About GLNs

What is a GLN?
The Global Location Number (GLN) is a 13-digit number for identifying supply chain parties and/or locations. There is a name and address associated with each unique number and it is specific to only one very precise location in the world.

Which business processes involve the use of GLNs?
Trading partners use GLNs to support streamlined supply chain processes that require location information, such as ordering, shipping, receiving and invoicing.

What are examples of locations that can be assigned GLNs?
The GLN is a unique data structure that identifies any legal or physical location, such as:

- **Legal entities:** Legal organizations that subscribe to the GS1 System of standards, including healthcare providers/hospitals, suppliers, parent corporations, subsidiaries, divisions, customers, group purchasing organizations (GPOs), distributors, manufacturers, third-party logistics, banks, etc.
- **Functions within legal entities:** function or department within an organization, including pharmacies, hospital wards, purchasing departments, accounting departments, returns departments, etc.
- **Physical entities:** Single points of access with a physical address, including a hospital unit, hospital delivery point, nursing station, warehouse, warehouse gate, loading dock, particular room in a building, and even a cabinet or cabinet shelf, etc.

What are the advantages of GLNs?
GLNs provide organizations with a method of identifying locations, within and outside their company or hospital, and are:

- **Simple:** GLNs are based on an easily defined data structure with integrity checks built into this structure; facilitating processing and transmission of data between supply chain partners.
- **Unique:** GLNs are globally unique, reducing confusion and errors that result from duplication of proprietary identification codes.
- **Multi-sectoral:** The non-significant characteristic of the GLN enables any location to be identified for any organization, regardless of its product channel, anywhere in the world.
- **Global:** GLNs are implemented around the world and supported by the international network of 108 GS1 Member Organizations, including GS1 Canada.
- **Efficient:** GLNs save organizations time and money by automating transactions where address/location information is required, benefitting processes such as ordering and invoicing.
- **Flexible:** GLNs may be assigned to any type of location, from a compound of buildings down to a warehouse shelf, to meet an organization’s unique requirements.
- **Versatile:** GLNs can be encoded in GS1-128 bar codes to be physically marked onto:
  - Trade units to identify the parties involved in the transaction (buyer, supplier).
  - Transport units (consignor and consignee).
  - Physical locations (place of delivery, place of departure and point of storage).
Why should my organization adopt GLNs now?
As a key component to standardizing the healthcare supply chain, the Canadian and U.S. healthcare sectors are transitioning to the use of GS1 Global Location Numbers (GLNs) by the industry-established sunrise date of December 31, 2010. The GS1 Canada Carenet Healthcare Sector Board has established a roadmap to support Canadian implementation.

Adopting the GLN will eliminate the maintenance of hundreds of single-purpose, proprietary supplier numbers – reducing potential confusion and errors in supply chain transactions and healthcare administration.

In addition, the GLN along with the GS1 Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) are the standards used for location and product identification, respectively, within the latest Canadian healthcare Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) transaction set standards and implementation guidelines – developed for and by industry.

Are there other location coding methods?
Yes. There are 196 different location coding methods recognized by ANSI X12, and 212 different location coding methods recognized by UN/EDIFACT, such as:
- Proprietary seller-generated location codes (i.e. DUNS +4 number)
- Location codes assigned by accepted third-party organizations

Then why use GLNs instead of another identifier?
Until recently, there was no recognized location identification standard for healthcare providers and healthcare related entities. Use of a multitude of location coding methods across the supply chain was resulting in costly errors, wasteful inefficiencies and inability to efficiently track and trace.

An internal solution at a healthcare organization may seem to be the easiest and fastest way to move forward with identifying all locations to cover operating requirements. However, when information is exchanged between computers of distinct healthcare organizations and companies, this may present such problems as:
- **Duplication**: Two or more supply chain partners may use the exact same location code to identify an internal location in their company/organization. There is no guarantee of uniqueness.
- **Complexity**: Internal codes will have a variety of structures and formats, making application programming more complex and application changes costly.
- **Inflexibility**: Location codes that contain information related to the location in the code structure itself will become difficult to handle as the coding structure evolves to incorporate new meanings.

