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Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — Unique identification —

Part 3: Common rules

*Technologies de l'information — Identification automatique et
techniques de capture de données — Identification unique —*

Partie 3: Règles communes

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work. In the field of information technology, ISO and IEC have established a joint technical committee, ISO/IEC JTC 1.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the WTO principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: Foreword - Supplementary information

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 31, *Automatic identification and data capture techniques*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO/IEC 15459-3:2006), which has been technically revised.

ISO/IEC 15459 consists of the following parts (as a result of the reconstruction of previously published parts 1 to 8), under the general title *Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques— Unique identification*:

- *Part 1: Individual transport units*
- *Part 2: Registration procedures*
- *Part 3: Common rules*
- *Part 4: Individual products and product packages*
- *Part 5: Individual returnable transport items (RTIs)*
- *Part 6: Groupings*

Introduction

Unique identification can occur at many different levels, at item level, on the transport unit, on the returnable transport item, at grouping levels, and elsewhere. Such entities are often handled by several parties, both public and private, throughout their lifecycle. Each of these parties must be able to identify and trace such distinct entities so that reference can be made to associated information such as quality inspection data, the chemical substance contained, the batch or lot number of parts, components or raw materials, etc.

The associated information is typically held in some kind of database. The information can be accessed using EDI exchange or another appropriate access protocol, e.g. a directory access protocol.

There are considerable benefits if the identity of the entity is represented as a bar code or other AIDC (Automatic Identification and Data Capture) media and attached to, or made a constituent part of, that which is being uniquely identified so that:

- it can be read electronically, thus minimizing errors;
- one identity can be used by all parties;
- each party can use the identity to look up its computer files to find the data associated with the entity.

All AIDC technologies have the potential to encode an identity. It is expected that application standards, using various automatic identification technologies, will be developed based upon the identity as a prime key. These application standards, which can include additional rules for which level of identification should be used, are often made available from the publisher.

The common rules for how to construct an identity to achieve unique identification of an entity are defined in this part of ISO/IEC 15459.

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Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — Unique identification —

Part 3: Common rules

1 Scope

This part of ISO/IEC 15459 specifies the common rules applicable for unique identification that are required to ensure full compatibility across different identities.

2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC 646, *Information technology — ISO 7-bit coded character set for information interchange*

ISO/IEC 15459-2, *Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — Unique identification — Part 2: Registration procedures*

ISO/IEC 19762-1, *Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture (AIDC) techniques — Harmonized vocabulary — Part 1: General terms relating to AIDC*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC 19762-1 and the following apply.

3.1

entity

anything (physical or non physical) having a distinct existence

Note 1 to entry: In the context of supply chain management it often refers to an item (product or service) which can be individually considered and identified.

3.2

string

characters assigned to an entity constructed using the specific rules of the Issuing Agency to create an unambiguous number within the context of the specific parts of ISO/IEC 15459

Note 1 to entry: The structure of the string is specified in ISO/IEC 15459-3 and begins with the IAC component in the ISO/IEC 15459 Register.

3.3

qualifier

one or more characters referring to an entity, providing the meaning of the string data

Note 1 to entry: Examples of qualifiers are DIs, AIs and OIDs.

**3.4
identity**

combination of qualifier and string which distinguishes an entity from other entities

Note 1 to entry: Some parts of this standard allow for multiple qualifier/string combinations as an identity.

Note 2 to entry: In other standards or documents the UII is referring to the identity.

**3.5
Issuing Agency**

organization entrusted by the Registration Authority to assign company identifying numbers in line with the requirements of ISO/IEC 15459-2

**3.6
Issuing Agency Code**

one or more characters assigned by the Registration Authority to an Issuing Agency making it recognizable and distinct from other issuing agencies

**3.7
Company Identifying Number**

one or more characters assigned by the Issuing Agency to an identity issuer making the issuer recognizable and distinct from other issuers

**3.8
identification**

process (act) of assigning an identity to an entity

**3.9
identifying**

process of recognizing an entity by accessing its identity

4 Abbreviated terms

AI	Application Identifier
AIDC	Automatic Identification and Data Capture
CIN	Company Identifying Number
DI	Data Identifier
IA	Issuing Agency
IAC	Issuing Agency Code
OID	Object Identifier
RA	Registration Authority

5 Distinguishing between identities

ISO/IEC 15459 recognizes types of identities, each type being used to identify a specific level, meaning, handling, role, etc. An organization may adopt the usage of one or more such types.

