Launching Cannabis Products in Canada
How to Get the Basics Right for Retail
Using this Guide

This guide provides licensed producers of cannabis and manufacturers of cannabis-related products with helpful information on how to meet Canadian trading partner and regulatory requirements when selling cannabis products within Canada’s Grocery retail sector.

Learn:
1. How to become a GS1 Canada subscriber
2. How to get the right barcodes for cannabis and cannabis-related products
3. What product information and images are required to trade in Canada
4. How to share product information with all of your trading partners using one industry solution - ECCnet New Item Setup
5. How to get content to support eCommerce, planogram and marketing business processes

Industry guidelines have been developed in collaboration with provincial cannabis authorities.

Download this guide at www.gs1ca.org/cannabis

Who is GS1 Canada?

In a world of growing data, GS1 global standards provide a common language to identify, capture, share and use supply chain data—ensuring important information is accessible, accurate and easy to understand.

Through our unique community management role, GS1 Canada collaborates with Canadian business leaders, advisory councils and industry work groups to develop standards, guidelines and non-propriety business solutions to support subscribers of all sizes across multiple sectors.

Our solutions address specific sector-wide, non-competitive business process issues, designed to enable users to meet Canadian trading partner and regulatory requirements.

GS1 Canada is a proven global leader in data excellence, delivering the highest quality of accurate and complete bilingual product content to the Canadian market.

Download this guide at www.gs1ca.org/cannabis
Why GS1 Global Standards Matter

In a global digital world, GS1 global standards help single out what really matters. They give you a common language to identify, capture and share supply chain data - ensuring important information is accessible, accurate and easy to understand.

Global standards users benefit from:

- **Interoperability**: Global standards level the playing field and facilitate business across borders for businesses of all sizes. Standards-based solutions ensure interoperability across systems.

- **Traceability**: Global standards enable products to be tracked and traced as they move through the supply chain. This enables supply chain issues to be identified and products to be quickly located or recalled if necessary.

- **Operational Efficiency**: Remove unreliable, time-consuming, manual business processes from the supply chain, minimizing the number of repetitive processes and significantly reducing the opportunity for human error.

- **Authenticity**: Unique company and product identification enable traceability and prevent counterfeiting.

- **Trusted Canadian Industry Expertise**: Have confidence in GS1 Canada’s industry knowledge and expertise gained over 40 years of delivering global standards-based solutions built by industry, for industry.

Example product data attributes that are used to fuel business processes throughout the supply chain:

- Global Trade Item Number (GTIN)
- Production Lot Number
- Batch Number
- Expiry Date
- Serial Number
All of GS1 Canada’s ECCnet industry managed solutions, tools and services are powered by TrueSource™, our commitment to being the one source of truth for complete and reliable product data and image content.

GS1 Canada content can be relied upon as the most reliable, perpetually cleansed and updated content available, enabling business leaders to rely on accurate and complete bilingual data to fuel their business processes, and helping to build trust along the value chain.

Why Data Excellence Matters

Poor data quality can have a significant impact on your trading partner relationships and the business processes that rely on accurate and complete data, including:

- Missed listings due to incomplete data
- Loss of revenue
- Misinformed business decisions
- Errors in product/mail deliveries
- Inventory management issues
- Low customer satisfaction and retention
- Low productivity
- Higher consumption of resources
- Invalid reports
- Difficulty enacting product recalls
- Increased risk of product counterfeiting
- Risk of not meeting Canadian trading partner and regulatory requirements
- Difficulty engaging consumers looking for information that goes beyond the label when making purchasing choices
Subscribing to GS1 Canada

Becoming a GS1 Canada subscriber is the first step in experiencing the wide range of benefits that GS1 global standards provide.

Take ten minutes to complete the simple subscription process at www.gs1ca.org/subscribe

Download a walkthrough of GS1 Canada’s subscription process for licensed producers from www.gs1ca.org/lpsubscription

GS1 Global Standards: Identify

GS1 standards can identify specific products and physical locations in a unique way, ensuring that they will always be correctly identified on a global scale.

GS1 identification keys used for cannabis and cannabis-related products:

**Global Location Number (GLN):** This GS1 identification standard is used for physical locations, from a head office down to a specific storeroom shelf.

