



STERLING QUALITY CLAUSES

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SQC	Clause Name	Quality Category
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SQC-223	Sampling and Statistical Inspection	Inspection, Testing and Acceptance
SQC-224	Summary Test Report	Inspection, Testing and Acceptance
SQC-225	Supplier Inspection System	Inspection, Testing and Acceptance
SQC-226	Test Failure Report	Inspection, Testing and Acceptance
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SQC-251	Special Process Control and Approval	Materials and Special Processes
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SQC-253	Printed Wiring Board Controls	Materials and Special Processes
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SQC-301	General Workmanship and Cleanliness	Personnel, Service and Workmanship
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SQC-303	Personnel Qualification and Competence	Personnel, Service and Workmanship
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SQC	Clause Name	Quality Category
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SQC-332	Basic / Commercial Quality System	Quality Systems and Compliance
SQC-333	AS9003 Inspection and Test Quality System	Quality Systems and Compliance
SQC-334	General Quality and Contract Compliance	Quality Systems and Compliance
SQC-335	ISO 9001 Quality Management System	Quality Systems and Compliance
SQC-336	Other Certified Quality Systems	Quality Systems and Compliance
SQC-337	Software Quality System / CMMI	Quality Systems and Compliance
SQC-338	Sub-tier Flowdown and Conformance	Quality Systems and Compliance
SQC-339	Warranty and Responsibility for Conformance	Quality Systems and Compliance
(SQC-340 through SQC-360 reserved)		
SQC-361	Software Quality Plan	Software Quality
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SQC-392	Authorized Distributor Letter of Authorization	Supply Chain and Counterfeit Prevention
SQC-393	Certificate of Authenticity	Supply Chain and Counterfeit Prevention
SQC-394	Counterfeit / Suspect Material Prevention	Supply Chain and Counterfeit Prevention
SQC-395	Counterfeit EEE Parts Prevention	Supply Chain and Counterfeit Prevention
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SQC-397	Distributor Controls and Responsibilities	Supply Chain and Counterfeit Prevention
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SQC-399	Purchase from Manufacturer or Authorized Distributor	Supply Chain and Counterfeit Prevention
SQC-400	Qualified Products / Manufacturers (QPL/QML)	Supply Chain and Counterfeit Prevention
SQC-401	Authentication Test Approval and Shipment Release	Supply Chain and Counterfeit Prevention
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SQC-421	Cybersecurity / CUI / Information Protection	Regulatory, Safety and Security
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SQC	Clause Name	Quality Category
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SQC-425	HTS Code	Regulatory, Safety and Security
SQC-426	Nuclear / Regulatory Defect Reporting	Regulatory, Safety and Security
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SQC-428	Priority Rating / DPAS	Regulatory, Safety and Security
SQC-429	Product Safety / Critical Characteristics	Regulatory, Safety and Security
SQC-430	Safety Data Sheets.	Regulatory, Safety and Security
SQC-431	Schedule B Number	Regulatory, Safety and Security
SQC-432	Tax Exemption Certificate	Regulatory, Safety and Security
SQC-433	Domestic Source and Trade Agreement Compliance	Regulatory, Safety and Security
SQC-434	Malware Prevention	Regulatory, Safety and Security
SQC-435	WEEE and Environmental Product Compliance	Regulatory, Safety and Security
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SQC-451	Authorization to Ship Form	Shipping and Delivery
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SQC-453	Shipping and Delivery Controls	Shipping and Delivery



Alerts and Notifications

SQC-001 Escape / Defect Notification

Partner must notify Sterling in writing immediately upon discovering that any product or service delivered to Sterling may be nonconforming, defective, unsafe, counterfeit or suspect counterfeit, incorrectly identified, or otherwise inconsistent with the purchase order. The notice must identify the affected purchase order, part number, revision, serial/lot/batch/date codes, quantities, shipment dates, destinations, and the nature and potential effect of the condition.

Partner must promptly contain the condition, preserve relevant evidence and records, determine whether other products or lower-tier sources are affected, and provide Sterling with investigation status, risk assessment, root cause, corrective action, and recommended disposition. Partner must not conceal, alter, repair, replace, or destroy affected material without Sterling authorization and must support customer or regulatory reporting, recall, field action, and recovery as directed.

Partner must flow this requirement to all lower-tier sources and remains responsible for timely notification of conditions originating at any tier.

For commercial-off-the-shelf products, the notification duty applies to credible defect information received from any source, including Partner's own determination, the manufacturer, an industry or Government alert, or another purchaser or user of the same product.

SQC-002 Industry Alert / GIDEP Response

If eligible, Partner must maintain active membership in the Government-Industry Data Exchange Program (GIDEP), subscribe to applicable alerts, and review alerts concerning suspect, counterfeit, defective, or technically deficient items or processes. If Partner is not eligible for GIDEP, it must monitor other credible industry-alert and counterfeit-information sources.

Partner must take appropriate containment, corrective, and preventive action for alerts applicable to material offered or delivered under the purchase order. Partner must immediately report acquiring suspect counterfeit material or providing suspect counterfeit material to Sterling and, when eligible and required, to GIDEP.

Partner must respond completely to Sterling inquiries concerning industry alerts, normally within 30 calendar days or within any shorter period Sterling specifies for an urgent matter. Responses must identify affected items, processes, assemblies, shipments, locations, quantities, traceability, containment, disposition, and corrective action. Partner must flow this clause to applicable lower-tier sources.

SQC-003 Supply Disruption Notification

Partner must promptly notify Sterling in writing of any actual or reasonably anticipated natural disaster, fire, flood, severe weather event, utility interruption, cyber incident, labor disruption, facility casualty, transportation interruption, public-health emergency, or other event that diminishes or may materially diminish Partner's ability to deliver conforming products, services, data, or documentation when required.

The notice must identify the affected purchase order, items or services, facilities and lower-tier sources; describe the event and known or anticipated effect on quality, capacity, schedule, and delivery; identify containment and recovery actions; and provide the earliest reasonably achievable recovery and delivery dates. Partner must provide material updates until the risk is resolved and must promptly notify Sterling if the recovery plan or projected delivery changes.

Partner must maintain reasonable business-continuity and recovery controls appropriate to the work and flow equivalent notification duties to lower-tier sources whose disruption could materially affect performance. Notice does not excuse performance or authorize a schedule, source, process, design, material, or other contractual change.

Audit, Access and Reviews

SQC-031 Post Award Review (PAR)

Partner must participate in a Post Award Review (PAR) for the items or services identified on the purchase order. The PAR must occur after purchase-order award but before Partner or any lower-tier subcontractor begins fabrication, assembly, or other production activity.

Partner is responsible for contacting Sterling promptly after receipt of the purchase order to schedule the PAR. Unless Sterling authorizes another location or format, the PAR will be conducted at Partner's facility.

Partner must make the following available for review, as applicable:

- The purchase order, statement of work, and referenced contractual requirements.
- Applicable drawings, specifications, standards, and revision levels.
- Manufacturing plans, routers, travelers, work instructions, and process documentation.
- Inspection and test plans, procedures, and acceptance criteria.
- Production schedules, milestones, and delivery plans.
- Tooling, fixtures, gauges, inspection and test equipment.
- Material requirements, sources of supply, and applicable certifications.
- Lower-tier subcontractors and special-process sources.
- First Article Inspection plans and requirements.
- Configuration-management and change-control processes.
- Nonconformance, corrective-action, and material-review processes.
- Packaging, preservation, labeling, and shipping plans.
- Personnel qualifications and required special-process certifications.
- Quality records and other objective evidence requested by Sterling.

Partner must resolve or obtain Sterling's written disposition of all action items that Sterling identifies as prerequisites to beginning work. Partner must not begin fabrication, assembly, or other production activity until Sterling provides written authorization or confirms that the PAR requirement has been satisfied.

Partner must provide Sterling and, when authorized by Sterling, Sterling's customer or government representatives reasonable access to Partner's facility for the PAR and any related assessment.

Partner must flow applicable PAR requirements down to any lower-tier subcontractor whose work Sterling determines should be reviewed before production begins.

SQC-032 Pre-Work Authorization Review (PWAR)

When the purchase order requires a Pre-Work Authorization Review (PWAR), Partner must support and successfully complete the review at the time specified by Sterling and before beginning the affected work or accepting any advance authorization to proceed.

Partner must provide Sterling, Sterling's customer, and authorized regulatory representatives reasonable access to the facilities, personnel, plans, procedures, records, systems, and lower-tier sources needed to evaluate readiness. The review may include quality-system, manufacturing-capability, tooling, planning, inspection, test, configuration, and risk assessments.

Completion of a PWAR does not constitute acceptance of product, approval of deviations, or waiver of any purchase-order requirement. A separate production-readiness or pre-award review remains required when specified.

Partner must flow this clause, or equivalent requirements, to each lower-tier source whose work is included in the review.



SQC-033 Right of Access / Audit / Surveillance

Sterling, Sterling's customer, the U.S. Government, and applicable regulatory authorities have the right of access, upon reasonable notice or as otherwise required by the purchase order, to all facilities and lower-tier locations where work is performed or records are maintained. Access includes the right to survey, audit, inspect, witness, verify, test, and conduct surveillance of products, processes, quality systems, personnel qualifications, records, software, tooling, and property associated with the purchase order.

Partner must provide safe and timely access, suitable workspace and assistance, and all requested objective evidence. Partner must notify Sterling promptly of any restriction that could delay access and, when requested, provide at least 48 hours' advance notice of an inspection or test hold point. Sterling may perform in-process or pre-shipment inspection and may require correction of identified deficiencies.

Exercise or nonexercise of these rights does not constitute acceptance and does not relieve Partner of responsibility for conformity. Partner must include equivalent access rights in every applicable lower-tier agreement.

SQC-034 Contract and Requirements Review

When Sterling requires a contract, technical-requirements, or requirements-consumption review, Partner must participate at the time and in the manner specified and, unless Sterling authorizes otherwise, before beginning affected manufacturing, servicing, or other performance. The purpose of the review is to confirm that Partner understands and can satisfy the purchase order, drawings, specifications, quality clauses, delivery requirements, and other applicable technical and contractual requirements.

Partner must make available the purchase order and contract-review records; production and inspection planning; training and qualification records; applicable drawings, specifications, procedures, and revision status; configuration and change controls; lower-tier flowdown records; schedules; risks; open questions; and other objective evidence reasonably requested for the review.

Partner must document and resolve identified gaps or obtain Sterling's written direction before proceeding with affected work. Partner must verify and retain evidence that applicable contract, engineering, and quality requirements are flowed to affected lower-tier sources. Completion of the review does not constitute product acceptance, approval of a deviation, or relief from any purchase-order requirement.

Calibration and Metrology

SQC-061 Certificate of Calibration

Each item furnished or returned after calibration must be accompanied by a legible, signed Certificate of Calibration or calibration report. The calibration must be performed in accordance with the standard identified in the purchase order, including, as applicable, ISO/IEC 17025, ISO 10012, ANSI/NCSL Z540.3, an applicable ASTM calibration standard, or the original manufacturer's calibration requirements.

Unless otherwise specified, the calibration laboratory must use the following order of precedence:

- The equipment manufacturer's calibration instructions and accuracy requirements.
- The standard identified in the purchase order.
- ISO/IEC 17025, ISO 10012, or ANSI/NCSL Z540.3, as applicable.
- If no other accuracy requirement applies, a minimum Test Accuracy Ratio of 4:1 or disclosure of the measurement uncertainty and achieved Test Accuracy Ratio.

When ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation is required, the calibration must:

- Be performed by a laboratory holding current accreditation from an accreditation body that is a signatory to the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation Mutual Recognition Arrangement.
- Fall within the laboratory's approved scope of accreditation.
- Not be subcontracted without Sterling's prior written approval.



