# NATIONAL STOCK NUMBER

# NSN

## THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE OF LOGISTICS

Bine ati venit
ЛАСКАВО ПРОСИМО välkommen
Laipni Lūdzam
добредојде Bem-vindo 환영 Welcome
ÜDVÖZÖLJÜK BENVENUTO いらっしゃいませ
Willkommen VELKOMINN Bienvenidos
সবাগত TERE TULEMAST Fáilte स्वागत
Bènvido VITAJTE স্বাগতম SVEIKI
Witamy καλῶς ήρθατε
Tervetuloa MIRËSEARDHJE
Dobrodošli добре дошли Aloha
Bienvenue Bine ati venit
WËLLKÓMM bem-vindos

# DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY

*Providing Support to
U.S. Military Services and
Whole of Government Agencies
and our International Partners*

# What is a National Stock Number (NSN)?

A National Stock Number (also known as a NATO Stock Number) is simply the official label applied to an item of supply that is repeatedly procured, stocked, stored, issued, and used throughout the federal supply system. It is a unique item identifying series of numbers. When a NSN is assigned to an item of supply, data is assembled to describe the item. Some data elements include information such as an item name, manufacturer's part number, unit price, and physical and performance characteristics. NSNs are an essential part of the military's logistics supply chain used in managing, moving, storing, and disposing of material.

NSNs are used to identify and manage nearly every imaginable item, from *aircraft parts* to *light bulbs.* The use of NSNs facilitates the standardization of item names, supply language, characteristics and management data and aids in reducing duplicate items in the federal inventory. It also helps to standardize the military requirements for testing and evaluation of potential items of supply, as well as identifying potential duplicate items.

*The United States Air Force's F/A-22 Raptor. Thousands of Raptor parts are assigned NSNs.*

*Many types of commercially made light bulbs are assigned NSNs*

The NSN is officially recognized by the United States Government, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and many governments around the world. The Department of Defense (DOD), and other Federal Agencies use the NSN to buy and manage billions of dollars worth of supplies yearly. Currently, there are over 7 million active NSNs in the Federal Logistics Information System (FLIS).

# Why Was The Concept of a NSN Created?

During World War II, it was common to find different names applied to a single item of supply used by each Military Service. That made it difficult for the Military Services to locate supplies and, in most cases, impossible to share items of supply. This resulted in an item depletion situation for one service and item surplus situation for another due to different naming conventions.

To illustrate this complex issue, one only needs to consider what the name of the following item is. Is it a washer, a spacer or a shim?

The correct name for this item is WASHER, FLAT.



This is one example of why it is so important to establish a common name and description for a single item of supply. If each of the Military Services called this washer by a different name, there would be no way to identify and move assets from one service to another when needed. Additionally, it was determined to be essential that DOD describe all like items the same, with the same characteristics to facilitate comparison of items and avoid proliferation of like items in the DOD inventory.

Even today, commercial entities continue to justify and reinforce the need for a standardized national stock numbering system.
Manufacturers, as in the case of the preceding washer, use a variety of item names for identical parts. Cataloging these items with different item names creates inconsistencies in the various logistics management systems, making it difficult to identify, separate and control inventory of items.

Manufacturers use many different commercial part numbering conventions. For example, manufacturers may refer to their items of supply using various descriptors like a Universal Product Code (UPC), a National Drug Code, and/or a Universal Standard Products and Services Classification Code (UNSPSC) as part of the item description. The NSN alleviates manufacturers from using various languages to describe items of supply by standardizing naming conventions and logistics management data.
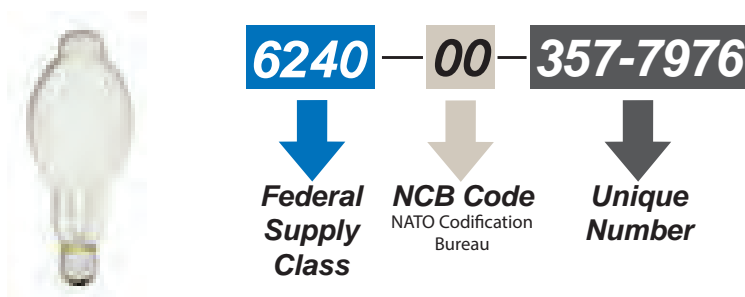
# What Does a NSN Structure Look Like?

Everyone recognizes this number system, (269) 704-7921. It is, of course, a telephone number. The three distinct parts of a phone number are easily identifiable. The first part is the area code, the second part is the exchange, and the third part is a unique four-digit number.

## (269) 704-7921

Just as each part of a telephone number has a distinct meaning, a NSN is formatted to convey specific information about the item of supply.

The NSN is a 13-digit code, and it is depicted as: 6240-00-357-7976



**6240** — **00** — **357-7976**

**Federal Supply Class**    **NCB Code** NATO Codification Bureau    **Unique Number**

The first four digits of the NSN are known as the Federal Supply Class (FSC). For example, 6240 is the FSC for electric lamps. It is used to group like items, which would include fluorescent lamps, incandescent lamps, mercury lamps, and sodium lamps. The next two digits make up the NATO Codification Bureau code. Codes 00 and 01 are both used to identify the United States. The remaining seven digits are non-significant and sequentially assigned to each NSN.

