

Guidelines for the Blood Transfusion Services

23.1: Introduction

<http://www.transfusionguidelines.org/red-book/chapter-23-specification-for-the-uniform-labelling-of-blood-blood-components-and-blood-donor-samples/23-1-introduction>

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23.1.1: General information

The information contained in this chapter is intended to inform all persons involved in labelling blood and blood components of the specifications for uniform labelling. It is intended for users, software developers and suppliers of pre-printed labels.

The specification covers labels required by the United Kingdom Blood Transfusion Services (UKBTS) for the labelling of blood donation (collection) packs, satellite packs, associated samples and documentation. It utilises barcodes to encode information in addition to eye-readable symbols.

Blood pack labelling is in a period of transition as the established Codabar system is replaced with the International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT) international standard ISBT 128. Guidance on the specification for the future labelling of blood components prepared in the UK can be found under the **General Documents** section of the JPAC website. Currently the UKBTS use ISBT 128 data structures for the donation identification number (DIN) and the blood group code.

Where this document refers to ISBT 128, cross-reference should be made to the ICCBBA **ISBT 128 Standard Technical Specification** which gives detailed information on data structures and labelling. This chapter interprets relevant sections of the Technical Specification in the light of UK requirements, and in some cases it limits the available options or deviates from the Technical Specification. In all such cases, this chapter takes precedence.

Further migration to ISBT 128 involves converting and/or adding more data structures and adopting the ISBT 128 definitions. The timetable for further changes is currently under consideration and development.

Note: Barcodes included in all figures are not readable and are for visual purposes only.

23.1.2: The purpose of a standardised, structured coding system

The objective is to reduce the dangers of incompatible blood transfusions caused by human error and a central part of the label design is machine-readable coding of essential information.

Each blood donation pack, plus connected satellite packs and associated samples and documentation, must be identified by a unique identification number applied at the time of donation. Additionally, each blood component requires identification by labelling, showing the ABO group, RhD type and the component type. Such a system will ensure unique identification of every blood component and help secure association between donations and samples.

Further adoption of an international coding system such as ISBT 128 will facilitate the movement of blood components across national and international boundaries.

23.1.3: Applicability

All blood pack/sample labels for use by the UK Blood Establishments must comply with the specifications in this document.

Plasma intended for fractionation may not require ABO group, RhD type or component type labelling. As a minimum requirement, an ISBT128 DIN label is required for traceability.