The calibration laboratory must evaluate the item's as-received or as-found condition before performing any adjustment, repair, cleaning, or other work that could affect the calibration results. If the item is out of tolerance, Partner must record and report the out-of-tolerance condition and the actual as-found data. Partner must obtain Sterling's instructions before continuing when the item cannot be restored to the applicable requirements.

The Certificate of Calibration or report must include, as applicable:

- A unique certificate or report number.
- The name and address of the calibration laboratory.
- The laboratory's accreditation and applicable scope, when accreditation is required.
- Sterling's purchase-order number and line-item number.
- Identification of the calibrated item, including manufacturer, description, model number, serial number, and Sterling asset number, when provided.
- The calibration date and, when required, the next calibration due date.
- The location where the calibration was performed.
- The calibration procedure, manufacturer specification, or other technical requirement used, including its revision.
- The measurement points and ranges calibrated.
- The applicable tolerances or acceptance criteria.
- The actual as-found results and an indication whether each result was acceptable or unacceptable.
- Any adjustment, repair, or other corrective work performed.
- The actual as-returned or as-left results and an indication whether each result was acceptable or unacceptable.
- The measurement uncertainty or achieved Test Accuracy Ratio.
- Identification of the measurement standards used, including the standard's serial or traceability number, calibration date, and calibration due date.
- A statement that the measurement standards are traceable to the National Institute of Standards and Technology, another recognized national or international standard, an intrinsic standard, or recognized natural physical constants, as applicable.
- Any limitation, deviation, qualification, or condition affecting the calibration or use of the item.
- A statement that the calibration was performed within the laboratory's accredited scope, when applicable.
- The name, title, signature or electronic approval, and approval date of the laboratory's authorized representative.

A label or seal showing the calibration date and next calibration due date must be affixed to the item when practicable and when required by the purchase order.

Partner must immediately notify Sterling of any condition that adversely affects the laboratory's accreditation, approved scope, calibration capability, or the validity of a calibration performed under the purchase order.

SQC-062 Calibration Services and Data

When Partner performs calibration or repair of monitoring and measuring equipment, it must use documented procedures and standards traceable to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), another recognized national metrology institute or documented natural physical constants. Calibration must comply with the purchase order and, as applicable, ISO/IEC 17025, ISO 10012, ANSI/NCSL Z540.1, or an approved equivalent.

Partner must provide a calibration certificate or data report identifying the equipment, manufacturer, model and serial number; condition received; procedure and revision; standards used and their calibration due dates; environmental conditions when relevant; calibration date, due date or interval; as-found and as-left results with units and tolerances; adjustments or repairs; measurement uncertainty when required; traceability statement; limitations; and authorized approval.

Partner must notify Sterling promptly of any out-of-tolerance condition, identify the magnitude and affected range, and provide information sufficient for Sterling to assess previously accepted measurements. Calibration labels and seals must

show status and prevent unauthorized adjustment. Partner must retain records and flow applicable requirements to calibration laboratories and lower-tier sources.

SQC-063 Measurement Traceability

Partner must ensure that all monitoring, measuring, inspection, and test equipment used to determine conformity with purchase-order requirements is suitable for its intended purpose, properly maintained, and in a current calibrated status when used.

All calibrations must be traceable through an unbroken and documented chain of calibrations to:

- The National Institute of Standards and Technology;
- Another recognized national or international measurement standard;
- An intrinsic measurement standard; or
- Recognized natural physical constants when no applicable national or international standard exists.

Partner must maintain a calibration and measurement-control system in accordance with the standard specified in the purchase order or, if none is specified, a recognized system such as ISO/IEC 17025, ISO 10012, or ANSI/NCSL Z540.3.

Partner's system must:

- Uniquely identify each item of monitoring, measuring, inspection, and test equipment.
- Establish the equipment's location, calibration status, calibration interval, and next calibration due date.
- Identify the calibration method, applicable procedure, acceptance criteria, and measurement standards used.
- Ensure calibration is performed at prescribed intervals and before use when calibration status cannot be established.
- Provide adequate measurement accuracy and capability for the characteristic being evaluated.
- Protect equipment from damage, deterioration, unauthorized adjustment, and conditions that could invalidate its calibration.
- Identify equipment whose calibration status has expired or cannot be verified and prevent its unintended use.
- Record calibration results, including as-found and as-left conditions, adjustments, repairs, limitations, and out-of-tolerance conditions.
- Evaluate and document the validity of previous inspection or test results when equipment is found out of tolerance.
- Notify Sterling promptly when an out-of-tolerance condition may affect items delivered or accepted under a Sterling purchase order.
- Retain calibration and traceability records for the period required by the purchase order and provide them to Sterling upon request.

Unless otherwise specified, the measurement standard used must provide a minimum Test Accuracy Ratio of 4:1. When that ratio cannot be achieved, Partner must document and report the measurement uncertainty or achieved ratio and obtain Sterling's approval when required by the purchase order.

Partner must flow applicable measurement-traceability requirements down to all lower-tier subcontractors performing inspection, testing, or other acceptance activities.

Certification, Traceability and Labeling

SQC-091 Barcode Labels

Partner must provide barcode labels for each shipment and each individual shipping container. Unless the purchase order specifies another format or placement, Partner must:

- Affix two identical barcode labels to opposite sides of each shipping container.
- Affix an additional copy of the applicable barcode label to the packing slip or packing-list pouch.
- Use white, self-adhesive labels measuring at least 4 inches by 2-5/16 inches.
- Use Code 39 barcode symbology.
- Ensure all barcodes are accurate, legible, machine-readable, securely affixed, and unobstructed.



Each barcode label must include the following information in both barcode and human-readable form, as applicable:

- Sterling's purchase-order number.
- Purchase-order line-item number.
- Sterling's part number.
- Manufacturer's part number.
- Part revision.
- Quantity delivered under the purchase-order line.
- Quantity contained in the labeled container.
- Unit of measure.
- Package number and total number of packages, stated as "Box ___ of ___" or equivalent.
- Serial number, lot number, batch number, date code, or other required traceability identifier.
- Ship-to name and address.
- Inbound delivery number, authorization-to-ship number, inspection-lot number, or other shipment identifier required by the purchase order.

When the purchase order requires use of a customer portal, ship-to module, or customer-generated barcode, Partner must generate and use the label produced through that system. The customer-generated label and its required format take precedence over the default format stated above.

Labels for different purchase orders, line items, part numbers, lots, or shipment destinations must not be combined or used interchangeably. The information encoded in each barcode must correspond to the human-readable information, packing slip, and actual contents of the labeled container.

Partner must replace any damaged, inaccurate, illegible, or non-scannable label before shipment. Partner must not deviate from the required barcode content, format, or placement without Sterling's prior written approval.

SQC-092 CE-Marked Certificate of Conformance

For each item subject to CE marking, Partner must ensure that the required CE marking is visible, legible, and permanently applied to the item or its required packaging before delivery.

Partner must provide with each shipment a Certificate of Conformance or other declaration issued by the manufacturer or an appropriately accredited or licensed body that identifies the delivered item, the applicable CE requirements, and the basis for conformity. The certificate must be signed or otherwise authenticated and traceable to the shipment.

Sterling may reject or withhold acceptance of any item lacking the required marking or supporting conformity documentation. Partner must flow these requirements to every applicable lower-tier source.

SQC-093 Certificate from Accredited Agency

When the purchase order requires testing or certification by an accredited agency, Partner must use a laboratory or certification body accredited for the applicable scope and standard. Required solderability testing must use the standard specified in the purchase order, which may include MIL-STD-750 Method 2026, MIL-STD-883 Method 2003, MIL-STD-202 Method 208, MIL-P-55110, MIL-P-50884, J-STD-001, J-STD-002, or J-STD-003.

Partner must provide with each applicable shipment the agency's authenticated certificate or test report identifying the agency, accreditation, item and lot tested, test method and revision, results, acceptance criteria, and disposition.

Partner must stop affected work and notify Sterling within 24 hours if the agency's required accreditation or certification expires, is suspended, or is revoked. Partner must not resume affected work without Sterling's written authorization and must flow these requirements to applicable lower-tier sources.

SQC-094 Partner Certificate of Conformance

Partner must furnish a Certificate of Conformance (CofC) with each shipment of each item identified on the purchase order. A separate CofC for EACH ITEM must be provided. Each CofC must contain the following information. Equivalent documentation or other traceable evidence may be considered in lieu of the stated requirements. The packing list must reflect the CoC line items and associated quantities. Partner must flow this clause in its entirety (or its equivalent) down to all lower tier subcontractors.

- Partner's name and address and CAGE Code Identification Number.
- Manufacturer's name and address and CAGE Code Identification Number, if different than Partner.
- Purchase order document number and line-item number, including quantity for each line item.
- Traceability identifying nomenclature such as item name, part number and revision, specification number and revision, drawing number and revision level, serial number and revision, and date, lot, batch, or date code, as applicable.
- Quantity shipped.
- Country of Origin / Country of Manufacturer.
- Shelf-life requirements such as date of manufacturer, date of expiration, and any special storage conditions for the material, as applicable.
- A positive compliance statement certifying that the articles delivered under the purchase order conform to the applicable requirements and specifications for the ordered items.
- Signature and title of an authorized company representative, electronic or wet signature acceptable, and the date of signature.

SQC-095 Certificate of Matrix Verification

When an item requires a Unique Item Identification, Item Unique Identification, data-matrix, or other machine-readable marking, Partner must verify and validate each individual matrix marking through electro-optical scanning.

Verification and validation must confirm, as applicable:

- The accuracy and completeness of the encoded data.
- Compliance with the required data content, syntax, semantics, and identifier construct.
- Consistency between the encoded data and the human-readable information.
- Legibility and machine readability.
- Mark quality, including symbol contrast, cell quality, dimensions, quiet zone, and physical integrity.
- Compliance with MIL-STD-130 and any other standard, drawing, specification, or purchase-order requirement applicable to the marking.
- The absence of any duplicate unique item identifier.

The UID processor must provide a Certificate of Matrix Verification for each marked item. The certificate must include:

- Sterling's purchase-order number and line-item number.
- Item part number and revision.
- Item serial number or other unique identifier.
- The data encoded in the matrix.
- The verification and validation method and equipment used.
- The applicable acceptance standard and grading criteria.
- The actual verification and validation results.
- An indication that the marking passed or failed each applicable requirement.
- The verification date.
- The name, title, and signature or electronic approval of the authorized representative performing or approving the verification.



The certificate must accompany the applicable shipment. Partner must retain the underlying verification and validation records for at least five years or any longer period required by the purchase order.

When the purchase order requires first-item approval, Partner must submit a sample matrix marking and its corresponding verification and validation results to Sterling and must obtain Sterling's written approval before shipping the first marked item.

Partner must flow this clause in its entirety, or its equivalent, down to the UID processor and all applicable lower-tier subcontractors.

SQC-096 Certificate of Origin

Partner must provide a Certificate of Origin for each applicable item or shipment. The certificate must identify the item, manufacturer, country of manufacture or substantial transformation, purchase order, quantity, and applicable lot, batch, or serial identifiers.

When Trade Agreements Act or other country-of-origin restrictions apply, the certificate must state compliance with those requirements. The certificate must be accurate, complete, authenticated by an authorized representative, traceable to the delivered material, and submitted at the time required by the purchase order and no later than delivery.

Partner must maintain objective evidence supporting the declared origin and flow these requirements to all applicable lower-tier sources.

SQC-097 Certificate of Transportability

For each hazardous material shipment requiring a Certificate of Transportability, Partner must certify that the material, packaging, marking, labeling, and documentation are suitable for air transport in the delivered configuration. If additional actions are required before air transport, the certificate must clearly identify each action.

The applicable UN or NA identification number and proper shipping classification must appear on the container or accompanying shipping data. Partner remains responsible for compliance with applicable dangerous-goods transportation requirements and must flow these requirements to applicable lower-tier sources.

