying commodity management activities in the Branches via NCAL once a U/I change and its effective date have been established. Central Office Supply Chain Management and the commodity activities in the Branches are jointly responsible for any follow-up necessary to confirm finalization of any U/I changes. The Supply Operations Branches are responsible for publicizing any U/I change through the use of GSA Supply Catalog updates, etc.

10. Assigning a New NSN in Lieu of Changing the U/I. Changing the properties of an item of supply is not permissible; however, changing the U/I or the quantity supplied is. Liquids are a good example, since they are supplied in various container sizes. If a determination is made that selling a one quart can of paint is not cost effective, changing that particular NSNs U/I to gallon would not be proper. The NSN was established as a quart container; therefore, obtaining a separate NSN to be used as a gallon container would be correct. The U/I, however, for the one quart can of paint could be changed to a package of four. The original intent was that the NSN would represent a quart container. That intent is not changed, only the fact that the customer now has to purchase four quarts at a time. In instances where demand is shown to be substantial, it may be beneficial for both FAS and our customers to establish two or more NSNs using separate U/Is.