§ 101–30.101–2 Item of supply.

Item of supply means an item of production that is purchased, cataloged, and assigned a national stock number by the Government. The item of supply is determined by the requirements of each Government agency’s supply system. The item of supply concept differentiates one item from another item in the Federal Catalog System. Each item of supply is expressed in and fixed by a national item identification number. An item of supply may be:

(a) A single item of production;
(b) Two or more items of production that are functionally interchangeable;
(c) A more precise quality controlled item than the regular item of production, or
(d) A modification of a regular item of production.


The national stock number (NSN) is the identifying number assigned to each item of supply. The NSN consists of the 4-digit Federal Supply Classification (FSC) code and the 9-digit national item identification number (NIIN). The written, printed, or typed NSN configuration is 1234–00–567–8901. The following terms are elements of the 13-digit national stock number:

(a) Federal Supply Classification (FSC) is a 4-digit number which groups similar items into classes.

(b) National Codification Bureau (NCB) code is a 2-digit number designating the central cataloging office of the NATO or other friendly country which assigned the national item identification number (NIIN) and is used as the first two digits of the NIIN.

(c) National item identification number (NIIN) is a 9-digit number composed of the NCB code number (2-digits) followed by 7 other nonsignificant digits.


Federal item identification means the approved item identification for the item of supply, plus the national stock number assigned to that item identification. It consists of four basic elements: The name of the item, the identifying characteristics, the Federal Supply Classification code, and the national item identification number.


Cataloging means the process of uniformly identifying, describing, classifying, numbering, and publishing in the Federal Catalog System all items of personal property (items of supply) repetitively procured, stored, issued, and/or used by Federal agencies.


Cataloging activity means the activity of a Federal agency having responsibility for performing cataloging operations in identifying and describing items of supply in the Federal Catalog System.


Federal Catalog System means the single supply catalog system designed to uniformly identify, classify, name, describe, and number the items of personal property used by the Federal Government by providing only one classification, one name, one description, and one item identification number for each item of supply. It provides a standard reference language or terminology to be used by all persons engaged in the process of supply.


Conversion means the changeover from using existing supply classifications, stock numbers, names, and identification data to using those of the Federal Catalog System in all supply operations, from determination of requirements to final disposal.