SQC-098 Item Labeling

Partner must permanently and legibly identify each item in accordance with the purchase order, applicable drawing, specification, and other technical requirements.

Unless otherwise specified, item identification must include, as applicable:

- Sterling's part number.
- Manufacturer's part number.
- Applicable revision.
- Manufacturer's name, identifying symbol, or CAGE code.
- Serial number.
- Manufacturing lot number, batch number, date code, heat number, or other applicable traceability identifier.
- National Stock Number, when identified in the purchase order.
- Shelf-life or expiration information.
- Any other identification or marking required by the purchase order or applicable technical documentation.

Partner must serialize items when serialization is required by the purchase order, drawing, or specification. Serial numbers must be unique and must correspond to the shipment documentation and applicable inspection and test records.

When direct marking is impracticable because of the item's size, material, configuration, or intended use, Partner must securely attach an identification tag or mark the item's smallest unit container, unless the purchase order prohibits that alternative.



Partner must not alter, obscure, remove, or replace original manufacturer markings without Sterling's prior written approval. Partner must flow applicable item-labeling requirements down to all lower-tier subcontractors and suppliers.

SQC-099 Unique Item Identification Labels

When the purchase order or applicable drawing requires Unique Item Identification or Item Unique Identification, Partner must mark each applicable item in accordance with DFARS 252.211-7003, MIL-STD-130, and all purchase-order, drawing, and customer-specific requirements. The applicable revisions are those identified in the purchase order or, if no revision is identified, those in effect when Partner receives the purchase order.

Partner must:

- Assign and apply a unique item identifier using the required construct, data identifiers, enterprise identifier, part number, serial number, and other required data elements.
- Place the marking at the location and use the marking method specified by the applicable drawing or technical requirement.
- Ensure the marking is permanent for the item's expected useful life and does not impair the item's form, fit, function, safety, or performance.
- Ensure the machine-readable data and human-readable information are accurate and consistent.
- Verify and validate each data-matrix symbol through electro-optical scanning using applicable marking and data-quality standards.
- Prevent duplication of a unique item identifier assigned to another item.
- Maintain the verification and validation records for at least five years or any longer period required by the purchase order.
- Provide the applicable verification and validation certification with the shipment.
- Provide certification of registration in the applicable U.S. Government IUID system when required by the purchase order.
- Submit a sample marking and its verification and validation report for Sterling's approval before shipment of the first marked item when the purchase order requires first-item approval.

The UID processor's certification must identify the marked item and include the verification and validation results for the mark's content, syntax, contrast, quality, readability, and compliance with the applicable requirements.

Partner must not deliver an item requiring UID marking until all required marking, verification, validation, approval, and registration activities have been completed.

SQC-100 Intermediary Certificate of Conformance

When Partner is not the manufacturer and one or more supply chain intermediaries are used (Franchised Distributor, etc.): For each supply chain intermediary from the manufacturer to the direct source of the item for Partner, Partner must furnish a distributor's Certificate of Conformance (Intermediary CofC) with each shipment for each item identified on the purchase order. A separate CofC for EACH ITEM must be provided. A separate CofC is required for each supply chain intermediary from the manufacturer to the direct source of the item for Partner. Each CofC must contain the following information. Equivalent documentation or other traceable evidence may be considered in lieu of the stated requirements. The packing list must reflect the CoC line items and associated quantities. Partner must flow this clause in its entirety (or its equivalent) down to all lower tier subcontractors.

- Distributor's name and address and CAGE Code Identification Number.
- Purchase order document number and line-item number, including quantity for each line item.
- Traceability identifying nomenclature such as item name, part number and revision, specification number and revision, drawing number and revision level, serial number and revision, and date, lot, batch, or date code, as applicable.
- Quantity shipped.

- Country of Origin / Country of Manufacturer.
- Shelf-life requirements such as date of manufacturer, date of expiration, and any special storage conditions for the material, as applicable.
- A positive compliance statement certifying that the articles delivered under the purchase order conform to the applicable requirements and specifications for the ordered items.
- Signature and title of an authorized company representative, electronic or wet signature acceptable, and the date of signature.

SQC-101 Manufacturer Certificate of Conformance

When Partner is not the manufacturer: Partner must furnish a manufacturer's Certificate of Conformance (OEM CofC) with each shipment for each item identified on the purchase order. A separate OEM CofC for EACH ITEM must be provided. Each OEM CofC must contain the following information. Equivalent documentation or other traceable evidence may be considered in lieu of the stated requirements. The packing list must reflect the CoC line items and associated quantities. Partner must flow this clause in its entirety (or its equivalent) down to all lower tier subcontractors.

- Manufacturer's name and address and CAGE Code Identification Number.
- Purchase order document number and line-item number, including quantity for each line item.
- Traceability identifying nomenclature such as item name, part number and revision, specification number and revision, drawing number and revision level, serial number and revision, and date, lot, batch, or date code, as applicable.
- Quantity shipped.
- Country of Origin / Country of Manufacturer.
- Shelf-life requirements such as date of manufacturer, date of expiration, and any special storage conditions for the material, as applicable.
- A positive compliance statement certifying that the articles delivered under the purchase order conform to the applicable requirements and specifications for the ordered items.
- Signature and title of an authorized company representative, electronic or wet signature acceptable, and the date of signature.

SQC-102 Package Labeling

Partner must legibly label each applicable unit container, intermediate container, and exterior shipping container as necessary to identify, preserve, handle, and control the shipment. Labels must be durable, securely affixed, unobstructed, and readable throughout normal handling, transportation, and storage. This clause governs package and container labeling; identification applied directly to the product is governed by SQC-098, and UID marking is governed by SQC-099.

Unless otherwise specified, each package label must include, as applicable: Sterling purchase-order and line-item numbers; Sterling and manufacturer part numbers and revisions; manufacturer name or CAGE code; item description; quantity and unit of measure; serial, lot, batch, heat, and date-code identifiers; package number and total package count; ship-from and ship-to information; packing-slip number and shipment date; gross weight and dimensions; and required acceptance, customer, or shipment identifiers.

Partner must include all applicable preservation and handling markings, including shelf-life or expiration date and storage conditions; hazardous-material identification; electrostatic-discharge, moisture-sensitive-device, fragility, lifting, loading, orientation, and environmental precautions; lead-free or material-composition identification; and any special marking required by the purchase order, drawing, specification, or law.

Different purchase orders, line items, part numbers, revisions, manufacturing lots, shelf-life conditions, or acceptance categories must be separately packaged or placed in separately identified inner containers. Package labeling must correspond to the contents actually enclosed. Welding materials and other controlled materials must retain positive material identification and traceability on the package or container.



When a barcode or customer-generated label is required, Partner must use the specified symbology, dimensions, format, data, placement, and system-generated output. Partner must not alter required ship-to information, label content, or placement without Sterling's prior written approval.

Partner must flow applicable package-labeling requirements to every lower-tier source that packages, labels, stores, handles, or directly ships the affected product.

SQC-103 Traceability

Partner must maintain documented traceability for each item supplied under the purchase order to the original equipment manufacturer, original component manufacturer, or original mill or material producer, as applicable. Traceability documentation must:

- Identify the manufacturer's name and location.
- Identify each supply-chain intermediary between the manufacturer and Partner.
- Identify the applicable manufacturer part number and revision.
- Identify the applicable serial number, lot number, batch number, date code, heat number, or other manufacturer-assigned production identifier.
- Establish an unbroken chain of custody from the original manufacturer or material producer to Partner.
- Be traceable to the applicable manufacturing, inspection, and test records.

Partner must identify the applicable traceability information on the item, its packaging, or the documentation accompanying the item so that items from different manufacturing lots, batches, date codes, or other production groupings can be distinguished.

Partner must furnish traceability documentation with each shipment unless the purchase order authorizes Partner to retain the documentation and provide it upon request. Acceptable evidence may include purchase orders, invoices, packing slips, certificates of conformance, or other records that collectively establish the required traceability.

Partner must not deliver an item for which the required traceability is unavailable without first notifying Sterling and obtaining Sterling's written authorization. Partner must flow this clause in its entirety, or its equivalent, down to all lower-tier subcontractors and suppliers.

SQC-104 Quality Management System Registration Certificate

Partner must maintain a Quality Management System registered to the standard identified in the purchase order, such as ISO 9001, AS9100, or AS9120, for the duration of the purchase order.

The registration must:

- Be issued by an accredited third-party certification body.
- Be current and valid.
- Cover the facility performing the work.

Include a scope that encompasses the products, services, and activities performed under the purchase order.

Be issued under an accreditation recognized by the International Accreditation Forum or another accreditation structure approved by Sterling.

Partner must provide Sterling with a legible copy of its current registration certificate:

Upon initial acceptance of the purchase order;

Upon renewal or recertification;

Following a change in registrar, certificate number, covered facility, or certification scope; and

Upon Sterling's request.



The certificate must identify the registered organization, facility address, applicable standard and revision, registration scope, certification body, certificate number, initial or issue date, effective date, and expiration date.

Partner must notify Sterling in writing within ten business days after any suspension, withdrawal, expiration, lapse, reduction in scope, change of registrar, or notice that the registration may be adversely affected. Partner must immediately notify Sterling if the change affects Partner's ability to perform the purchase order.

Sterling reserves the right to assess Partner's Quality Management System and supporting records. Registration does not relieve Partner of responsibility for compliance with the purchase order.

Partner must flow applicable Quality Management System requirements down to lower-tier subcontractors when required by the purchase order.

SQC-105 Special Labeling

Partner must comply with all special labeling and marking requirements contained in or referenced by the purchase order, drawing, specification, statement of work, packaging instruction, or other applicable technical document.

Unless otherwise directed, each required label must:

Contain the exact information, wording, symbols, identifiers, warnings, and machine-readable data specified in the applicable requirement.

Be placed at the location specified for the item, unit container, intermediate container, or exterior shipping container.

Be accurate, complete, legible, securely affixed, and sufficiently durable to remain readable during normal handling, transportation, and storage.

Correspond to the item and documentation included in the shipment.

Not cover, alter, or obscure required manufacturer markings, traceability information, warnings, or other identification.

Partner must reproduce or reference the applicable special-labeling requirements on the packing slip or other shipping documentation when required by the purchase order.

Partner must not modify or omit a special label without Sterling's prior written approval. Partner must flow applicable special-labeling requirements down to all lower-tier subcontractors and suppliers.

SQC-106 Additional Item and Source Information

When the purchase order requires supplemental item or source information, Partner must provide the required information for each applicable item with each delivery in the format specified by Sterling. The information must be complete, accurate, current as of shipment, and traceable to the purchase order, line item, part number, manufacturer, and delivered item.

Required information may include: the original equipment manufacturer's full legal name, physical address and country, website, and facility-clearance level; the manufacturer's website and facility-clearance level; the applicable Government cognizance or supply-management code; whether the item contains batteries; and the information necessary to identify and subscribe to applicable hardware or software service-bulletin updates.

Partner must define any code, abbreviation, or data element used; verify the information against authoritative source records; identify information that is not applicable or unavailable rather than leaving a required field blank; correct rejected or inaccurate information promptly; and flow the information-collection requirement to applicable lower-tier sources.

Documents and Records

SQC-121 As Built List

Partner must provide an As-Built Configuration List with each shipment or data package when required. For each serialized end item and serialized component, the list must identify the as-designed, as-built, and as-delivered configuration, including part number, revision, nomenclature, serial number, and incorporated changes or approved deviations.

The list must be accurate, authenticated, traceable to the delivered item, and consistent with the configuration and acceptance records. Partner must flow these requirements to applicable lower-tier sources and consolidate their configuration data into the delivered list.

