



GDSN Package Measurement Rules Implementation Guide

Issue 4, Aug-2010



Document Summary

Document Item	Current Value
Document Title	GDSN Package Measurement Rules Implementation Guide
Date Last Modified	Aug-2010
Current Document Issue	Issue 4
Status	Approved
Document Description	The purpose of this manual is to share with the GDSN trading partner community a recommended set of best practices and guidelines to aid the user in implementing the GDSN Package Measurement Rules in their facility. It is important to note that this document in no way takes the place of or supersedes the GDSN Package Measurement Rules. The GDSN Package Measurement Rules should always be your first source for Package Measurement information.

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Log of Changes in Issue 4

Issue No.	Date of Change	Changed By	Summary of Change
1	Oct-2006		Initial Version
2	Feb-2008		Revised for Flexible, Soft Paper and Transitions
3	Jun-2008		Reorganization of content, re-title and update
4	Aug-2010	Data Accuracy BRG	Added content to the sentence in section 4.2

Detailed Changes in Issue 4

The GDSN Package Measurement Rules Implementation Guideline replaces the Former Best Practices for GDSN Package Measurement Rules & Tolerances.

#	Summary of Change
1	Three chapters were removed because they pertained to GDSN Trade Item Implementation rather than GDSN Package Measurement Rules (Those 3 chapters will be reviewed by the GDSN Trade Item Implementation Guideline Work group to see where they bring value to their guideline.
2	The chapter number s in the new GDSN Package Measurement Rules Implementation Guideline now directly corresponds to the Chapter numbers in the GDSN Package Measurement Rules Standard.
3	Other enhancements were made throughout the document so the entire guideline should be reviewed.

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and support to the person(s) responsible for implementation of the Package Measurement Rules within their company. It supports the recommendations identified in the [GS1 Data Quality Framework](#) which is published in 2005. This manual is not intended to be a technical manual, nor does it intend to provide rules for publication of data through GDSN. The information is based on the real world experiences of users. You will find helpful hints, tips, pitfalls to avoid and suggestions for the development of the measurement and reporting process in your company.

 **Important:** It is important to note that this document in no way takes the place of or supersedes the GDSN Package Measurement Rules. The GDSN Package Measurement Rules should always be your first source for Package Measurement information.

This document also provides guidance for the proper use and application of standard tolerances, as defined in the Package Measurement Rules. The section numbering of this document adheres closely to that of the Package Measurement Rules, making it easy to reference back and forth between the two documents.

Adherence to the practices identified in this document is a first step to establishing and maintaining a data quality management system, as referenced in the [GS1 Data Quality Framework](#).


2. Before You Begin

Some organizations begin the process of package measurement as a result of customer requirements. Regardless of the reason, however, it is important to remember that accurate dimensional data will bring significant benefits to your organization, including the following:

- Costs savings in Logistics by improving truck capacity and accurately stating freight
- Reduced reconciliation time, based on having the data right the first time
- Improvements in the new product introduction process, resulting in reduced 'speed-to-market' times
- More satisfied customers and improved customer relationships

2.1. Measurement Tools

2.1.1. Appropriate Tools

 **Important:** While trading partners are entitled to use any tool that fits their business model in order to meet the standard tolerances, digital technology is generally considered the most accurate means of measuring.

Consider the following when selecting measurement tools:

- Consider the types of products that your organization will need to measure, including the largest and smallest packages. Both linear and weight data attributes should be considered.
- Consider the degree of accuracy required. Refer to the GDSN Package Measurement Rules for determining the number of decimal places recommended for trade item measurements. Organizations will typically have multiple degrees of accuracy required, and equipment should be obtained to support this requirement.

- As a best practice, the use of digital callipers and digital scales is recommended for performing measurements. There are also non-contact measurement devices for case and consumer units that use various optic or laser-based methods to capture dimensions and weight. These devices are commonly used and are acceptable measurement tools. In addition, these systems often come with their own database software that allows the input of serial data directly from the equipment into a PC application.
- In general, the ability to directly input data from a measurement device will eliminate potential data entry errors based on keying the data into an application.

2.1.2. Calibration and Certification

It is the organization's responsibility to make sure that all equipment provided and used for data gathering is well maintained and calibrated prior to use.

- Measurement equipment should be certified against measurement standards traceable to international or national measurement standards at least annually.
- The measurement equipment should enable the calibration status to be determined, and should be safeguarded from adjustments that would invalidate the measurement result.

