SMDG recommendation #2 Non-ISO container identifiers

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Background facts

- There are containers without official owner code (mostly shippers owned)

- Id does not comply with ISO 6346

- Often build up of digits only

- Some IT systems need a dummy prefix to handle them

- Various different dummy prefixes in use by terminals/liners/etc

- A lot of manual corrections required

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Popular dummy prefixes in use

Dummy prefix	Remarks
OHNE	german (means 'without')
NONE	descriptive
NONU	Officially registered BIC-Code (Schenker Italiana). Should never be used as dummy code
XXXX	Most commonly used
ZZZZ	Might show up as official code (for trailer). Should never be used as dummy code
////	Special characters, adding another problem on top (for some systems)

Idea

If a dummy prefix is required,

let's **unify** the one to be used.

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Draft Recommendation (circulated in subgroup)

In EDI messages, equipment identification shall be transmitted exactly as it is marked on the box unless it consists of numerals only. In that case, a dummy prefix of 'XXXX' shall be used to precede the numerical identification.

Feedback on draft

- Popular assumption: If you receive an id starting with XXXX, the box will not have any prefix

PROOFED WRONG

Actually, XXXX is the most famous unofficial prefix painted on shippers owned containers

Options to improve situation

- Get rid of unofficial ids on containers **IMPOSSIBLE**

- Always transmit ids as printed on box (even without any prefix at all) **IMPOSSIBLE**

- Recommend to use a 'dummy' code which hopefully is never used on a box

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Options for a dummy code

- Approach BIC in order to ask for (silent) reservation of a dummy code which can never be registered officially – usage of that code shall be limited to encoding 'no prefix present'.

- Recommend an unofficial prefix to use as dummy code which is not (yet) in use

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Argument against a recommendation

- Any dummy code we recommend now might be painted on a box in the future

  - That's true, and it might with any approach.

  - It should not stop us now – it might introduce problems for that box, but we can improve the situation for hundreds of boxes now.

Shall we recommend a dummy code?

- Pro
  - Adding/removing/mangling of dummy codes unified, number of manual corrections can be reduced
  - No other approach to improve situation

- Contra
  - No dummy prefix will solve all related problems

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Dummy prefixes discussed

Prefix	Remarks
~~XXXX~~	Often show up as (unofficial) marking on container
~~NNNN~~	Likely to show up as (unofficial) marking on container
~~ZZZZ~~	Likely to show up as (unofficial) marking
~~XXXU~~	Shall be reserved by BIC before recommendation. Requires time and BIC cooperation. No clear advantage.
~~CNID~~	Might not be recognized as dummy
~~NONX~~	Might not be recognized as dummy
~~NOPX~~	Might not be recognized as dummy
~~NPFX~~	Might not be recognized as dummy
NONE	Clearly recognizable worldwide, already in use as dummy code

SMDG Recommendation #2
on NON-ISO container identifiers

In EDI messages, container identification should be transmitted exactly as it is marked on the box.

In case it consists of numerals only and for any reason a dummy prefix cannot be avoided, we strongly recommend to use 'NONE' in order to indicate the absence of a prefix on the container itself.

Note: If 'NONE' is received as part of a container identification, check sum calculation shall not be expected to match.