**Global Trade Item Number (GTIN):** Many people are familiar with this GS1 identification key as the number found at the bottom of many barcodes. This identification standard is used to uniquely identify products.
How Many GLNs Do I Need?

A Global Location Number (GLN) is a 13-digit GS1 identifier used by organizations to identify physical locations of any size including buildings, rooms or filing cabinets.

You will need at least one GLN to represent your organization. You will need an additional GLN for each department, role or physical location you choose to identify.

You will be assigned at least one GLN when you become a GS1 Canada subscriber. You can obtain additional GLNs on request by contacting your account manager or calling GS1 Canada on 1.800.567.7084.
What is a GTIN?

There are multiple types of GTINs with GTIN-12s, GTIN-13s and GTIN-14s, being 12, 13 and 14 digits in length respectively.

GTIN-12s and GTIN-13s are made up of three parts:

1. **GS1 Company Prefix**: This unique company identifier can be between 6 digits (with the ability to create up to 100,000 GTINs) to up to 9 digits long (able to create up to 100 GTINs).

2. **Item Reference Number (IRN)**: This part of the GTIN specifies the item being identified. In a GTIN-12, the combined total number of digits between your GS1 Company Prefix number and IRN must be 11.

3. **Check Digit**: The last digit of a barcode number is a computer check digit which makes sure the barcode is correctly composed. To generate a check digit, or understand how it is calculated, visit the Check Digit Calculator page.

GTIN-14s include an extra part at the beginning called an Indicator Digit. Ranging from 1-8, these digits indicate what packaging level the rest of the GTIN refers to. Indicator “9” is utilized only when there is additional information about weight and counts are provided (Variable Weight and Count) that need to be included.

The GTIN is the result of combining your Global Company Prefix, Item Reference and Check Digit numbers in order.

Remember, GTINs cannot be reused and are permanently assigned to each unique product.

For more information visit: https://gs1ca.org/standards/global-trade-item-numbers/
How Many GTINs Do I Need?

Because GTINs uniquely identify each product, you need a different one for every product you sell, including one for every difference in quantity, strain, size, etc. You will also need a GTIN for each packaging format, such as pallet or case.

Whenever you launch a new product or make changes to your existing product or product packaging, you may need to assign a new GTIN. Learn more about the rules around when a new GTIN must be applied at [www.gs1.org/gtinrules](http://www.gs1.org/gtinrules) or through GS1 Canada’s Learning Zone via [www.gs1ca.org/learningzone](http://www.gs1ca.org/learningzone).

Consider how many GTINs you will need when your business grows as you introduce new products or different sizes of packaging.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 Sizes</th>
<th>= 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Strains</td>
<td>= 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Packaging Levels</td>
<td>= 27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27 GTINS needed
The following GS1 barcodes are applicable to cannabis and cannabis-related products sold in Canada. Before implementing barcode symbologies ensure your trading partners are capable of processing/using the barcode.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barcode Symbology</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Application by Product</th>
<th>GTIN Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GS1 DataMatrix (Length: 14 digits)</td>
<td>GS1 DataMatrix is a 2D (two-dimensional) barcode that holds large amounts of data in a relatively small space. These barcodes were developed for items that are too small for the traditional GS1 System linear barcode symbols or that require information in addition to the GTIN such as a serial number, lot number or expiry date.</td>
<td>Consumer-level cannabis products and inner cases</td>
<td>0061212100376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITF-14 (Length: 14 digits)</td>
<td>ITF-14 is applied in general distribution and logistics environments, and not applied at the retail point-of-sale (POS). ITF-14 barcode symbology can only carry the GTIN. ITF-14 Symbols are better suited for direct printing onto corrugated fibreboard.</td>
<td>Cannabis Accessories</td>
<td>10612121003753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPC-A/EAN-13</td>
<td>The UPC-A/EAN-13 is one of the most widely deployed GS1 barcodes. These barcodes are suitable for retail point-of-sale (POS) because they are designed for high-volume scanning environment. Applications are limited to GTIN only.</td>
<td>Cannabis Accessories</td>
<td>612121003756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS1 DataBar Expanded (Length: 14 digits)</td>
<td>GS1 DataBar Expanded and GS1 DataBar Expanded Stacked can be applied in scanning at retail point-of-sale (POS), and are able to carry additional information such as a serial number, lot number and the expiry date.</td>
<td>Consumer-level cannabis products and inner cases</td>
<td>0061212100376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS1 DataBar Expanded Stacked (Length: 14 digits)</td>
<td>GS1-128 is applied in general distribution and logistics environments, and not applied at the retail point-of-sale (POS) and are able to carry additional information such as serial number, lot number or expiry date. GS1-128 barcodes can carry GS1 keys and attributes.</td>
<td>For cannabis products at the case level</td>
<td>10612121003753</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Components of a GTIN:

