



## IMMUNOHEMATOLOGY BAR CODE REGULATIONS: ISBT 128

In November 1994, the International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT) adopted a new international standard for bar code labeling of blood and blood products. The standard has gained international acceptance and is now officially endorsed by the American Association of Blood Banks and the American Red Cross. The bar codes, called ISBT 128, replace the American Blood Commission (ABC) Codabar system.

ISBT 128 bar codes look different from the Codabar system, which is quickly becoming obsolete. Therefore, hospitals and facilities that collect or accept blood or blood products need to train their staff on the ISBT 128 bar code labeling system and develop standard operating procedures for the use of this system.

According to AABB Association Bulletin #05-12, "ISBT 128 ensures that all donation identification numbers are unique. In addition, the labeling scheme includes a center prefix so that a facility receiving a unit can easily determine the collecting blood center. As a result of international standardization, product codes can be read and interpreted anywhere in the world. Unlike Codabar, the product code structure is expandable and able to accommodate new products. Perhaps most important, ISBT 128 bar codes include check characters, which can be used to detect scanning errors."

All hospitals and facilities that collect blood and blood components are expected to register with ICCBBA, Inc. (formerly International Council for Commonality in Blood Banking Automation) to obtain a Facility Identification Number and be placed in the international database. These hospitals and facilities will also be subject to an annual licensing fee.

AABB has mandated ISBT 128 for all its member institutions by May 2008.

For additional information, please contact your regional blood center or ICCBBA, Inc.

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