

AMERICAN AXLE LABEL  
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Question:** Where can we obtain support or assistance if we are having problems with printing labels ?

Answer: You can send an email to [CCC@aam.com](mailto:CCC@aam.com)

**Question:** If I use the portal to print my labels am I immune to PRR's?

Answer: No. Even though the label may be technically accurate you are still responsible for the print quality and data accuracy.

**Question:** What actions can I take to correct my labels if we get a PRR for Non-Scannable labels (quality issue)?

Answer: First, check your labels with a quality verifier tool. 2nd check you ribbon and label stock to ensure they are correct for your printer. 3<sup>rd</sup> if the verifier indicates problems, try to lighten up the label with the dial on the back of the printer. Many times a label can go from a "F" (fail) to a "A, or B" (pass) just by adjusting the potentiometer dial.

**Question:** Does AAM have a list of recommended label stock and ribbon stock for each printer.

Answer: Yes, we can provide sources and lists for these as needed. The in-correct combination can easily produce a BAD label that cannot be scanned.

**Question:** Why does the Order ID Bar code need to be so large?

Answer: This bar code field will be scanned from the fork truck for Pull Signal re-order. This size will allow scans up to 14 feet away

**Question:** What are the GS, RS and EOT characters in the PDF 417?

Answer: These are special characters and cannot be typed literally. A group separator (GS) has a Hex value of 1D. A record separator (RS) has a hex value of 1E. The end of transmission character (EOT) has a hex value of 04. All labeling software is unique as to how you enter these characters into the data string. Calling your software provider or searching the help provided within your software will usually provide you with the answer. Most packaged label software packages offer these characters in a drop down box when building the PDF417 code. It then creates the hex values for you.

**Question:** How do I make the American Axle Order ID bar code fit in the area provided?

Answer: You must use Code 128 subset C for the data. The Code 128 bar code contains three subsets A, B and C. Subset A contains some special characters you will not use. Subset B is the most commonly used subset and has all the characters in subset A minus a few special characters. Subset C is only used for **pairs** of numbers and will actually pair two numbers into one symbol in the bar code. In order to fit the required 35 mil bar code on the label, subset B must be used for the data identifier 9K and subset C should be used for the data if there is an even number of digits. If the digits are uneven, you must include the odd digit with the data identifier using subset B and the rest in subset C. The data will be a maximum of 8 digits. Most labeling software will have an Auto' feature for the subset that will make the switch from subset B to subset C for you.

**Question:** What does X dimension refer to?

Answer: X dimension is the width of the narrowest bar in your barcode. The lower the X dimension the smaller the barcode will be, thus the higher the density will be and vice versa. This setting is adjustable within your barcode software and has a direct impact from the printer you are using.

**Question:** What is Bar Tolerance?

Answer: This is the average bar print error. It is the value or amount of average bar growth or shrinkage in the measured symbol relative to its X dimension. Bar Gain/Loss can be caused by many factors in the printing process such as the ink applied to form the bars spreading on the background material. The ideal situation would be to have 0% variation. In case of high bar gain/loss, adjustments need to be made to the original artwork, plate-making, ink application and print head temperature.

**Question:** What is ANSI print quality?

Answer: ANSI (American National Standards Institute) is a committee that produces acceptable values, which we measure against. In this case a subcommittee of ANSI studies reasonably acceptable barcodes and releases its findings to the public. These values are then used in barcode verification equipment to provide feedback to the end user producing the labels. AAM requires a minimum grade of a C at our docks to ensure good scans on 100% of shipments.

**Question:** I am using a barcode font to create my barcodes, why am I failing Label certification?

Answer: Barcode fonts do not allow for direct manipulation of the X Dimension. These fonts also tend to scale the barcode to adjust for the requested point size. Barcodes that have been scaled will either return incorrect information, or not scan at all. In order to produce a barcode that no reader will have problem decoding, software designed to produce barcodes should be used.

**Question:** Will my label fail if the only section I fail is Slashed Zeros Recommended?

Answer: No. We recommend that all labels use a slashed zero, but you will not fail if that is the only problem with the label. Slash zeros help the user determine the difference between a zero, the letter o, and other similar characters.