- **4 parts:**
  - Two zeroes (filler digits)
  - Global Company Prefix
  - Item Reference Number
  - Check Digit.
- **5 parts:**
  - One number (1-8) denoting case level
  - One zero (filler digit)
  - Global Company Prefix
  - Item Reference Number
  - Check Digit.
- **3 parts:**
  - Global Company Prefix
  - Item Reference Number
  - Check Digit.
- **4 parts:**
  - Two zeroes (filler digits)
  - Global Company Prefix
  - Item Reference Number
  - Check Digit.
- **5 parts:**
  - One number (1-8) denoting case level
  - One zero (filler digit)
  - Global Company Prefix
  - Item Reference Number
  - Check Digit.

Information can be encoded into different types of GS1 barcodes such as UPC-A/EAN-13, GS1 DataBar, GS1 DataMatrix, ITF-14 and GS1-128.

Disclaimer: Barcodes are only for visual representation.
Application Identifiers

GS1 Application Identifiers (AIs) are a finite set of specialized identifiers encoded within barcodes to indicate the type of data represented in the various barcode segments (e.g., GTIN, serial number, expiration date, etc.).

When encoding GS1 Application Identifiers to a GS1 Barcode, it is important to know that there is a recommended order to how they are presented. GS1 Key (e.g., GTIN) is always presented first, followed by any fixed length AI element(s) (e.g. an expiration date) and then followed by any variable length element(s) (e.g., batch/lot, serial number, etc.).

1. Application Identifiers are mandatory in the following GS1 barcode standards: GS1-128, GS1 DataBar and GS1 DataMatrix.

2. When rendered in human-readable form, AIs are usually shown in parentheses. However, neither the parentheses (nor the spaces) are part of the encoded data.

FOR EXAMPLE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GS1 DataMatrix</th>
<th>GS1 DataBar Expanded Stacked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(01) 00061212100376</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(17) 190420</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) ABC123</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the above example the GTIN is 0061212100376, the expiry date is April 20, 2019 and the batch/lot number is ABC123.

Printing Barcodes

Since September 2018, GS1 Canada has been offering the Barcode Generator, a tool that creates global standard barcodes in formats such as UPC-A, EAN-13, ITF-14 and GS1 128.

Once you have your barcode symbols, you can incorporate them into your product packaging. To obtain more information on global standards governing the size, colour, placement and more visit: https://gs1ca.org/standards/barcode-standards/

Barcode Scan Verification Service

GS1 Canada is a certified third-party barcode verifier that complies with the Procedural Guidelines for Certification Services.

Barcode Scan Verification tests barcodes to ensure that they comply with global standards and on a variety of scanners (including point-of-sale scanners) to ensure that each one passes the “real-world” test.

Barcode Scan Verification tests your printed barcode images to ensure that they can be scanned first time, every time.

Tips for printing barcodes:

- Inform your solution provider of the unique GTIN and barcode symbol required
- Ensure the barcode shows crisp, clear well-defined bars to avoid scanning issues and that the correct alphanumeric characters are clearly readable below
- Create and follow a quality control procedure and test code quality at each stage of the design process
- Choose printing substrates that avoid smudged ink and distortion of barcodes
GS1 Global Standards: Share

GS1 global standards are interoperable with systems all over the world. This helps to create one global language of business.

GS1 Canada supports flexible data loading, sharing and electronic exchange options for licensed producers to ensure supply chain transparency and traceability.