# Who Can Request a NSN Assignment?

Manufacturers and suppliers do not have the authority to request a NSN. This is usually accomplished once a requirement/need for that manufacturer's/supplier's item has been identified by a Military Service, NATO country, Federal/Civil Agency or various Contractor Support Weapons Systems (CSWS) managed by a contractor. Requests are then forwarded through the appropriate supply chain for cataloging and then forwarded to Logistics Information Services for NSN assignment.

# Who Assigns a NSN?

The Logistics Information Services, located in Battle Creek, Michigan, assigns all NSNs at the request of the Military Services, certain Federal and Civil Agencies, and International partners. Each NSN assigned to an item of supply is the result of a careful review process known as cataloging. Cataloging is the process whereby each item of supply is named, assigned a Federal Supply Class, described to identify all known characteristics and performance data, and ultimately assigned a NSN. This information is contained and maintained in the Federal Logistics Information System (FLIS), which is managed by the Logistics Information Services, which is part of the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA).

Requests for NSNs are initiated whenever a non-stocked item is repeatedly ordered or when a new weapons system is being developed. Whenever a new weapon system is deployed by a Military Service, the service engages in an upfront review known as a provisioning process. This process identifies all potential spares to ensure weapon system support throughout the life cycle of the weapon system. This step is essential to properly provide support to the warfighter. During the provisioning process all potential spare parts are identified and requests for NSN assignment are submitted to Logistics Information Services.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **NSN:** | 6240-00-357-7976 | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Item Name:** | LAMP, MERCURY VAPOR | | | | | | | | | | |

Note: This is a representative picture only, of this item.

**Reference/Part Number** ⬆ Back to Top

| REF/PN | CAGE-CD | STAT | RNCC | RNVC | DAC | RNAAC | RNFC | RNSC | RNJC | SADC | HCC | MSDS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 500E37SBW120 | 12117 | H | 5 | 9 | 5 | SB | 1 | B | | | | |
| 37106 | 51454 | A | 3 | 2 | E | CX | 3 | D | | | N1 | BDXDH |
| SBER | 62607 | A | 5 | 9 | 4 | CX | | B | | | | |

Company Name:    Westron Corporation
CAGE Code:        51454

**Characteristics (Decoded)**

| REQUIREMENT STATEMENT | CLEAR TEXT REPLY |
|---|---|
| ITEM NAME | LAMP,MERCURY VAPOR |
| OVERALL LENGTH | 11.750 INCHES MAXIMUM |
| LIGHT OUTPUT RATING | 11780.000 LUMENS NOMINAL SINGLE RATING |
| AVERAGE LIFE RATING IN HOURS | 16000.0 |
| EMITTED LIGHT CHARACTERISTIC | WHITE |
| VOLTAGE RATING | 120.000 VOLTS NOMINAL |
| WATTAGE RATING | 500.000 WATTS |

*Image above is for illustrative purposes only and not an actual screenshot*

During NSN assignment, a wide range of logistics data is assembled to describe the item. This information includes the item name, manufacturer's part number, unit price, physical and performance characteristics, shipping data, special handling, storage, shelf life, and information associated with how to dispose of the item when no longer needed in the inventory.

Throughout the life of the NSN, this data is routinely updated to include new manufacturers, price changes, part number changes or other changes affecting the support, logistics data, or characteristics of the item.

# Who Uses NSNs?

The NSN is used by domestic and foreign governments, all the Military Services and various Federal and Civil Agencies. The NSN is officially recognized by the United States Government, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and many other Governments around the world. The NSN affords the opportunity for greater cross-servicing potential and facilitates operations that involve many Military Services from many nations.

## Federal Agencies

The Department of Defense (DOD), and many other Federal Agencies use the NSN to buy and manage billions of dollars worth of supplies yearly. The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) establishes how each DLA-managed NSN will be stocked, stored and issued to the Military Services. DLA evaluates usage demands to determine required quantities of NSNs. The NSN is the foundation for logistics coordination between the services and Government agencies.

## Military Services

The practice of using a single language of supply like the NSN is increasingly important as it promotes coordination between the Military Services, readiness, and availability to all users. The NSN is also critical to the effective integration of the services in joint military endeavors.

The NSN enables Military Services to access the same information and identify like items of supply. Mechanics, technical inspectors, maintenance and other supply personnel can review NSN data in the FLIS to locate information on all parts needed to maintain and support weapon systems.

The use of NSNs provides logistics managers, procurement personnel, operations planners, and industrial base assessment personnel with a standard method of identifying and tracking items of supply in-storage, in-process, in-transit and in-theater.

## Defense Reutilization and Disposal

The DLA Disposition Services identify products for reutilization and/or disposal using the NSN to distinguish what items require special handling upon disposal. Examples include items with specific demilitarization requirements, items containing precious metals, hazardous materials or sensitive technology.