SQC-122 Deliverable Data and Documentation

Partner must furnish all data and documentation required by the purchase order, drawing, specification, statement of work, data-submission schedule, or applicable quality clause in the required format, medium, language, revision, and delivery sequence. Deliverables must be complete, legible, accurate, internally consistent, and traceable to the purchase order, line item, product, part number, revision, serial/lot/batch/date code, and represented quantity.

Partner must review and approve deliverables before submission and must identify proprietary or export-controlled content. Missing, rejected, corrupted, or inaccurate data must be corrected and resubmitted promptly at no additional cost. Sterling's review does not relieve Partner of responsibility for compliance.

Where delivered material is required to be CE listed, the product must bear the required visible CE marking and the delivery must include the applicable manufacturer or approved-agency Certificate of Conformance consistent with SQC-092 and SQC-093. Partner must ensure lower-tier data is obtained, reviewed, incorporated, and delivered when applicable and must retain the supporting source records for the required retention period.

If a lot or order is divided into partial shipments, each shipment must include all documentation required for the items and quantities in that shipment. Samples or sample data submitted separately must reference the applicable purchase order, line item, and original shipment date.

Sterling may reject, withhold acceptance of, or require correction of an item or shipment when required certifications, test data, reports, source-inspection releases, or other deliverable documentation are missing, incomplete, or not traceable to the delivered product. When source inspection is performed, the data package must include the applicable signed, stamped, or electronically authenticated inspection release or approval evidence.

SQC-123 Document and Revision Control

Partner must maintain a documented system to approve, issue, revise, distribute, and control documents and data used to perform or verify work. Personnel must have access to the current authorized revision at the point of use, and obsolete documents must be removed from use or clearly identified to prevent unintended use.

Partner must verify before performance that drawings, specifications, software, procedures, work instructions, and purchase-order requirements agree with the revision identified by Sterling. Changes must be reviewed and approved by authorized personnel, with the nature, date, and authority for the change retained. Partner must not implement a customer, design, process, or configuration change requiring Sterling approval until written approval is received.

Equivalent revision-control requirements must be flowed to lower-tier sources.

SQC-124 Document Upload

Partner must submit all required quality records using the method, format, naming convention, and timing specified by Sterling or the purchase order. Electronic submission is permitted only through a Sterling-approved system; when electronic submission is prohibited or physical records are required, complete legible records must accompany the hardware.



Submission or upload does not relieve Partner of record-retention, accuracy, traceability, or delivery obligations. Partner must correct rejected, corrupt, incomplete, or unreadable files promptly and must flow these requirements to applicable lower-tier sources.

When a customer-designated electronic portal is required, Partner must obtain and maintain authorized access, use required authentication controls and submit records through the designated portal before shipment or at another stated time. Partner must follow the specified file type, combined-file, and naming convention requirements, including part, serial or lot identifiers and submission or shipment date when required, and must retain evidence of successful submission.

SQC-125 Quality Manual

Before beginning work, Partner must provide its current quality manual and requested supporting procedures to Sterling for review when required by the purchase order. The manual must describe the quality-management system applicable to the work, including responsibility, document and configuration control, purchasing and lower-tier control, inspection and test, nonconformance control, corrective action, records, and internal audit.

Partner must notify Sterling before implementing any material change that could affect conformity, quality-system approval, or contractual compliance and must provide revised documents upon request. Review by Sterling does not relieve Partner of responsibility for compliance. Applicable requirements must be flowed to lower-tier sources.

SQC-126 Records Retention

Partner must create and retain complete, legible, identifiable, protected, and retrievable quality and conformity records for the purchase order. Records include, as applicable, procurement and traceability records; certificates; inspection, test, calibration, first-article, acceptance, process, personnel-qualification, configuration, nonconformance, corrective-action, counterfeit-prevention, and software records; and lower-tier objective evidence.

Unless the purchase order specifies a longer period, Partner must retain records for 30 years after final delivery. A shorter period stated elsewhere does not reduce this requirement unless Sterling expressly authorizes the shorter period in writing. Records must be protected against deterioration, alteration, loss, and unauthorized access, with electronic records backed up and reproducible.

Records must be available promptly to Sterling, Sterling's customer, the U.S. Government, and regulatory authorities. Before destroying or transferring records, Partner must notify Sterling and provide Sterling an opportunity to obtain them. Partner must flow these requirements, including the applicable retention period and access rights, to lower-tier sources.

SQC-127 Software Delivery Documentation

For deliverable software, firmware, or programmable logic, Partner must provide the documentation specified by the purchase order, including applicable requirements, architecture and design descriptions, source and executable identification, build and version information, configuration baseline, interfaces, installation/loading/initialization and operating instructions, licenses, known limitations, verification and validation procedures and results, problem reports, approved waivers or deviations, and release notes.

Documentation must demonstrate that requirements were achieved, the delivered configuration is correct and properly marked, the required acceptance level was achieved, and authorized deviations are included in the delivery package. Instructions must be sufficient for trained personnel to load, initialize, operate, maintain, and reproduce the delivered version as required.

Partner must control and retain the documentation with the software baseline and flow applicable requirements to lower-tier software sources.

SQC-128 Tooling Asset Documentation

Partner must create, maintain, protect, and deliver complete documentation for tooling or other assets used or furnished under the purchase order. Documentation must support design, fabrication, inspection, acceptance, rework, repair, modification,



maintenance, and configuration control and must comply with the forms, data fields, and technical standards specified by Sterling.

Partner must submit required records for Sterling approval through the designated method and include required hard-copy records with each asset shipment. No unapproved change may be made to controlled tooling or its documentation. Partner must impose equivalent documentation and approval controls on applicable lower-tier sources.

SQC-129 English Language and Data Format

Partner must be capable of communicating verbally and in writing in the English language for all matters affecting purchase-order performance. Unless Sterling expressly authorizes another language in writing, all reports, correspondence, drawings, procedures, notices, markings, labels, certificates, records, software documentation, and other information submitted for review, approval, acceptance, or delivery must be complete, accurate, and legible in English.

Technical terms, units of measure, dates, symbols, abbreviations, and translated information must be consistent with the purchase order and applicable technical standards. If Partner supplies a translation, Partner remains responsible for its accuracy and for resolving any conflict with the controlling source document. Partner must ensure personnel who communicate with Sterling or prepare required deliverables possess sufficient English-language proficiency for the assigned work.

Partner must flow equivalent language and data-format requirements to lower-tier sources whose work or documentation affects the deliverable and must review lower-tier submissions for compliance before providing them to Sterling.

Engineering and Change Control

SQC-151 Configuration and Change Control

Partner must establish and maintain documented configuration management for products, software, firmware, technical data, processes, tooling, and acceptance baselines used under the purchase order. Controls must identify configuration items, establish approved functional and physical baselines, maintain revision and change status, preserve traceability, prevent unauthorized changes, and ensure delivered items match the configuration ordered.

Partner must classify proposed changes according to their effect on fit, form, function, safety, reliability, interchangeability, performance, qualification, producibility, supportability, software behavior, or contractual requirements. Partner must submit proposed major or otherwise approval-controlled changes to Sterling with sufficient technical and schedule impact data and must receive written approval before implementation. Minor changes requiring notice must be reported within the period stated in the purchase order; otherwise, promptly and before delivery of affected product.

Partner must control emergency changes, deviations, waivers, effectivity, superseded configurations, and verification of implementation. Configuration records and data must be available to Sterling. These requirements must be flowed to and enforced at applicable lower tiers.

The controlled baseline includes the product design, fabrication method, material, process, identification, part number, revision, tolerance, reliability, marking, and configuration represented in Partner's quotation or offer and incorporated into the purchase order. Partner must notify Sterling before delivery of any departure from that baseline and obtain approval when required.

SQC-152 Design Control and Technical Requirements

When Partner has design responsibility or uses Sterling or customer technical data, Partner must plan, review, verify, validate, and control the design to satisfy all purchase-order, drawing, specification, interface, safety, performance, reliability, and regulatory requirements. Design inputs, outputs, assumptions, analyses, reviews, tests, approvals, and changes must be documented and traceable.

Partner must use the complete, current engineering dataset and must resolve conflicts or omissions with Sterling before use. Digital product definition or model-based definition data must be controlled through an approved process that protects

authority, accuracy, translation, access, and revision status; any customer-required capability approval must be obtained before using customer digital geometry.

Partner may not change an approved design or technical baseline without required written approval and must flow applicable design and data-control requirements to lower-tier design sources.

Partner must confirm that it has received all drawings, bills of material, specifications, and other technical documentation associated with the ordered assembly or item. Partner must promptly request missing information or clarification from Sterling and must not proceed on assumptions when the missing or conflicting information could affect conformity.

SQC-153 Deviation / Waiver / Authorization

Partner must not depart from any drawing, specification, process, material, source, test, inspection, configuration, packaging, delivery, or other purchase-order requirement without Sterling's prior written approval. A request must identify the affected item and quantity, requirement, proposed departure, technical and quality impact, root cause, corrective action, duration, and requested disposition.

Partner must segregate and control affected product pending disposition. Approval is limited to the specific scope and period stated and does not revise the purchase order, establish precedent, waive latent defects, or authorize shipment unless shipment is expressly approved.

Partner must retain each request and disposition, ensure approved conditions are incorporated into work and shipment records, and flow this clause to all lower-tier sources. Lower-tier departures must be submitted through Partner to Sterling before implementation.

Partner must use any Sterling-designated request, information, deviation, or change form and submission method to request clarification, propose a technical or configuration change, or request authorization to ship nonconforming material. An approved request must accompany or be referenced on affected product and shipment records when required.

SQC-154 Obsolescence / Discontinuance Notification

Partner must maintain a proactive process to identify and manage actual or anticipated obsolescence, end-of-life, loss of source, or discontinuance affecting products, components, materials, software, tooling, services, or support required under the purchase order.

Partner must monitor for manufacturer plans extending at least four years where such information is available and notify Sterling in writing as soon as a condition is known and, when practicable, at least 12 months before the last order or production date. The notice must identify affected part numbers and configurations, reason, key dates, available inventory, last-time-buy terms, support horizon, recommended replacement or redesign, form-fit-function and qualification impacts, and proposed mitigation. Partner must support reasonable lifetime-buy, redesign, requalification, and continuity planning and must not substitute an item without approval.

Partner must obtain and flow comparable notifications from lower-tier sources and retain obsolescence records for the support life required by the purchase order.

SQC-155 Supplier / Facility Change Notification

Partner must notify Sterling in writing before any change that could affect product conformity, quality-system approval, traceability, delivery, or continued source qualification. Covered changes include ownership or legal name; quality representative; loss, suspension, or scope change of certification; significant customer or regulatory findings; facility location; manufacturing, assembly, inspection, test, storage, or repair site; production line; equipment, tooling, software, technology, material, design, drawing, process, procedure, test method, or special-process source; and a material lower-tier supplier change.

Unless a different period is stated in the purchase order, Partner must provide notice at least 90 days before planned implementation and within 10 calendar days after learning of an unplanned certification, ownership, facility, or quality-

system status change. The submission must describe the change, rationale, affected items, risk, validation and requalification plan, first affected lot or serial number, proposed effectivity, and schedule impact.

Partner must not implement a change requiring approval until Sterling gives written approval. Approval does not relieve Partner of conformity responsibility. Partner must impose equivalent change-notification and approval controls on lower-tier sources.

SQC-156 Manufacturing, Inspection and Test Planning

When required by the purchase order, Partner must prepare and submit for Sterling approval a manufacturing-process flowchart, manufacturing plan, inspection plan, Acceptance Test Procedure (ATP), Qualification Test Procedure (QTP), or equivalent planning document before affected production, qualification, acceptance testing, or delivery begins. Unless another period is stated, the initial submission must be provided at least 30 calendar days before the planned activity or delivery.

