

# Global Location Number (GLN)

## What you need to know

On a daily basis information related to parties and locations is generated and communicated throughout the business world in vast quantities. Names and addresses are put on envelopes for the mail, the point to which a delivery is made is put on transport documentation, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) network addresses are provided in EDI messages etc. These are just a few examples of the many applications in existence today, which identify parties or locations in trade or other communications.

### What is a Global Location Number (GLN)?

A GLN is a globally unique and unambiguous GS1 Identification Key that is used to identify parties (legal entity and functions) and locations (physical and digital).

- 1. Physical Locations** - A site (an area, a structure or group of structures) or area within the site where something was, is, or will be located. The identification of physical locations is an essential element for supply chain visibility. A GLN assigned to a physical location always has an identifiable geographical address regardless of any business process roles conducted at the site. A physical location may be permanent and remain in a fixed position or mobile where the position can change over time (i.e., mobile blood donation van)  
*Examples of a physical location: 8 Nexus Ct, Mulgrave VIC 3170 or -37.908808510300425, 145.15938966881816*
- 2. Digital Locations** - A digital location represents an electronic (non-physical) address that is used for communication between computer systems. Just as the exchange of physical goods is a transaction between companies, the exchange of data is a transaction between systems, for example the delivery of an invoice can be mapped to an EDI gateway identified by a GLN.  
*Examples of a digital location: <https://www.gs1au.org/what-we-do/standards/global-location-number-gln> or 142.250.191.46*
- 3. Legal Entities** - Any business, government body, department, charity, individual or institution that has standing in the eyes of the law and has the capacity to enter into agreements or contracts.  
*Examples of a legal entity: GS1 Australia or GS1 New Zealand*
- 4. Functions** - An organisational subdivision or department based on the specific tasks being performed, as defined by the organisation.  
*Examples of a function: Financial department or Sales department*

## Assigning Global Location Numbers

The exact method used to assign a GLN is at the discretion of the issuing organisation. The GLN must be unique for each individual party/location being identified. For example: A GLN can be used to identify a warehouse on a specific address, and another GLN can be used to identify a loading dock of the warehouse on a specific geo location.

### Who assigns GLN?

GLNs SHALL be assigned by the party that defined the party/location in support of their business operations.

If a GLN is used to identify a combination of legal entity, function, physical location, and/or digital location, all applicable rules SHALL apply.

- **Legal entity:** Allocating a GLN to a legal entity is the responsibility of the legal entity itself or another legal entity that is part of the same organisation. If multiple legal entities within an organisation have licensed GS1 Company Prefixes or individual GLNs, the parties SHOULD coordinate GLN allocation.
- **Function:** The organisation identifying their own, internal functions to support their business operation is responsible for allocating GLN.

When representing itself as a legal entity or function in transactions, an organisation SHALL only use GLNs which the organisation has licenced. This means that an organisation SHALL NOT use another organisation's GLN to represent itself as a party.

- **Physical location:** The owner or primary user(s) of the physical location is responsible for allocating the GLN. When a party allocates a GLN to a location they do not own, that party SHOULD inform the owner and/or primary users of the location. Parties SHALL use a GLN allocated by their own organisation, the owner of the location, or a primary user that is a business partner directly involved in a specified transaction. A party SHALL NOT use a GLN allocated by an organisation that does not directly relate to their business relationships.
- **Digital location:** The owner or primary user(s) of the digital location is responsible for allocating the GLN.

**Note:** The owner is the organisation that has the legal or rightful title to the physical or digital location. A primary user is an organisation that directly transacts with a physical or digital location. There may be multiple primary users associated to a single location and they can have their own GLN assigned to it.

### Locations without Global Location Numbers

If a GLN is required, the party responsible for that location must assign the GLN to it. Assigning the GLN at source by the responsible trading partner ensures supply chain efficiency.

If a trading partner responsible for a particular location does not have a GS1 Company Prefix, they must either request a GS1 Company Prefix or GLN packs from a GS1 Member Organisation. A GLN SHALL NOT be sold, leased, or loaned to a separate party.

## Use of GLN to identify single party or single location

GS1 recommends identifying only one type per GLN. Party and location use cases can be complex and have overlapping elements. When a single GLN identifies a single party or location, multiple GLNs can be used in any combination required by specific use cases without overlap or duplication. As an organisation expands, additional parties and locations can be allocated new GLNs. If a party or location is discontinued, it can be removed from use with minimal impact to other GLNs as the information associated to the GLNs are designed to function independently.

## Use of same GLN to identify a combination of party/location

A single GLN MAY be used to identify a combination of a legal entity, function, physical location, and/or digital location. This means that the GLN MAY be allocated to:

- one legal entity, and/or
- one function, and/or
- one physical location, and/or
- one digital location

Companies with limited identification requirements can successfully utilise a single GLN to identify one legal entity, function, physical location, and/or digital location simultaneously.

Companies using this method of GLN allocation may experience issues when scaling due to business needs or trying to meet more complex use case requirements.

## GLN Non-Reuse

GLN that has been previously used and published and has become obsolete must not be reused for another party/location.

## GLN Allocation Rules

The GLN Allocation Rules Standard and contained GLN Management Rules is designed to help industry make consistent decisions about the unique identification of parties and locations in open supply chains. Read the [GLN allocations rules](#) on the web.

## Useful Links

[GS1 AU GLN webpage \(including how to get a GLN\)](#)

[GLN Allocation Rules](#)

[Healthcare GLN Implementation Guideline](#)

[Advice on assigning GLNs](#)

[Extended fact sheet GLNs](#)