

PRODUCT & PRICE INFORMATION FORMAT

Using the PPIF

The following provides requirements and guidelines for creating, transmitting and utilizing update files in the Product & Price Information Format (PPIF). For additional assistance, contact Pete Alles at NFPA (414-778-3350; palles@nfpa.com).

CREATING PPIF FILES

- Required Contents:**
- Read Me File: Provides background on vendor's use of the PPIF.
 - Header Record: One record used to identify the vendor (manufacturer or supplier) and define general parameters and the type of the second file.
 - Either Standard Product Records or Price Break Records:
 - Standard Product Information Database Records: Contain information about vendor product descriptions, characteristics and pricing.
 - Price Break Records: Provide information on price breaks by quantity, dollar amount or weight (if price breaks are offered).

Required Format: ASCII, tab-delimited with variable-length fields

- Requirements:**
- Include all fields as specified in the Standard Product Information Database Records (Field 1 through Field 63).
 - Not include additional fields after Field 63.
 - Have all Required (R) fields populated unless data is not available. Explain any unpopulated required fields in the Read Me file.
 - Utilize a null character (tab tab) to indicate data not provided.
 - Omit all symbols and special characters, including but not limited to @, #, \$, &, *, ©, ®, ™, ", +, -.
 - Reflect price per each in all Standard Product Information Database Records, where "each" is defined in Selling Unit of Measure (Field 19).
 - Use physical decimal points in all numeric fields that require them. Numeric fields without decimals will be considered integers.

- Recommendations:**
- Populate fields with all available data.
 - Keep data as static as possible between updates.
 - Utilize a consistent part number schema to minimize distributor manipulation of data, including consistent use of spaces, dashes or other separators.
 - Identify a single point of contact within the company who is tasked with maintaining, editing and updating PPIF-format files and has authority to make changes to address compliance issues. This individual's name and contact information should be:
 - Included in all correspondence related to PPIF files.
 - Added to the Read Me file.
 - Communicated to all manufacturer representatives, customer service representatives and regional managers for referral of questions from distributors or OEMs.
 - Send separate transmissions for each currency for which pricing is provided, such that each transmission includes only one currency.
 - Use ANSI.X12 standards where defined.

First-Time Users: Distributors already receiving updates in the format can provide valuable insights on preferred file structure, content and transmission.

TRANSMITTING PPIF FILES

Acceptable Vehicles:

- Mail (on CD-ROM, floppy diskette or other electronic storage vehicle)
- E-mail
- FTP or other Internet-based file transfer

Lead Time:

- Distribute price files to allow sufficient time for review and implementation by distributors and/or OEMs.
- Recommended Lead Time: Minimum of 30 days in advance of price effective date or as defined in supplier agreements with distributors and/or OEMs.

Transmission Guidelines:

- Compressed Files: If update files are compressed with WinZip or other software, cover letter or e-mail should include directions to extract files, unless this information is not required based on prior successful transmittals to the recipient.
- Masked Files: If update files are sent with invalid extensions to bypass firewall or other security restrictions, cover letter or e-mail should include directions to rename files.
- E-mail Transmission: If files are transmitted by e-mail:
 - As a courtesy, forward the corporate price adjustment notification letter or fax to PPIF contacts to communicate the upcoming adjustment.
 - A preliminary e-mail to all recipients is recommended to address concerns related to sender and receiver system restrictions.
 - The initial e-mail should alert distributors/OEMs to expect a PPIF files within a certain time frame and to contact the manufacturer if the file is not received.
 - Generic e-mails may be sent to a group of distributors/OEMs while preserving the confidentiality of individual addressees by using the blind carbon copy (BCC) field to prevent each recipient from seeing a list of other recipients. However, individualized e-mails may be required if PPIF files are customized for each distributor/OEM.

UTILIZING PPIF FILES

Guidelines: Upon receipt of a PPIF pricing update, the distributor/OEM should:

- Review provided files to ensure all expected information is included and correct.
- Determine which information is needed.
- Extract desired data from the price file provided by the vendor.

Converting Data: Procedures are available to convert PPIF data to Microsoft® Excel or Access for uploading to a distributor management system, for reference or for printing:

First-Time Users: Vendors often offer resources to help understand, extract and upload provided data. For assistance, consult the vendor's PPIF contact.