The submitted plan must identify the sequence, location, and description of manufacturing, inspection, and test operations; responsible facilities and lower-tier sources; applicable drawings, specifications, and revisions; characteristics and acceptance criteria; mandatory inspection or witness points; required equipment, tooling, software, and calibration status; referenced data sheets; sampling or test methods; objective-evidence and result-recording fields; configuration controls; and treatment of failures, deviations, and nonconformances.

Partner must not implement a plan requiring approval, proceed beyond a mandatory hold point, or deliver affected product until written approval or release is received. Partner must submit material changes for renewed approval before implementation, retain approved plans and resulting records, make them available for review, and flow applicable planning and approval requirements to lower-tier sources. Sterling approval does not relieve Partner of responsibility for conformity.

Handling, Storage and Preservation

SQC-181 Electrostatic Discharge Controls

Partner must establish, document, implement, and maintain an electrostatic-discharge control program for electrostatic-discharge-sensitive (ESDS) items throughout manufacture, inspection, test, handling, storage, packaging, and shipment. The program must comply with ANSI/ESD S20.20 and ANSI/ESD S541, or another purchase-order-approved equivalent, and include protected areas, grounding, personnel training, monitoring, calibrated verification equipment, corrective action, and records.

ESDS items must be enclosed in approved static-shielding packaging; static-dissipative or antistatic material alone is not acceptable as primary shielding. Pink polyethylene must not contact or serve as primary protection for ESDS devices. Leads must be protected as appropriate, and packages must bear conspicuous ESDS caution identification compliant with ANSI/ESD S8.1 or the specified marking standard. Moisture-sensitive items must also comply with SQC-186.

Sterling may review the program and records and may reject product exposed without required protection. Partner must flow these requirements to all lower-tier sources handling ESDS items.

When MIL-STD-129 marking or packaging controls are invoked, Partner must apply the specified revision and required figures. For ESD Class 1 and Class 2 components, all leads must be shorted using material having a surface resistivity between 1×10^5 and 1×10^{12} ohms per square unless the governing requirement specifies another method. Packaging must maintain the required protection throughout handling, storage, and shipment.

SQC-182 Foreign Object Damage Prevention

Partner must maintain a documented foreign object debris/damage (FOD) prevention program appropriate to product risk and compliant with AS9146 or NAS 412 when required by the purchase order. The program must address prevention, detection, removal, housekeeping, personnel training, accountability, tool and hardware control, consumables, work-area control, lost-item searches, reporting, investigation, corrective action, and periodic audits.

Partner must review designs, manufacturing and maintenance processes, facilities, packaging, and transport methods for FOD risk; establish FOD-sensitive or critical areas; perform inspections and verifications at appropriate stages and before closure or shipment; and ensure products and packaging are free of debris, loose items, contamination, and damage. Tools, parts, protective devices, and temporary materials must be accounted for and removed before delivery.

Partner must report any actual or suspected FOD affecting delivered product promptly, support containment and investigation, retain program and inspection records, and flow applicable FOD and tool-control requirements to lower tiers.

SQC-183 Hazardous Materials Packaging / Handling

Partner must identify, classify, package, mark, label, document, store, handle, and transport hazardous materials in compliance with the purchase order and all applicable transportation, environmental, safety, carrier, and destination requirements. Only trained and currently qualified personnel may prepare hazardous-material shipments.

Partner must use authorized containers and compatible cushioning, segregation, closures, and quantity limits; protect against leakage, reaction, ignition, contamination, and damage; and provide current safety data sheets, declarations, certifications, emergency information, and other required shipping papers. Hazard labels and markings must remain visible and correspond to the contents.

Partner must notify Sterling before shipment of unusual restrictions or handling needs and must flow applicable requirements to lower-tier packers, warehouses, and carriers.

SQC-184 Infrastructure, Storage and Stockroom Controls

Partner must provide and maintain facilities, utilities, equipment, software environments, work areas, and storage conditions adequate to preserve conformity and prevent damage, deterioration, contamination, commingling, loss, or unauthorized use. Required environmental conditions must be monitored and recorded with calibrated equipment.

Stockroom controls must provide positive identification, traceability, status segregation, lot/date-code and shelf-life control, first-in/first-out or other required rotation, restricted access, inventory accuracy, periodic inspection, and preservation of customer or government property. Tools and production equipment must be controlled, maintained, and accounted for.

For software or programmable-logic work, infrastructure must support the applicable AS9115 and AS9125 processes and include controlled development, build, test, configuration, security, problem-reporting, backup, release, and archival environments; defined and verified functions for non-deliverable software used in manufacture or acceptance; appropriate independence of software quality personnel; planned reviews and audits; retrievable metrics and objective evidence; and access for Sterling assessment.

Partner must correct adverse conditions promptly, assess affected inventory, retain supporting records, and apply equivalent controls at lower-tier and off-site storage locations.

SQC-185 Material Segregation and Status Control

Partner must maintain documented controls to identify and physically or electronically segregate conforming, nonconforming, suspect counterfeit, customer-furnished, government-owned, expired, awaiting-inspection, rejected, returned, and otherwise restricted material. Status and ownership must be clear at all times and unauthorized use or shipment must be prevented.

Different part numbers, revisions, manufacturers, lots, date codes, heat numbers, shelf-life conditions, purchase orders, and acceptance statuses must not be commingled unless traceability and identity remain fully preserved. Suspect or nonconforming material must be quarantined in controlled access areas pending authorized disposition; material must not be returned to stock without documented verification.

Partner must maintain inventory movement and disposition records, investigate any loss of control, notify Sterling when affected delivered product is possible, and flow equivalent controls to lower tiers.



When Sterling authorizes delivery of nonconforming material, Partner must segregate each affected unit in a separate container when directed, affix conspicuous nonconforming identification to the material and container, and include or reference the approved disposition or authorization with the shipment.

SQC-186 Moisture Sensitive Device Controls

Partner must identify and control moisture-sensitive electronic devices in accordance with J-STD-033 and, where applicable, J-STD-020 or J-STD-075. Controls must cover moisture-sensitivity-level determination, dry storage, floor-life tracking, exposure time, baking or rebaking, handling, resealing, labeling, and records.

Moisture-sensitive devices must be delivered in intact moisture-barrier packaging with required desiccant and humidity indicator card and with the manufacturer, part number, lot/date code, moisture-sensitivity level, seal date, floor life, and applicable expiration or bake information identified. Partner must not reset exposure history or rebake outside approved limits.

Partner must assess and disclose any exceeded exposure, failed indicator, damaged barrier, or uncontrolled condition before shipment and must flow these requirements to applicable lower-tier sources.

SQC-187 Packaging and Preservation

Partner must preserve and package products to prevent corrosion, contamination, electrostatic or moisture damage, FOD, shock, vibration, abrasion, deformation, deterioration, and loss throughout handling, transportation, and the expected storage period. Packaging must comply with the purchase order, product specification, and any specified ASTM D3951, MIL-STD-2073, ESD, moisture, hazardous-material, or customer packaging requirement.

Packaging materials must be clean, compatible, non-damaging, and appropriate for item weight, fragility, finish, shelf life, and mode of transport. Items must be individually protected when contact could cause damage; openings and sensitive surfaces must be capped or sealed; loose fill and prohibited materials must not be used; and reusable or special containers must be identified and returned when directed.

Partner must verify packaging effectiveness before shipment, apply the labeling required by SQC-102, include required packing documentation, and flow preservation and packaging requirements to lower-tier and direct-ship sources.

SQC-188 Shelf-Life / Perishable Material

Partner must identify and control all shelf-life, age-sensitive, environmentally sensitive, and life-limited material. Unless the purchase order specifies a different minimum, material must have at least 75 percent of its total manufacturer-established shelf life and no less than two years of useful life remaining at delivery. If the manufacturer-established total life makes the two-year minimum impossible, or either minimum cannot be met, Sterling's written approval is required before shipment.

Each item and package, and the Certificate of Conformance when required, must identify the manufacturer, product, batch/lot/date code, date of manufacture or cure, expiration or retest date, total shelf life, remaining shelf life, storage conditions, and any life or cycle usage. Rubber goods and other date-controlled materials must comply with the governing age-control specification. Partner must not extend or alter shelf life without manufacturer support and Sterling approval.

Partner must use controlled storage and rotation, prevent shipment of expired or improperly stored material, provide life-history documentation for life-limited parts, notify Sterling of excursions, and flow these controls to lower tiers.

Inspection, Testing and Acceptance

SQC-211 As-received Report

For each item submitted for calibration, repair, or adjustment when an as-received report is required, Partner must evaluate and document the item's condition and measurement results before performing repair, adjustment, or other work that could alter those results.

The signed calibration certificate or report must identify the item and serial number, calibration date, standards and methods used, measurement uncertainty or test-accuracy ratio, and both as-received and as-retained findings, including whether each



condition was acceptable or unsatisfactory. Unless otherwise specified, the test-accuracy ratio must be at least 4:1 or the reported uncertainty must demonstrate adequate measurement capability.

Partner must notify Sterling promptly of an out-of-tolerance as-received condition and provide sufficient data for impact assessment. These requirements must be flowed to applicable calibration and repair sources.

SQC-212 Source Inspection

The items and work identified on the purchase order are subject to source inspection at Partner's facility, a lower-tier supplier's facility, or another location designated by Sterling. Source inspection may be performed by Sterling, Sterling's customer, the U.S. Government, or their authorized representatives.

Partner must:

Notify Sterling at least fourteen calendar days before the items or work will be ready for source inspection, unless the purchase order specifies another notice period.

Promptly notify Sterling of any change affecting the scheduled inspection.

Complete Partner's required inspections and tests before presenting the items for final source inspection, unless an in-process inspection or witness point is specified.

Provide, at no additional cost, reasonable access, facilities, equipment, personnel, assistance, records, inspection and test data, and other documentation necessary to determine conformity with purchase-order requirements.

Permit inspection, test, surveillance, review of manufacturing and quality processes, and verification of items and documentation at the applicable facility.

Obtain written authorization from Sterling before shipment unless Sterling provides a written waiver of the source-inspection requirement.

Include evidence of completed source inspection or Sterling's written waiver with the shipment.

Any rework, repair, retest, alteration, nonscheduled entry, or other work performed on an item after source-inspection acceptance voids that acceptance unless Sterling provides written authorization. Partner must notify Sterling and, if directed, present the item for repeat source inspection.

Source inspection, waiver, or acceptance does not relieve Partner of responsibility for compliance with all purchase-order requirements.

Partner must flow this clause in its entirety, or its equivalent, down to each lower-tier subcontractor at whose facility source inspection may be performed.

When Sterling specifies an electronic scheduling or source-inspection system, Partner must submit the quantity offered, requested inspection date, readiness information, and other required scheduling data through that system and retain the resulting inspection-lot or transaction number. A system-generated authorization to ship without source inspection is a waiver only for the identified shipment and does not waive any Government inspection requirement.

SQC-213 Government Source Inspection

When the purchase order requires Government Source Inspection, Partner must promptly notify the Government Quality Assurance Representative or other Government representative that normally services the facility upon receipt of the purchase order so that inspection planning can begin. If Partner cannot identify or contact the appropriate representative, Partner must notify Sterling promptly and obtain direction.

Partner must coordinate the required inspection or test before shipment; complete all required internal inspections and tests before presentation unless an in-process witness point applies; and provide the Government representative reasonable access to the product, facilities, personnel, equipment, records, and lower-tier locations necessary to verify conformity.



Partner must not ship until the required Government inspection or test is completed and documented, or until an authorized Government representative or Sterling provides a written waiver or release applicable to the shipment. Government inspection, waiver, or release does not constitute final acceptance and does not relieve Partner of responsibility for compliance.