Therefore, in 2009, the Canadian and U.S. healthcare industries committed to adoption of the GS1 Global Location Number (GLN) as the standard for location identification across the healthcare sector. The GLN enables globally unique, standardized location identification for providers, manufacturers, and distributors. GLNs replace the need to use proprietary numbering systems, decreasing confusion and costs by standardizing location identifiers across the entire supply chain.

**Using GLNs**

**How and when do I use my GLN?**
The GLN is a number you can use to uniquely identify your organization (or locations within your organization) within the global supply chain, when exchanging such information with your trading partners through Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) or other supply chain processes.
More specifically, the GLN is useful when:
- Ordering products
- Processing supply related order and invoicing inquiries
- Corresponding with suppliers or hospitals
- Performing any other standard business transactions with manufacturers, distributors, GPOs and other stakeholders across the supply chain
- Tracking and tracing the movement goods within the system to facilitate activities, such as product recalls or sterilization quality control.

How are GLNs assigned?
GS1 Canada is the assignment authority for GLNs in Canada. To obtain a GLN for your organization, contact GS1 Canada at 1.800.567.7084, ext. 3 or email info@gs1ca.org. GS1 Canada will capture the organization’s location information in ECCnet Locations.

Can a GLN change?
Yes, GLNs can change. Every time there is a change to the information associated with a GLN – if a given organization is closed down or moves to a new location, if a department moves to a different floor of the building – a new GLN must be assigned.

A GLN that has stopped being used will remain dormant for seven years before being reallocated by GS1 Canada. This delay is to allow time for all references of the old location number to be removed from trading partners’ files.

ECCnet Locations

How is GLN information shared?
ECCnet Locations is the central resource for accessing accurate, up-to-date, precise GLN information about your trading partners. It is the single reference for all GLNs in Canada. You can think of it as a national, online address book.

What is ECCnet Locations?
ECCnet Locations is a single source of comprehensive, standardized location information, including the GLNs and GLN-related details (e.g., name, address, class of trade, etc.) of healthcare facilities and their suppliers who are GS1 Canada members. It is an electronic catalogue of standardized party/location information about healthcare providers and healthcare-related entities in Canada.

How does ECCnet Locations work?
Accessed through the GS1 Canada website, ECCnet Locations enables users to search for trading partners’ location information based on the GLN provided or, conversely, enables users to search for a GLN, based on location information. If required, users can request an extract of the data in a flat file for integration into their internal systems.

How does ECCnet Locations support the healthcare industry?
GLNs enable all healthcare trading partners to use a common location identification standard to identify the same legal entity, trading partner or location, supporting transactions such as ensuring that product orders are submitted to the correct supplier branch, or ensuring that a product arrives at the correct location within a hospital, ultimately enhancing traceability and patient safety.

ECCnet Locations supports this process by being the central resource for GLN information for the entire healthcare supply chain, ensuring accurate, up-to-date, precise location information for use in trading partner transactions, and driving system-wide visibility best practices.
Who is responsible for maintaining my location hierarchy?
The individual within your organization assigned as the GLN administrator will work with GS1 Canada to ensure hierarchy integrity and assignment.

Implementation Resources

Are there tools to help me begin implementing GLNs?
Yes. The following resources will help your organization as it begins to implement GLNs:

- GLN/GTIN Sunrise Dates for Healthcare webpage & resources: [www.gs1ca.org/e/hcsunrise](http://www.gs1ca.org/e/hcsunrise)
- GLN Implementation Checklist – Providers
- GLN Implementation Checklist – Suppliers
- Get Ready for GLN Sunrise 2010 brochure
- GLN in Healthcare Implementation Guide
- GLN Implementation Guide for Healthcare Providers
- GLN Implementation Guide for Healthcare Suppliers
- Mayo Clinic / Cardinal Health GLN Implementation White Paper

Learn More

I still have questions; who can I call?
To access GS1 standards experts, contact GS1 Canada

P: 416.510.8039
Toll-free: 1.800.567.7084
E: info@gs1ca.org

Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. EST.