2.2. Measurement Process

Developing a standardized methodology for taking measurements is the first step before undertaking the task of measuring.

- Schedule periodic audits of measurements. It is not unusual for product changes to occur (packaging material, product, packaging size) without an adjustment to the recorded measurements.
- Do not measure crushed or damaged product. Product should be measured in a condition that you expect your customer to receive it.
- Dedicate an area for measurement that is isolated and away from other interferences.
- Some of the recommended materials required for taking consistent methods include:
 - A secure flat surface, such as a table 6' to 8' long
 - Available power supply with 4 outlets
 - A computer with connection to your company's network
 - One or more digital callipers appropriate to your product sizes that report data to 2-3 decimal places with data link (this enables direct input to data base from the calliper without keystrokes- see the calliper manufacturer for details)
 - A digital scale that reports data to 2-3 decimal places with data link capabilities (usually the print function- see manufacturer of scale for details). There is the possibility you will need 2 scales if your products range from very small to very heavy floor style displays.
 - A box cutting tool, markers and assorted office supplies.

2.2.1. Sample Size


Multiple random samples will help to reduce errors caused by equipment, inconsistent techniques or product abnormalities. The use of multiple samples is particularly important for flexible packages, as these will often result in greater variability due to the nature of the packaging and measurement techniques. The appropriate number of randomly selected samples is described in more detail in the [GS1 Data Quality Framework](#).

2.2.2. Environmental Considerations

If environmental conditions have a significant impact upon measurements, these conditions should be captured in the sample selection process. For example, soft paper products affected by temperature or humidity during normal shipping and handling should be selected towards the end of the manufacturer supply chain, just prior to customer delivery.

2.2.3. Product Specific Considerations

Those packages that have greater variability in size require more samples and measurements prior to determining an average values.

 **Note:** For additional tips related to specific types of products, refer to examples listed in sections [4](#) and [5](#).

2.2.4. Recording and Comparing Measurement Results

Recording of measurement results can be done using a collection worksheet such as the GS1 KPI Scorecard (included in the GS1 Data Quality Framework), or a spreadsheet similar to the example identified in Appendix [A](#) of this document. The example contains all the relevant fields that are required for data collection.

Once all sample measurements have been recorded, these measurements should be compared to the published data. If the difference between the published and new data is outside the allowable tolerance for that type of product, you should take additional measurements and/ or make changes/corrections to published data to ensure accuracy.


2.2.5. Communication of Findings

The findings resulting from the above comparisons should be summarized and communicated to internal or external partners accordingly.

As a general practice, it is helpful for trading partners to use these communications as reminders to assess their internal processes and ensure that accurate data is being generated and maintained on a regular basis.

2.3. Education and Training

Ensure that all personnel involved in measurement activities are properly trained in the use of the measuring equipment, and that they understand the **GDSN Package Measurement Rules**. You should also review this document in its entirety prior to measurement activity.

 **Note:** The **GDSN Package Measurement Rules** change frequently based on ongoing development and improvements. You can reference the latest version on the GS1 website at: www.gs1.org/services/gsm/kc/gdsn/index.html

GS1 Member Organizations provide excellent training and information on interpreting and applying the package measurement rules, which form the foundation for accuracy of physical dimensional data. In addition, many GS1 Member Organizations provide services to audit product data and communicate the results between trading partners. Additional details regarding the rules for package measurement can be found in the GDSN Package Measurement Rules

3. Metric and Imperial Dimensions

The appropriate number of decimal places for measurements and rules for rounding should be adhered as stated in the GDSN Package Measurement Rules standard.

4. Consumer Trade Items

4.1. Default Front

Identifying Default Front is pivotal to accurate Consumer Trade Item Measurement. Be aware of the following “exceptions” to the general rule:

- When there are two equally sized surfaces that can be used for Default Front, the taller orientation is used
- The default front for Soft Paper products on rolls (e.g. paper towels) is based on the package being oriented with the rolls in the vertical position.

The following sections describe some reminders for various package types that are helpful to ensure proper and consistent dimensional measurements.

4.2. Hanging Items

Hanging Consumer Trade Items should be measured as if they were hanging. Flexible hanging items are an exception to this rule. For more information refer to the latest version of the *GDSN Package Measurement Rules* at: www.gs1.org/services/gsm/kc/gdsn/index.html.