ISO/IEC 15459-2 requires Issuing Agencies to define rules that ensure that no identity issuer can allocate a duplicate identity within a given type. Organisations making use of an identity should ensure that identities for different types are treated as distinct references.

Mechanisms exist that distinguish between identities. The qualifier component of an identity may use any data format supported by ISO/IEC 15434 or ISO/IEC 9834-1. What formats to be used are to be

specified by the Issuing Agency rules. For the purpose of this standard examples are not to be exhaustive, but rather representative of the full suite of data qualifiers possible to use and relevant to this standard.

NOTE 1 Identities always start with a qualifier (see the examples in the informative annexes of each part of ISO/IEC 15459).

NOTE 2 Qualifiers are essential distinguishing features for data capture applications.

NOTE 3 Each part of ISO/IEC 15459 specifically references the qualifiers (GS1 Application Identifiers (AI), ASC MH10 Data Identifiers (DI) and ISO/IEC 9834-1 Object Identifiers (OID)) that are used as legitimate examples within the specific identity type.

NOTE 4 Legitimate qualifier can specify a type (OID "1 0 15459 1" identifies the type "transport units") or a sub-type within the type (the DI "6J" identifies transport units consisting of identical items).

6 Identities

An identity is assigned to an individual entity, item, unit or grouping by an identity issuer.

The following requirements apply to identities:

- a) an identity shall include a qualifier from one of the qualifier identification methods listed above.
- b) the string component of an identity shall start with one or more characters for the identification of the identity issuer, i.e. Issuing Agency Code (IAC) followed by Company Identifying Number (CIN).
- c) the string shall conform to the format specified for the qualifier to which it applies.
- d) the string shall be unambiguous within its qualifier in the sense that no issuer re-issues the string within the qualifier over the entire life cycle for the identified entity or until a sufficient period time has passed so that the identity has ceased to be of significance to any user.
- e) each qualifier shall require its own independent set of rules that enable the identities for this qualifier to be held in a separate field on a database, be defined as a separate data element in an EDI message or as a separate search criterion in a directory search. For each qualifier the rules should minimally determine (1) the maximum length of the string for that qualifier and (2) the repertoire of characters that may be used in the string following the identity issuer identification.
- f) for some parts of this standard an identity may be made up from a combination of two or more qualifiers and their associated strings, according to rules defined for the qualifier identification method. This is explained in each part.

It is recommended that the Issuing Agency provide application guidance to identity issuers (e.g. check-digit algorithms, selection of GS1 Application Identifier or ASC MH10 Data Identifier, etc).

6.1 Common rule for the length of an identity

The common rule for the length of an identity is that it should be kept as short as possible, enabling coding using different AIDC techniques (e.g. one line linear bar code, 2D symbol, RFID tag, etc.) within the same or across several applications. It is especially important to keep the identity short if one line linear bar codes are to be used as the size of the bar code depends on the number of characters to be encoded.

6.2 Common rule for the character set of an identity

The common rule for the character set of an identity is that it shall only contain upper-case alphabetic characters and numeric digits of the invariant character set of ISO/IEC 646, see [Annex A](#).

Any data processing system shall be capable of processing identities using the full repertoire of permitted characters.

6.3 Compliance with ISO/IEC 15459

An organization can claim that it is compliant with ISO/IEC 15459 (all parts or a specific part) if it can allocate and process identities according to the rules defined in ISO/IEC 15459-3, Common rules, ISO/IEC 15459-2, Registration procedures and all or any other part.

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