Any rework, repair, retest, alteration, substitution, configuration change, damage, or other activity after Government acceptance that could affect the inspected condition invalidates the prior release unless otherwise authorized. Partner must notify Sterling and the applicable Government representative and must repeat the required inspection when directed. Partner must flow this clause to every lower-tier facility at which Government Source Inspection may occur.

SQC-214 Test and Inspection Reports

Partner must perform and document all inspections and tests required by the purchase order, drawing, specification, acceptance-test procedure, or other applicable technical requirement. When a report or recorded data is required, Partner must submit a complete, legible, and traceable report with each affected shipment unless Sterling specifies an earlier submission date or another frequency.

Each report must include, as applicable: Partner name and address; Sterling purchase-order and line-item numbers and applicable change notice; manufacturer and part number; item description and revision; drawing, specification, procedure, and revision used; serial, lot, batch, heat, and date-code identification; total order or lot quantity; quantities inspected, tested, accepted, and rejected; sample size and sample-selection method; inspection or test type, purpose, date, location, and acceptance criteria; each characteristic, parameter, or note evaluated; required values or tolerances and actual quantitative results; test conditions; equipment identification; applicable codes or keys needed to interpret the data; nonconformances and dispositions; and the name, title, and authenticated approval of the responsible representative.

Reports must show objective evidence of conformity. Actual results must be reported when quantitative results are generated or required; statements such as "acceptable," "pass," or "within tolerance" may be used only when the governing requirement permits attribute reporting. Blank or omitted characteristics must be explained. Corrections must remain traceable to the original entry and the person and date of correction.

When work is performed by an outside laboratory, processor, or lower-tier source, its report must identify the source, operation performed, governing specification and revision, represented quantity, and applicable manufacturer, heat, lot, batch, or serial identifiers. Partner must review lower-tier reports for completeness and compliance before submission.

For items machined under tape-controlled, numerically controlled, or other automatic conditions in one continuous setup, a first-and-last-item report may replace reporting for every item only when the purchase order or Sterling authorizes that exception. The report must identify the automatic process and continuous setup and provide 100-percent inspection results for the first and last items.

Partner must retain inspection, test, reliability, and supporting quality records for at least seven years after completion of the purchase order, or longer when required by the purchase order, contract, or law. Records must remain legible, protected, and readily retrievable and must be available to Sterling, its customer, and authorized regulatory representatives. Partner must flow this clause to every lower-tier source performing or documenting an applicable inspection or test.

SQC-215 Dimensional Inspection Report

Partner must perform and document dimensional inspection before shipment. Unless the purchase order or Sterling approves sampling under SQC-223, Partner must verify 100 percent of all drawing dimensions, characteristics, and notes for every affected item.

The dimensional inspection report must delineate each drawing characteristic and identify the drawing or specification and revision, characteristic or balloon number, nominal requirement, tolerance, and actual measured result. The report must also identify Partner; Sterling purchase order and line item; manufacturer and part number; item revision; inspection date; measuring-equipment identification; and the quantities inspected, accepted, and rejected.



Inspection-record traceability must be maintained by serializing each inspected item when permitted or by using a controlled tag or equivalent identifier. The item identification must correspond directly to the applicable report and shipment documentation.

Partner must submit one complete dimensional inspection report with each shipment unless Sterling specifies another frequency. An AS9102 Form 3 may satisfy the characteristic-results portion when it contains all required information. Any authorized automatic-process or first-and-last-item reporting exception must comply with SQC-214.

Partner must not substitute attribute results for actual dimensional measurements unless the governing requirement expressly permits it. Partner must flow this clause to every lower-tier source performing work that affects dimensional characteristics or performing the required inspection.

SQC-216 Disposition Report

Partner must maintain documented controls to identify, segregate, review, and disposition nonconforming product. Proposed Repair or Use-As-Is dispositions, and dispositions involving Sterling- or customer-furnished property, must be submitted to Sterling with the nonconformance description, affected quantity and configuration, cause, technical justification, proposed action, and supporting evidence.

Partner must not implement the proposed disposition or ship affected product until Sterling provides written approval. Acceptance or qualification test failures must be reported within 24 hours unless the purchase order requires earlier notice.

The final disposition report must record approvals, work performed, verification results, affected serial or lot numbers, and closure. Partner must flow equivalent controls to lower-tier sources and submit their dispositions through Partner.

SQC-217 Electronic Source Inspection

When electronic source inspection is required, Partner must submit the affected items and objective evidence to Sterling for review before shipment. Partner must complete all required inspections and tests before submitting the electronic source-inspection package.

The submission must include, as applicable: clear photographs showing the overall condition and all relevant features of each item or the sample authorized under SQC-223; manufacturer labels and all part, serial, lot, batch, heat, and date-code information; unit and exterior packaging; applicable inspection and test reports; Certificate of Conformance and other required quality records; identified nonconformances and approved dispositions; and any additional evidence requested by Sterling.

Each photograph, record, and data file must be legible and identified so Sterling can correlate it to the purchase order, line item, part number, revision, item, serial number, lot, batch, date code, and inspected quantity. Partner must use Sterling's specified electronic-submission method and promptly correct incomplete, corrupt, or unreadable submissions.

Partner must not ship until Sterling issues written authorization to ship. Any rework, repair, retest, alteration, substitution, change in configuration, unauthorized entry, damage, or other activity after authorization that could affect the inspected condition voids the authorization. Partner must notify Sterling and resubmit the affected item for electronic source inspection.

Electronic source inspection, surveillance, or authorization to ship does not constitute final acceptance and does not relieve Partner of responsibility for compliance. When sampling is permitted, Partner must comply with SQC-223. Partner must flow this clause to every lower-tier source whose work or direct shipment is subject to electronic source inspection.

SQC-218 FAA Conformity Inspection

When FAA conformity inspection is required, Partner must perform the work under a controlled manufacturing and conformity plan and provide the plan to Sterling at least 30 days before initial fabrication or assembly, unless Sterling approves another schedule. Partner must coordinate with Sterling and the designated FAA representative at least 14 days before the item will be ready for inspection.



Partner must provide access to the product, facilities, calibrated inspection equipment, personnel, approved design data, manufacturing and inspection planning, test records, material-review records, first-article data, configuration records, and lower-tier evidence necessary to establish conformity. The item must conform 100 percent to approved design data; no deviation may be incorporated without required written approval.

Partner must complete and provide applicable FAA conformity documentation, including FAA Forms 8130-9 and 8130-3 when required. Containers must be identified as "FAA Conformity Part" using the marking method and size specified by Sterling; when no method is specified, conspicuous red lettering must be used.

Partner must comply with the applicable provisions of 14 CFR Parts 21 and 25 and, for maintenance work, Parts 43 and 145, as invoked by the purchase order. These requirements and access rights must be flowed to every applicable lower-tier source.

SQC-219 First Article Inspection

Partner must perform a First Article Inspection (FAI) for each item identified on the purchase order in accordance with AS9102, at the revision specified in the purchase order or, if no revision is specified, the revision in effect on the purchase-order issuance date.

The FAI must:

- Be performed on an item from the first production run unless otherwise authorized by Sterling in writing.
- verify 100 percent of the applicable drawing, specification, functional, test, and other design characteristics;
- identify each characteristic, its applicable requirement or tolerance, and the actual result obtained;
- include all required and conditionally required AS9102 forms and supporting documentation;
- identify any nonconformance, approved deviation, waiver, or corrective action applicable to the item; and
- be reviewed and approved by Partner's authorized quality representative.

Partner must perform a new full or partial FAI, as applicable, when required by AS9102, including following a change in design, manufacturing source, process, location, tooling, material, inspection method, numerical-control program, or other condition that could affect fit, form, function, or product conformity. A full or partial FAI may also be required following a significant interruption in production, an event affecting the manufacturing process, or implementation of corrective action.

Unless the purchase order requires earlier submission or Sterling's approval before shipment, the completed FAI report and supporting documentation must accompany the first shipment. The item used for the FAI must be separately identified when shipped with other items of the same part number.

Partner must not ship when the purchase order requires Sterling's approval of the FAI before shipment until Partner receives written authorization from Sterling. Partner must provide Sterling, Sterling's customer, and any authorized government representative an opportunity to witness the FAI when requested.

Partner must flow applicable FAI requirements down to all lower-tier subcontractors responsible for characteristics included within the FAI.

When a ballooned or otherwise characteristic-numbered drawing is required, the FAI report must include it, and each separately verifiable requirement contained in a drawing note must have a distinct characteristic identifier. Unless the purchase order specifies another period, Partner must notify Sterling at least ten working days before the planned FAI delivery or review date and must obtain required written acceptance before shipment.

SQC-220 Manufacturer Source Inspection

Each item identified on the purchase order must undergo the manufacturer's applicable quality-control inspections and final acceptance testing at the location of manufacture before shipment from that location.

The manufacturer must:



Inspect and test the item against the manufacturer's published specifications and all applicable purchase-order, drawing, specification, and technical requirements.

Use properly calibrated inspection and test equipment.

Complete all required inspections and tests before releasing the item for shipment.

Record the inspections and tests performed and their results.

Identify the inspected item by part number, revision, serial number, lot number, batch number, date code, or other applicable traceability identifier.

Segregate and control any item that does not satisfy the applicable acceptance requirements.

Authorize release of the item through the manufacturer's authorized quality representative.

When Partner is not the manufacturer, Partner must flow this requirement to the manufacturer and obtain objective evidence that the required inspection and testing were completed at the manufacturing location. The manufacturer's Certificate of Conformance, inspection report, test report, or equivalent quality record must accompany the shipment when required by the purchase order.

Manufacturer inspection and testing do not relieve Partner of responsibility for ensuring that all delivered items conform to the purchase order.

SQC-221 Product Testing and Acceptance

Partner must plan, perform, and document all inspections, examinations, verifications, and acceptance tests required by the purchase order, drawing, specification, approved acceptance-test procedure, or applicable law before shipment. Test articles, production configuration, software, equipment, fixtures, personnel, environment, methods, and acceptance criteria must be controlled and suitable for the intended verification.

Partner must verify purchased and lower-tier product, record actual results and dispositions, and provide required acceptance-test reports under SQC-214. Sampling may be used only under SQC-223. Product failing a test or returned or rejected product must be identified, segregated, investigated, and reverified after authorized correction; it must not be resubmitted without disclosure of the prior rejection and corrective action.

Sterling and authorized representatives may witness or audit testing. Such activity does not constitute final acceptance.

Partner remains responsible for all delivered product and must flow applicable inspection and test requirements to lower tiers.

SQC-222 Radiographic Test Report

When radiographic inspection is required, Partner must use qualified personnel and an appropriately certified radiographic laboratory and perform the examination to the drawing, specification, and acceptance standard stated in the purchase order.

The authenticated report must accompany the applicable shipment and identify the laboratory, item and serial or lot numbers, technique and equipment, specification and revision, acceptance criteria, results, and disposition. Images and related records must be traceable to the examined item.

For microcircuits, MIL-STD-883 Method 2012 applies when invoked; for semiconductor cavity devices, MIL-STD-750 Method 2076 applies when invoked. Acceptable items must be marked with a blue identification dot using ink conforming to MIL-I-43553 or A-A-56032 when that marking is required.

Partner must flow these requirements to all applicable lower-tier inspection and manufacturing sources.

SQC-223 Sampling and Statistical Inspection

Partner must not use sampling to reduce inspection or testing required by the purchase order, drawing, specification, or another quality clause unless the governing requirement permits sampling and Sterling has approved the sampling plan in writing before implementation.

Sampling may be proposed for destructive testing or when demonstrated process history, records, or inherent product characteristics show that reduced inspection or testing will not jeopardize product quality. The plan must identify the product and characteristics covered; lot definition and formation; inspection level; sample size and selection method; acceptance and rejection criteria; Acceptable Quality Limit or other quality level; switching, tightening, and discontinuance rules; treatment of rejected lots; records; and the statistical basis demonstrating valid confidence in the specified quality level.

