



# PPA Best Practice Guidelines for the inclusion of the off-sale week and recall information on the front cover of magazines

## Purpose of these guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to establish a set of best practice principles for incorporating the magazine off-sale week into the barcode area of magazines in order to help ensure the timely return of unsolds, and thereby reduce 'shrink' issues arising from wrongly identified copies, missed or rejected credit.

'Shrink' is a major issue within the newstrade affecting all stages of the supply chain. The PPA is firmly committed to overcoming 'shrink', and these guidelines are designed to play a part in that process.

Given the particular problems associated with irregular product, publishers of one-shots and specials should pay particular attention to these guidelines although PPA does recommend the inclusion of the off-sale week on all magazine product, other than weeklies for which the dates are self evident.

## Who should read them?

These guidelines are designed for operational staff at all stages of the newstrade supply chain: publishing, production, distribution, wholesale and retail. They will be of particular benefit where it is important to accurately identify copies for timely distribution, sales management, recall and returns processing.

## Operational Issues

Wholesalers receive basic cover information from publisher/distributor EDI 'Issue' files in advance of the on sale date. With this information they populate the National Title File (NTF) and it is used as the basis of the delivery and returns recall notes provided to retailers.

Issues may arise, however, if:

- the physical copy supplied differs from the pre-notified EDI information,
- titles on a related subject, or in a series, have particularly similar covers,
- titles from different publishers cover the same subject & appear identical

There may then be problems for retailers to correctly identify magazines in store and they may potentially fail to return them for credit, resulting in shrink.

## 1. Best Practice

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For ease of recognition a 'recall date' should be shown above the publication bar code, positioned so as not to be confused with any other numbers or interfere with the scanning process.

The date should take the format '**R WW**' 'R' represents the recall week and 'WW' represents the ISO standard week within which the recall date falls. ISO standard weeks are the weeks as numbered in diaries and calendars.

The retailer should match this recall date with the current working week.

**NOTE:** A yearly calendar of ISO week numbers is available in the form of the **Bar Code Week Calendar** from the National Title File Website. [www.nationaltitlefile.co.uk](http://www.nationaltitlefile.co.uk)

If necessary bar codes may be truncated to accommodate the additional information. See the 'Technical Note' below for minimum dimensions of the bar code symbol.

**Example:****Benefits**

- The Recall Date allows the retailer to recognise immediately that the publication must be returned THIS WEEK.
- Checking One Shots and specials each week will assist the retailer in keeping track of those due for return.
- Wholesalers and publishers will encounter fewer early returns & 'shrink' issues.

**2. Publisher Requirements**

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- Publishers & Distributors must take particular care to ensure that information in their EDI Issue files (or other notification to wholesalers) gives a clear indication of:

**Title Description:** A 'common sense' approach should be adopted to ensure ease of recognition within a 26-character standard (including spaces).

**Issue Date:** For Specials Series must match what appears on the cover

**Off Sale date:** Must match the week of printed 'Recall Date' on the cover

- Publishers/Distributors must work closely with publishing units originating One Shots & Specials to ensure the required disciplines are clearly understood.
- If changes do have to be made they must be communicated to wholesalers as quickly as possible by EDI Issue File **AND** email.

**3. Technical Note**

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The minimum size of the bar code symbol is 0.80 magnification factor.

Truncation may be applied up to 50% from top of symbol

EAN 13 Symbol:    Guide Bars at each end of symbol minimum 12mm height  
                         Symbol bars minimum 10mm height

2-digit add on Symbol:    Symbol bars minimum 8.5mm height

Conventions for the human readable numbers, light margins and chevron symbol should remain as at present.

Bar code symbols must not be contained within a ruled 'box' as this may lead to inaccurate scanning. Black bars on a white background must always be used to ensure maximum legibility.

**NOTE: The above sizes apply to 'Coated Paper' only.** For further guidance on other paper types please refer to the PPA Best Practice Guideline for Bar Coding and Issue Numbering of Magazines (Version 9 2005).

Text for the additional 'Recall Date' should be a slightly larger & bolder font than that used for the human readable characters under the bar code symbol. Black characters out of a white background should be used.

The bar code panel may be increased in depth to accommodate the 'Recall Date'.