

**To:** All Cannabis Licensed Producers  
**From:** BC Cannabis Wholesale  
**Subject:** Important upcoming changes to barcode format

BC Cannabis Wholesale would like to inform all Licensed Producers selling non-medical cannabis in the B.C. market of an important, upcoming change to barcode symbology that will impact the cannabis industry. The BC Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB) will be supporting the national introduction of a new barcode format on the retail packaging of non-medical cannabis products. As of March 31, 2025, the LDB will authorize Licensed Producers to use the GS1 DataMatrix barcode on the retail package. Potential benefits of the new barcode format include improved scanning accuracy and a reduction in the required barcode size.

Licensed Producers may choose to use the new GS1 DataMatrix symbology or continue with the currently approved GS1 DataBar or GS1 DataBar Expanded Stacked symbology. The application identifiers within the barcode will not change and the barcode must continue to contain: GTIN, packaging date, and lot number. This update impacts the retail package only and there is no change to the required GS1-128 barcode on the shipping case.

***Please note: the new DataMatrix barcode will only be accepted after the introduction date of March 31, 2025,*** in order to allow retailers sufficient time to test their systems and prepare for the change. Only one authorized barcode symbology may be used on each retail package. If you are changing the barcode format on any products, digital barcode samples must be sent to [cannabis.vendor@bclddb.com](mailto:cannabis.vendor@bclddb.com) for testing and approval before shipping any inventory to the LDB. Please include the BCLDB SKU numbers for the products in your email.

***Please consult the updated Shipping Requirements Guide for more details. This can be found in the Supply Chain Requirements of the following websites:***

- **Central Delivery Supplier Site:** <https://www.bcldbcannabisupdates.com/bclddb-cannabis-supplier-information>
- **Direct Delivery Supplier Site:** <https://www.bcldbcannabisupdates.com/bclddb-cannabis-direct-delivery>

To support you through this transition, our partners at GS1 Canada have provided the key points and resources below.

**Key Considerations for Licensed Producers:**

**1. Printer Capability:**

- Ensure your printers are able to print GS1 DataMatrix codes in compliance with GS1 General Specifications. Consult with your printing vendors on setup requirements.
- The GS1 DataMatrix must be printed "inline" due to the variable data encoded (e.g., batch/lot numbers); pre-printed artwork cannot be used.

**2. Internal System Readiness:**

- Ensure your internal systems are interoperable and capable of supplying the additional information (such as lot/batch number and packaging date) that will be encoded in the barcode.

For further information, please consult the following guides:

- [Barcode Scanning Equipment Selection Criteria for Retailers](#)
- [Barcoding for Designers, Printers, and Packagers Resource Guide](#)

Should you have any questions or require additional information, feel free to reach out to us or visit the [GS1 Canada website](#) for detailed support resources.

Thank you for your attention to this important transition, and we look forward to working together to ensure a smooth and successful implementation.

Sincerely,

Cannabis Vendor Relations

cannabis.vendor@bcldb.com