**Question:** Can we use the AAM Supplier Portal and print labels using our own internal proprietary Label printing software

Answer: Yes.

**Question:** Does thermal transfer printing with a ribbon create a better bar code than just thermal?

Answer: Yes, the quality is usually higher, and they are not as easily damaged or smudged. This is the method AAM uses on all customer label shipments using Intermec printers.

**Question:** Are spaces allowed in the LPN block?

Answer: NO, they are not permitted in the Bar code, but are OK for the Human Readable data.

**Question:** For the Master Labels, do we need to include LPN detail from each container in the 2D?

Answer: NO, but this data is required on the DESADV.

**Question:** For stacked Trays that do not use a MASTER label today are we required to produce and apply a MASTER label?

Answer: If you read the specs literally the answer is yes, but for certain approved suppliers with this method, only a Container label and Total Quantity is required. Any questions please contact your AAM plant materials dept.

**Question:** Do Indirect Material suppliers to AAM need to comply with the AAM GTPL specs?

Answer: Indirect Materials will also have their own unique Label and Packaging specifications. Concepts for the creation of the B16 and PDF417 block will adhere to all AIAG B16 label specifications.

**Question:** I am having connectivity problems with printing labels thru the AAM Portal when using Software. What can I check?

Answer: Connectivity to the printer may be TCP/IP, LPT, or COM. If a windows printer driver has the port open, we will not be able to stream data to it for LPT, or COM. One solution may be go into the driver settings on the printer and change it to a different port which then may allow printing. If the printer is TCP/IP or doesn't have another program trying to print to it, there should be minimal on no connectivity issues.

**Question:** Whom do I call for support on Portal label printing issues?

Answer: Send an email to [CCC@aam.com](mailto:CCC@aam.com). Phone calls can also be placed to AAM Customer Care at 800-621-2839. Tickets will be created and assigned to the technical staff to assist in diagnosis and troubleshooting.

**Question:** I am having problems printing labels from my proprietary software after using the AAM Portal label print job.

Answer: If more than one solution (program) is printing to the same printer, both packages need to do the proper steps to clear the printer's memory (if needed), then store the label format, and send the data to it. The Software program used by AAM will perform these steps. When we send a format to your printer the Connection | Shared Network printing box is checked.

**Question:** Does the License Plate (LPN) 1J, 5J, 6J type bar code field need to contain a unique Serial Number.

Answer: Yes, they should be unique, and not be repeated for at least a period of 365 days. Variations from this standard will cause major disruptions at the docks and receiving. It could also affect timely supplier payments.

**Question:** What Bar code printers are supported on the AAM Supplier Portal .

**Answer:** See list below

<i>Printer Mfg.</i>	<i>Models</i>	
<b>Datamax</b>	Prodigy 400	I-4206 I-4208
<b>Intermec</b>	Easy Coder 3400 Easy Coder 3400C Easy Coder 3400D Easy Coder 3400E	Easy Coder 3440 Easy Coder 3600 Easy Coder 4420 Easy Coder 4440 A/B
<b>Sato</b>	M-8400Rve M-84Pro	CL408e
<b>Zebra</b>	Stripe 600 105SE 105SL 140xill	220xill+ 170xill 170xill+ Z4M
<b>PCL</b>	HP Laser Jet or equivalent	

**Question:** What if my Bar code printer is not on this list?

**Answer:** Your options are to purchase a printer from the supported list or use the PCL (Laserjet) drivers to print on 8 ½ X 11 label stock.

**Question:** Are labels printed on regular paper stock acceptable?

**Answer:** No, only adhesive label stock type labels are approved.

**Question:** Can my label be larger than the 4” x 6.5” AIAG specification?

**Answer:** Yes, larger labels are acceptable as long as the key bar code fields scan per AAM specs.

**Question:** Are colored labels allowed?

**Answer:** NO, only black fonts on a white substrate label stock are allowed.

**Question:** Where should Master Labels be placed when using Shrink Wrap?

**Answer:** Per AAM Packaging specs they should always be applied externally to the wrap. 2 labels are required per skid on opposite sides. 4 labels – one per side is acceptable also.