The plan must comply with the applicable Sterling or customer specification. When no method is specified, Partner may propose a recognized standard appropriate to the inspection, including ANSI/ASQ Z1.4, MIL-STD-1916, ISO 2859, or another standard approved by Sterling. Use of a referenced standard does not authorize omission of any contractually required 100-percent inspection.

Sterling may reject, condition, suspend, or withdraw approval of a sampling plan and may require additional or 100-percent inspection. Partner must obtain written approval before changing an approved plan and must make the plan, supporting analysis, and resulting inspection records available upon request.

Partner must flow this clause to every lower-tier source using sampling for an applicable inspection or test. Partner remains responsible for the adequacy of lower-tier sampling and for conformity of all delivered product.

SQC-224 Summary Test Report

Partner must provide a Summary Test Report for each applicable product lot. The report must identify the manufacturer and part number, purchase order, lot size, date and lot codes, sample size or 100-percent inspection status, tests and inspections performed, methods and acceptance criteria, detailed results, failures, and final acceptance or disposition.

When performed, the report must include or reference radiographic results, X-ray fluorescence plots, de-lid or destructive-physical-analysis photographs, and parametric electrical-test data. Records must be legible, protected, and traceable to the delivered lot.

Partner must retain the report and supporting data for at least five years unless a longer period is specified and must provide requested records within 72 hours. These requirements must be flowed to applicable lower-tier sources.

SQC-225 Supplier Inspection System

Partner must maintain a documented inspection system sufficient to ensure that products and services conform to all purchase-order requirements. The system must address receiving, in-process, and final inspection; inspection planning and acceptance criteria; control and calibration of measuring equipment; inspector competence; sampling authorization; status identification; nonconformance control; records; and verification of lower-tier product.

Final inspection must confirm product identity, revision, quantity, workmanship, traceability, required documentation, packaging, and completion of all required tests and approvals before release. Partner must make the system and records available to Sterling and must correct identified deficiencies without relieving itself of delivery obligations.

Partner must flow applicable inspection requirements to lower-tier sources and remains responsible for their performance.

SQC-226 Test Failure Report

Partner must notify Sterling within 24 hours of any failure during acceptance, qualification, screening, validation, or other contractually required testing, unless the purchase order requires earlier notice. The notice must identify the affected item and lot, test, requirement, failure condition, quantity, containment, and known delivery or safety impact.

Partner must stop affected processing and shipment, preserve evidence, segregate affected product, and investigate the failure. No affected product may be shipped and no retest, repair, or disposition may be used to obtain acceptance without required written authorization.

Partner must provide the completed failure analysis, root cause, corrective action, disposition, and verification results within the schedule directed by Sterling and flow these requirements to applicable lower-tier sources.

SQC-227 Inspection/Test Reports.

Partner must furnish a legible and reproducible inspection or test report with each shipment for each item identified on the purchase order. The report must document the inspections and tests required by the purchase order, applicable drawings, specifications, acceptance test procedures, or other technical requirements.

Each report must include, as applicable:

Partner's and manufacturer's name and address.

Sterling's purchase-order number and line-item number.

Item name or description, part number, and revision.

Applicable drawing, specification, test procedure, and revision.

Serial number, lot number, batch number, date code, heat number, or other applicable traceability identifier.

The inspection or test performed and the applicable acceptance criteria.

Actual inspection or test results when quantitative limits or values apply.

The quantity inspected or tested and the quantities accepted and rejected.

Identification of the inspection or test equipment used when required by the applicable technical requirements.

Any code, key, unit of measurement, or other information necessary to interpret the results.

Any applicable nonconformance, deviation, or waiver authorization.

The date of inspection or testing.

The signature, inspection stamp, or electronic approval of an authorized quality representative of the organization performing the inspection or test.

The report must be traceable to the specific items included in the shipment. A statement of conformance may be used instead of actual values only when expressly permitted by the purchase order or applicable specification.

When the purchase order requires Sterling's review or approval before shipment, Partner must submit the report within the specified period and must not ship until Sterling provides written authorization.

Partner must flow this clause in its entirety, or its equivalent, down to each lower-tier subcontractor performing an inspection or test covered by this clause.

SQC-228 Test Coupons and Specimens

When required by the purchase order, drawing, specification, or process standard, Partner must produce and furnish test coupons, solder samples, specimens, or representative material for each applicable shipment, lot, batch, panel, process run, or other production grouping. Each coupon or specimen must be produced from, processed with, and be representative of the material or product it qualifies.

Partner must identify each coupon or specimen with the purchase order, part or material number, drawing or specification and revision, lot/batch/heat/panel or other production identifier, applicable process and processor, date, and the product or shipment represented. Required test data, laboratory reports, microsections, photographs, X-ray fluorescence results, controlled-impedance or time-domain-reflectometry results, and disposition records must accompany or be traceably linked to the coupon or specimen.

Partner must protect coupons and specimens from damage or contamination, retain them for the required period when shipment is not required, and must not substitute a nonrepresentative sample without prior written approval. These requirements must be flowed to every lower-tier source producing or testing the affected material or product.



SQC-229 Returned Product Failure Verification

When Sterling or the receiving party rejects and returns a delivered item and Partner cannot confirm the reported failure or nonconformance, Partner must promptly notify Sterling and hold the item and any proposed replacement or reshipment pending Sterling's written disposition.

Partner must provide a failure-verification report identifying the purchase order, line item, part number, revision, serial or lot number, return or rejection reference, reported condition, applicable acceptance and test requirements, test-procedure numbers and revisions, equipment used, tests and special tests performed, actual results, and the basis for any determination that the reported failure could not be duplicated or confirmed.

The report must include Partner's certification that the procedures and methods used were capable of detecting the reported failure. Partner must preserve the returned item's condition and relevant evidence, investigate possible intermittent or handling-related conditions, and must not repair, alter, replace, or reship the item until Sterling provides disposition or authorization.

Materials and Special Processes

SQC-241 Cadmium, Zinc and Mercury Restrictions

Except where expressly required by the purchase order or approved in writing by Sterling, delivered products must not contain intentionally added mercury, mercury compounds, cadmium plating or coating, or pure zinc plating or coating. Partner must also prevent mercury contamination during manufacture, test, storage, and handling and comply with applicable material-composition restrictions identified in the purchase order.

Partner must obtain material declarations or certifications from its sources, maintain objective evidence of compliance, and provide a signed certification upon request or when required with shipment. Any known or suspected prohibited content or contamination must be disclosed to Sterling before delivery; shipment constitutes Partner's certification of compliance.

Partner must flow these restrictions to all lower-tier sources supplying affected materials, finishes, or products.

SQC-242 Certificate of Analysis

Partner must provide an authenticated Certificate of Analysis for each applicable material, batch, heat, lot, or product. The certificate must identify the manufacturer, material or item, specification and revision, batch or lot, dates, test methods, required limits, actual quantitative results, disposition, and authorized approval.

The certificate must be based on testing of the represented material, be traceable to the shipment, and disclose any subcontracted testing. When tin-finish restrictions or MIL-STD-11991 are invoked, the certificate or equivalent objective evidence must demonstrate compliance with the applicable prohibited-material and finish requirements.

Partner must retain supporting laboratory data and flow these requirements to all applicable lower-tier material and testing sources.

SQC-243 EEE Parts Handling and Controls

For electrical, electronic, and electromechanical (EEE) parts, Partner must maintain documented controls for source authorization, authenticity, traceability, lot/date-code and age management, electrostatic discharge, moisture sensitivity, storage, handling, packaging, inspection, testing, nonconformance, and changes in source or status. Controls must be appropriate to product risk and consistent with applicable AS5553, AS6081, AS6171, AS6496, ANSI/ESD S20.20, J-STD-033, and purchase-order requirements.

Partner must procure from the original component manufacturer (OCM), an OCM-authorized distributor, or an authorized aftermarket manufacturer unless Sterling gives prior written approval for another source. Full, unbroken supply-chain traceability must identify each intermediary and include OCM identity, part number, revision, country of origin when required, lot/date/batch code, serial number when applicable, quantities, and certificates. Authorized-distributor status and letters of authorization must be provided upon request.

When approved traceability is unavailable or an independent source is authorized, Partner must perform risk-based authentication by a qualified laboratory using applicable AS6171, IDEA-STD-1010, MIL-STD-883, or purchase-order methods; preserve samples and records; and disclose all results and failures before shipment. Parts must meet specified age, finish, prohibited-material, ESD, moisture, packaging, and marking requirements.

Partner must report suspect or counterfeit conditions promptly, quarantine affected material, support GIDEP reporting, retain authentication and traceability records for at least 36 months or the longer SQC-126 period, permit audits, and flow all applicable requirements through every supply-chain tier.

SQC-244 Nondestructive Testing Controls

Nondestructive testing (NDT) must be performed only by qualified personnel using approved procedures, calibrated equipment, controlled materials, and facilities suitable for the method and product. Partner must comply with the purchase order and applicable method standards, including specified penetrant, magnetic-particle, radiographic, ultrasonic, particle-impact-noise-detection, or other inspection requirements.

Procedures and technique sheets must identify acceptance criteria, coverage, sensitivity, equipment, reference standards, environmental controls, and recording requirements and must receive approval when required. Personnel certifications, calibration and reference-standard traceability, process-control checks, indications, interpretations, results, and dispositions must be documented. NDT light meters and radiometers must be calibrated with traceability to NIST or another recognized national standard.

Partner must not repair, retest, or alter rejected material except under authorized disposition and must flow NDT requirements to approved lower-tier laboratories and processors.

SQC-245 Other Prohibited / Restricted Materials

Partner must ensure that delivered products, materials, processes, packaging, and substances comply with every prohibited- or restricted-material requirement identified in the purchase order, drawing, specification, or applicable law, including applicable RoHS or customer-specific substance restrictions. Partner must not introduce a restricted substance through plating, finishes, solder, adhesives, lubricants, processing aids, recycled content, or packaging.

Partner must maintain current material declarations, bills of material, safety data, supplier certifications, and test evidence sufficient to establish compliance and must provide a signed certification or disclosure when requested. Any exemption, threshold, or deviation must be specifically documented and approved before delivery; silence or an incomplete declaration is not approval.

Partner must notify Sterling immediately of discovered noncompliance and flow these controls to all applicable lower-tier sources.

SQC-246 Plating, Coating and Finishing Controls

Plating, coating, painting, passivation, conversion coating, and other finishing must conform to the purchase order, drawing, and governing specification for material, preparation, thickness, coverage, adhesion, color, texture, cure, corrosion resistance, conductivity, permanence, and workmanship. Finishes must be uniform, continuous where required, and free of blisters, peeling, flaking, cracking, runs, contamination, exposed basis material, or other defects.

Partner must use qualified and approved processors when required, control bath and process parameters, verify finish composition and thickness, protect masked and critical surfaces, and maintain lot traceability and process certifications. Prohibited platings or substances, including pure tin, cadmium, pure zinc, mercury, or hexavalent chromium where restricted, must not be used without express authorization.

Partner must preserve finished surfaces through packaging and shipment and flow applicable finish specifications and approvals to lower-tier processors.

SQC-247 Production Part Approval Process

When Production Part Approval Process (PPAP) is required, Partner must plan, prepare, and submit PPAP evidence in accordance with AS9145 at the revision current on the purchase-order date, unless another revision is specified. Required elements are those identified by Sterling; absent specific direction, Partner with design authority must address PPAP elements 1 through 11, and Partner without design authority must address elements 1 and 3 through 11.

Sterling and its customer may participate in or surveil PPAP activities. Partner must obtain written PPAP approval before production shipment. If Sterling directs staged approval, Partner must submit the PPAP unit and complete package at least seven business days before scheduled delivery and must not ship production units until approval is received.