GS1 supports a range of share standards that enables trusted data and transactional information to be shared between trading partners, including EDI and the Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN). These standards integrate with solutions to move data from where it was created to where it is used across a range of business processes.
GS1 Global Standards: Use

Businesses can use different GS1 standards to streamline business processes such as traceability, inventory management, product recalls and much more.

Grower/Licensed Producer
- New Item Setup
- Inventory Tracking
- Invoice Management
- Contract Management
- Product Withdrawal and Recall Notifications
- Product Information Management

Transport
- Logistics Information
- Delivery Tracking
- Truck Load Build
- Space Management

Distributor
- Inventory Tracking and Management
- Reordering
- Invoice Management
- Contract Management
- Product Forecasting
- Shipping and Receiving
- New Item Setup
- Online Ordering Applications
- Sales and Customer Service

Dispensaries/Retail Outlets
- Inventory Tracking and Management
- Reordering
- Invoice Management
- Contract Management
- Product Forecasting
- Product Withdrawal and Recall Notification
- Pricing
- Counterfeit Product Detection
- Shrinkage Reduction

Consumer/Patient
- Pricing
- Product Description
- THC/CBD Content and Terpene Information
Directed by industry, GS1 Canada solves non-competitive business process issues through the delivery of ECCnet Industry Managed Solutions. Designed for optimal efficiency through a one-to-many sharing process, our non-proprietary global standards-based solutions are developed to meet the evolving needs of businesses of all sizes.

Whether looking to launch new products, access accurate and complete product content, or increase safety and operational efficiencies, our solutions contain flexible tools, services and premium features to meet industry demand for increased visibility and data quality.

As a neutral, not-for-profit association, our ECCnet Industry Managed Solutions are developed on a cost-recovery basis, enabling subscribers to meet Canadian trading requirements at the lowest possible cost to industry.

Our ECCnet New Item Setup solution streamlines the listing process for cannabis and cannabis-related products while ensuring data meets Canadian trading partner and regulatory requirements.

With the tools you need to seamlessly load, store, share and access the most accurate, bilingual product data, cannabis and cannabis-related products can be listed and brought to market quickly and successfully through our efficient one-to-many process.

Our ECCnet Registry, Canada’s largest bilingual product registry, includes mandatory attributes for cannabis products that were specifically requested by Canadian industry, removing any confusion or doubt about the data required to meet trading partner and regulatory requirements.

Flexible content loading options make it easy to manage data while robust data excellence tools ensure your product information is accurate, complete, perpetually cleansed and updated.

To find out more about how to list your product using ECCnet New Item Setup, visit [www.gs1ca.org/solutions](http://www.gs1ca.org/solutions)
ECCnet Industry Managed Solutions for Content Capture

GS1 Canada’s ECCnet eCommerce Content, ECCnet Marketing Content and ECCnet Planogram Content solutions can provide you with the professional product images that fuel business processes.

- For cannabis products, submit product packaging only
- For cannabis-related products, ship two samples of each product

Visit [www.gs1ca.org/content-capture-loading](http://www.gs1ca.org/content-capture-loading) for more information about these and other Industry Managed Solutions.

**ECCnet eCommerce Content**
Directed by industry, GS1 Canada’s eCommerce Content solution delivers speed, accuracy and efficiency; ensuring products get to market as quickly and efficiently as possible.

**ECCnet Marketing Content**
Capturing, storing and sharing content that highlights products and showcases the latest packaging to grab consumer attention in advertising and marketing collateral.

**ECCnet Planogram Content**
Capturing, storing and sharing global standard product images and accurate weights and dimensions to plan optimal use of shelf space.

93% of online shoppers say visuals are the most influential factor affecting their purchase decisions*.

(*Diadeis, 2015)
GS1 is a neutral, not-for-profit organization that develops and maintains global standards for efficient business communication, improving the efficiency, safety, security, sustainability and visibility of value chains across physical and digital channels.

In Canada, through our unique community management role, we collaborate with business leaders and industry work groups to develop standards, implementation guidelines and non-proprietary business solutions, supporting subscribers of all sizes across multiple sectors.

For more information on requirements for the cannabis sector, please visit [www.gs1ca.org/cannabis](http://www.gs1ca.org/cannabis)