4.3. Flexible Packages

- Measurements of flexible packages that are taken edge to edge (according to Package Measurement Rules) should have the flaps extended and released prior to measurement.
- Measurements of gusseted bags, which may easily change shape due to settling of contents, should be performed multiple times.
- Measurements of flexible packages that are taken as product only (according to Package Measurement Rules), may vary due to product shifting caused during handling. Multiple measurements should be taken to minimize the potential variability.


4.4. Soft Paper Packages

- Measurements of soft paper packages are taken more easily with the package placed against a firm surface or corner, measuring from the surface to the outer edge of the package.
- Measurements of soft paper packages with soft (i.e., non-rigid) flat handles should be taken with the handles folded flat against the package (e.g., diaper bags). Because handles have minimal impact and can be folded during shelving, measurements should exclude the dimensions of unfolded handles.


5. Non-Consumer Trade Items

5.1. Natural Base

Remember that finding Natural Base for Non-Consumer Trade Items is pivotal to accurate measurement. Refer to the ***GDSN Package Measurement Rules*** for defining Natural Base.

 **Note:** The ***GDSN Package Measurement Rules*** change frequently based on ongoing development and improvements. You can reference the latest version on the GS1 website at: www.gs1.org/services/gsm/kc/gdsn/index.html

When measuring Non-Consumer Trade items, the item depth (or length) is the longer side of the base, and the item width is the shorter side of the base. This means that the depth (or length) is always greater than or equal to the width.

 **Important:** Note that a Non-Consumer Trade Item that is also shipped or sold as Consumer Trade item must be measured according to the rules for Consumer Trade items. Refer to the Package Measurement Rules for additional details. If additional measurements are required to support handling of the item as a Non-Consumer trade item, then these must be coordinated and communicated by the supplier.

5.2. Floor Ready Displays

The Package Measurement Rules apply only to the shipping container for Floor Ready Displays, not the actual assembled display unit. These are measured as any other Non-Consumer Trade Item. More specific information on attributes and their use for display packages are documented in the ***GDSN Trade Item Implementation Guide***.


 **Note:** The ***GDSN Trade Item Implementation Guide*** can be found on the GS1 website at: www.gs1.org/services/gsm/kc/gdsn/index.html

5.2.1. Pallet Level Shipping Platform

For pallet level non-consumer trade items, the shipping platform refers to the type of base that is used for assembling, handling and shipping a unitized load of product (unit load).

The Natural Base of a full unit load is the shipping platform. However, the shipping platform is not always included in dimension information (depth/length, width, height) of the unit load. If the dimensions of the shipping platform are excluded when this data is passed through data synchronization, then the proper indicators must be set accordingly in the GDS transaction set. See the ***GDSN Trade Item Implementation Guide*** for details.

5.3. Standard Tolerances


 **Important:** The tolerances referred to in this document do not replace the need for trading partners to have the most accurate data available in order to minimize disruptions.

Physical products identified by the same GTIN have some inherent variability in gross weights and linear dimensions. This may be due to manufacturing variability, handling methods, environment (e.g.

humidity) or other factors. It is expected that published physical dimensions of a trade item, therefore, may not coincide exactly with measured physical dimensions of that trade item.

For the purpose of this document, a standard tolerance is defined as follows:

Standard Tolerance: *An allowable variation between the stated (or synchronized) physical dimensions of a trade item and the measured (or actual) physical dimensions of a trade item, used to determine the accuracy of the stated dimensions of that trade item.*


 **Important:** The addition of standard tolerances does not impact the GTIN Allocation rule parameters identified in the General Specification. Tolerances and GTIN allocation rules are different concepts that must be treated independently. Standard tolerances are only used to determine the accuracy of physical dimensions of a particular trade item, while GTIN allocation rules focus on standard practices for establishing a new GTIN.

In order to facilitate the use of standard tolerances in the industry, a section has been added to the [GDSN Package Measurement Rules](#), including the following:

- Approved standard tolerances for linear dimensions and weights, for both consumer trade items and non-consumer trade items.
- List of predefined package types to which the standard tolerances can be applied.

6. Application of Standard Tolerances

Standard tolerances should be applied based on the predefined package type to which a GTIN is assigned. The approved standard tolerances have been deemed acceptable by retailers and attainable by manufacturers for the groups of consumer and non-consumer package types identified within the *Standard Tolerances for Data Accuracy* section of the [GDSN Package Measurement Rules](#). Dimensions of consumer and non-consumer trade items that are within the standard tolerances for their respective package types will be considered accurate.

 **Note:** For additional information regarding the empirical basis for establishing these tolerances, please contact a member of the GDSN Data Accuracy BRG.