# What's the Real Value of a NSN?

⭐ reduces downtime by enabling procurement personnel to quickly identify, locate, and order parts or supplies

⭐ accounts for existing inventory

⭐ identifies shelf life of an item of supply

⭐ maximizes use of available spares by identifying items of supply that are interchangeable or substitutable

⭐ provides pricing information, which is valuable when negotiating contracts and managing military budgets

⭐ improves cycle times for design, manufacture, and repair processes while extending weapon system life cycles

⭐ centralizes item information on all items managed within DOD

⭐ provides built-in protection for safeguarding proprietary information and limiting access to only those entities requiring such information

⭐ records multiple manufacturers on NSNs which increases supportability

⭐ aids in identifying duplicate items of supply

⭐ Perhaps the most significant and far-reaching benefit of the NSN is that it provides life cycle management of items of supply, from requisition to acquisition to maintenance to disposal

## The Bottom Line

The FLIS is used worldwide for logistics information, and the NSN is the international language of logistics. Together, the FLIS and the NSN make sense of the often confusing array of suppliers and supply parts, and provides affordable readiness and reduction of total ownership cost.

*NSN -The gear that keeps the supply chain running*

# Defense Logistics Agency
# Products and Services that Support NSNs

### Federal Logistics Data (FED LOG®)
FED LOG® can be downloaded directly from FedMall and is used by engineering, technical research, provisioning, procurement/contracting, supply, cataloging, maintenance, distribution, storage, transportation, quality assurance and disposal personnel to retrieve data associated with the NSN. FED LOG® data is updated every 30 days.
For more information, please visit:
**www.dla.mil/does/FEDLOG**

### Public Logistics Data on Mobile Media (PUB LOG®)
PUB LOG® is an interactive alternative source for users not authorized to access FED LOG® or WebFLIS® but require National Stock Number (NSN) information and other cataloging information including Federal Supply Classification (FSC) data and Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Codes.
For more information, please visit:
**https://www.dla.mil/does/publog**

### Web Federal Logistics Information System
**(WebFLIS®)** - WebFLIS® provides essential information about supply items through a web interface connected to Federal Logistics Information System (FLIS) data and is updated multiple times a day. WebFLIS® has additional tabs such as Advanced Characteristics Search, Medical, Weapon System and a Bill of Material (BOM)/Sets, Kits and Outfits (SKO) to allow users to narrow search queries.
For more information, please visit:
**http://www.dla.mil/does/webflis**

**FedMall** - FedMall is the premier government e-commerce acquisition platform and allows users to quickly search and purchase items online. The comprehensive site provides access to important data on the NSN to include order requisitions, stock levels, item notes and much more.
For more information, please visit:
**https://piee.eb.mil/**

# LEGISLATION OF THE 82ND CONGRESS
## 2ND SESSION (Year of 1952)
## DEFENSE CATALOGING AND STANDARDIZATION ACT
## CHAPTER 539 - PUBLIC LAW 436

An Act to provide for an economical, efficient, and effective supply management organization within the Department of Defense through the establishment of a single supply cataloging system, the standardization of supplies and the more efficient use of supply testing, inspection, packaging, and acceptance facilities and services.

This Act may be cited as the "Defense Cataloging and Standardization Act".

Sec. 2. There is hereby established within the Department of Defense, the Defense Supply Management Agency*, hereinafter referred to as the "Agency." This Agency shall develop a single catalog system and related supply standardization program.

Sec. 4.(a) In cataloging, the Agency shall name, describe, classify, and number each item repetitively used, purchased, stocked, or distributed, by the Department of Defense or any of the departments thereof, by such methods and in such manner that only one distinctive combination of letters or numerals or both will identify the same item either within a bureau of service, between bureaus or services, or between the departments. The single item identification shall be used for all functions of supply from original purchase to final field or area disposal. There shall be a single catalog, which may consist of a number of volumes, sections, or supplements, in which all items of supply shall be included and in which there shall appear information on each item needed for supply operations such as descriptive and performance data, size, weight, cubage, packaging or packing data, a standard quantitative measurement unit, and such other related data as is determined by the Director of the Agency to be necessary or desirable.

*Known today as the Defense Logistics Agency*

# Contact Information

## DLA Customer Interaction Center (DLA CIC)

**We're here for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including Government holidays.
"One Call Resolution"**

**Toll Free: 1-877-DLA-CALL (1-877-352-2255)
Local Commercial:  269-704-7921
Defense Switched Network (DSN):  xx-877-352-2255
Email:**
**dlacontactcenter@dla.mil**
**Web site:**
**http://www.dla.mil/CustomerSupport.aspx**

## Customer Logistics Data Training

**Scheduling Program Manager
Commercial: (269) 961-4829
DSN: (312) 661-4829
Commercial/FTS/FAX: (269) 961-5035
DSN: (312) 661-5035
Email:**
**dla.tng@dla.mil**
**Web site:**
**https://www.dla.mil/HQ/LogisticsOperations/TrainingandReference/**

**For complete information on cataloging
and logistics services
Visit our Web site:**
**https://www.dla.mil/HQ/LogisticsOperations/Services/FIC.aspx**

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