Interim approval requires an accepted action plan and expires as stated by Sterling. Product, process, source, tooling, location, design, or other changes that could affect approval require notification and may require PPAP resubmission. A signed PPAP approval must accompany the first authorized shipment. Partner must flow applicable PPAP requirements to lower-tier sources.

SQC-248 Pure Tin / Tin Whisker Restrictions

Partner must not use pure tin, defined as tin containing less than 3 percent lead by weight, in plating, solder, terminals, leads, finishes, underplates, or internal or external product construction unless the purchase order expressly permits it or Sterling approves a documented mitigation in writing. This prohibition applies to supplied parts and all lower-tier materials and processes.

When tin use is authorized, Partner must identify the alloy and finish, assess tin-whisker risk, and implement an approved mitigation and control plan consistent with the specified product and reliability requirements. Partner must maintain material and process certifications and must notify Sterling before any change in tin composition, finish, source, or mitigation.

A certificate of compliance must be provided when required. Partner must flow the restriction and approved mitigation requirements to all lower tiers.

SQC-249 Raw Material Certifications

Partner must provide with each shipment the original manufacturer, mill, or producer certification for each raw material used or delivered. Each certification must identify the producer and CAGE code when applicable; Sterling purchase order; item, part number, and revision; material specification and revision; alloy, grade, type, class, and temper; heat, melt, lot, or batch; quantity; country of melt when required; and date and authorized approval.

The certification must report applicable chemical, physical, mechanical, metallurgical, and nondestructive-test requirements, specified limits, actual results, test methods, and a statement of conformance. For converted material, Partner must provide traceable pre-conversion and post-conversion records. Test reports must represent the delivered heat or lot and must not be altered except through a controlled, traceable correction.

Partner must maintain positive identity and traceability through processing, mark raw metal as required, retain supporting records, and provide them on request. These requirements must be flowed without dilution to every applicable lower-tier mill, distributor, processor, laboratory, and material source.

SQC-250 Soldering and Electronics Workmanship

Soldering, printed-board, cable, harness, and electronic-assembly workmanship must comply with the purchase order and the specified revision and class of J-STD-001, IPC-A-610, IPC/WHMA-A-620, IPC-A-600, IPC-6011/6012, or other governing workmanship standard. Personnel must be trained and qualified for assigned work, and processes, materials, equipment, and environmental controls must be documented and controlled.

Partner must control solderability, flux, cleanliness, thermal profiles, component handling, moisture sensitivity, ESD, lead forming, crimping, termination, conformal coating, rework, and repair. Solderability testing must use the specified J-STD-002, J-STD-003, MIL-STD-202, MIL-STD-750, or MIL-STD-883 method. Lead-free materials and pure tin must not be used where prohibited; any authorized use must be identified and controlled.



Partner must inspect and test workmanship to the required acceptance class, maintain certifications and objective evidence, obtain approval for special processes when required, and flow applicable requirements to lower-tier assembly and process sources.

SQC-251 Special Process Control and Approval

A special process is any process whose resulting output cannot be fully verified by subsequent inspection or test. Partner must identify all special processes used under the purchase order and must use only Sterling- or customer-approved sources, Nadcap-accredited sources when required, or sources otherwise qualified to the governing specification. No source, facility, procedure, or significant parameter may be changed without required written approval.

Partner must maintain approved procedures, qualified personnel, validated equipment and software, controlled materials and parameters, environmental controls, periodic tests, lot and operator traceability, and certifications. Applicable plating, heat treating, chemical processing, NDT, welding, brazing, soldering, coating, bonding, and other processes must comply with the exact specification and revision stated in the purchase order or drawing.

Partner must verify lower-tier approvals before placing work, identify the processor and process on shipment certifications, retain objective evidence, report escapes or loss of approval promptly, and flow all process and approval requirements to every performing source.

When the purchase order identifies a customer-controlled process specification or approved-processor directory, Partner must verify before placing work that the processor, facility, process code, scope, and any limitations are currently approved. The approval must cover each required process variant, and the performing source must maintain the quality system required by the applicable approval listing.

Each special-process certification must identify, as applicable, the processor's name and address or business identifier; the processing date; the material or part processed; quantity; governing specification and revision; a statement of conformity; traceability identifiers; and the authenticated approval and completion date of the processor's authorized representative.

SQC-252 Welding / Brazing Controls

Welding and brazing must be performed to the purchase order, drawing, approved procedure, and applicable specification by currently qualified personnel using qualified procedures, controlled filler materials, calibrated equipment, and identified base materials. Procedure and personnel qualifications must be available to Sterling upon request.

Partner must preserve positive identification and heat/lot traceability of filler metals and consumables through storage, issue, use, and return; control conditioning, shelf life, contamination, and segregation; and document process parameters, inspection, NDT, repairs, and acceptance. Weld or braze repair requires prior authorization when specified and must be reexamined to the original acceptance criteria.

Partner must use approved lower-tier processors and flow all technical, qualification, traceability, and record requirements.

SQC-253 Printed Wiring Board Controls

Printed wiring boards and printed circuit boards must conform to the purchase order, approved drawing and fabrication data, and the specified revision and class of IPC-A-600, IPC-6011, IPC-6012, or other invoked acceptance and performance standard. Partner must use qualified materials, controlled processes, approved deviations, and qualified personnel and facilities appropriate to the specified product class.

Partner must perform required continuity testing for opens and shorts and all specified electrical, dimensional, visual, plating, solderability, cleanliness, controlled-impedance, and workmanship inspections. When applicable, Partner must furnish time-domain-reflectometry data, X-ray fluorescence plating data, microsections, test coupons, solder samples, certificates, and inspection or test reports traceable to the affected board lot, panel, date code, part number, and revision.

Boards must be individually protected when required and packaged using applicable moisture and electrostatic-discharge controls. Partner must maintain lot and material traceability, segregate failed or suspect boards, obtain written approval



before any unauthorized material, design, process, source, or acceptance change, and flow these requirements to all lower-tier board fabricators, processors, and laboratories.

SQC-254 Cable and Wire Harness Assembly Controls

Cable and wire-harness assemblies must conform to the purchase order, drawing, approved process instructions, and IPC/WHMA-A-620 Class 3 unless another class or standard is expressly stated. Personnel performing crimping, soldering, splicing, termination, inspection, or testing must be appropriately trained and qualified, and all tooling and test equipment must be controlled and calibrated.

Unless the purchase order, drawing, or Sterling's written approval permits otherwise, solid-conductor wire must be solder-coated and soldered to properly de-golded contacts and must not be crimped. This restriction does not apply to an unmodified commercial-off-the-shelf assembly when the purchase order expressly permits the commercial configuration. Partner must control conductor preparation, stripping, shielding, contact and terminal installation, pull strength, continuity, insulation resistance, workmanship, cleanliness, identification, and configuration.

Partner must retain objective inspection and test evidence, identify the applicable assembly and production lot, report and control nonconformances, and flow all applicable workmanship, process, qualification, traceability, and testing requirements to lower-tier cable and harness sources.

SQC-255 Outgassing Controls

When outgassing controls are required, each nonmetallic or organic material, including adhesives, coatings, paints, sealants, polymers, tapes, lubricants, and processing residues, must be evaluated and tested in accordance with ASTM E595 or the other method specified by the purchase order. Unless a different limit is stated, total mass loss must not exceed 1.0 percent and collected volatile condensable material must not exceed 0.1 percent.

Partner must maintain material identification, lot or batch traceability, test conditions, test results, laboratory identification, and evidence that the tested material represents the material used in the delivered product. A material exceeding an applicable limit must not be used without Sterling's prior written approval. The request must include the material, intended application, measured results, technical justification, contamination risk, and proposed controls and must be submitted at least 60 calendar days before planned use or delivery unless Sterling authorizes another period.

Partner must prevent unapproved material substitution or process change, retain supporting records, notify Sterling of any condition affecting approved outgassing status, and flow these controls to lower-tier material suppliers and processors.

Nonconformance and Corrective Action

SQC-271 Corrective Action / Root Cause

Partner must maintain a documented corrective-action system capable of timely containment, root-cause determination, correction, systemic corrective action, recurrence prevention, and verification of effectiveness for product, process, and quality-system nonconformities.

Upon Sterling's request or issuance of a supplier corrective-action request, Partner must: immediately contain affected product and protect Sterling and its customers; identify affected lots, serial numbers, shipments, and lower-tier sources; provide responses and objective evidence by the stated due dates; use a disciplined root-cause method; implement actions addressing both occurrence and escape causes; and verify sustained effectiveness.

Partner must notify Sterling of delivered nonconforming or suspect counterfeit product and support applicable Government-Industry Data Exchange Program reporting when required. Closure by Sterling does not limit Partner's responsibility for latent or recurring conditions.

Partner must retain corrective-action records and flow equivalent requirements to lower-tier sources, including their duty to provide timely evidence to Partner and Sterling.

SQC-272 Nonconforming Material Control

Partner must maintain documented controls to identify, document, segregate, evaluate, and prevent unintended use or shipment of nonconforming product. Partner and its lower-tier sources have no material review board authority for Sterling or its customer unless Sterling grants it expressly in writing. Use-as-is and repair dispositions, and any departure from requirements, require prior written Sterling approval; rework is permitted only when it returns the item fully to the original requirements.

Requests for deviation or disposition must be in English and identify the purchase order, item, revision, serial/lot/batch, quantity, requirement, actual condition, cause, risk, proposed disposition, reinspection, and corrective action. Partner must not ship affected product until authorized and must conspicuously identify approved nonconforming product and reference the authorization on shipment records.

Previously rejected or returned product must not be resubmitted without disclosure, correction, and objective evidence of reverification. Partner must notify Sterling within 24 hours of a nonconformance that may affect delivered product, immediately contain affected material, preserve evidence, and flow these controls to lower tiers.

Upon Sterling's return of nonconforming material, Partner must evaluate the reported condition and provide a documented responsibility evaluation, investigation status, and planned corrective action within ten working days after receipt unless Sterling specifies another period.

Personnel, Service and Workmanship

SQC-301 General Workmanship and Cleanliness

Products must be manufactured, assembled, cleaned, inspected, and delivered in a professional and workmanlike condition, free from contamination, foreign material, residue, oil, corrosion, burrs, sharp edges, loose hardware, damage, cosmetic defects beyond the applicable standard, and other conditions that could impair fit, form, function, safety, reliability, or appearance.

Electronic assemblies must meet the specified workmanship class and cleanliness limits of applicable IPC-A-610, J-STD-001, IPC/WHMA-A-620, and IPC-TM-650 requirements. Partner must establish inspection and cleaning controls appropriate to the product, protect cleaned product from recontamination, and document required cleanliness testing.

Partner must flow applicable workmanship and cleanliness criteria to lower-tier sources and remains responsible for delivered condition.

SQC-302 Maintenance / Repair Service Controls

Partner performing maintenance, overhaul, repair, modification, or field service must use authorized technical data, current procedures, qualified personnel, calibrated equipment, approved parts and processes, and configuration controls appropriate to the serviced item. Service must comply with the purchase order and applicable quality-system and airworthiness requirements, including AS9110 when specified.

Partner must document incoming condition, configuration, serial number, discrepancies, work performed, parts removed and installed, inspection and test results, calibration or functional checks, approved deviations, and release-to-service authorization. Suspected unapproved parts, hidden damage, out-of-scope conditions, or inability to meet requirements must be reported to Sterling before proceeding.

Partner must protect customer property, preserve traceability, control nonconforming material, provide service and test records, report post-service escapes promptly, and flow applicable controls to lower-tier repair and calibration sources.

SQC-303 Personnel Qualification and Competence

Partner must assign work affecting quality only to personnel who are competent through appropriate education, training, skills, experience, examination, and authorization. Partner must define qualification requirements for inspectors, testers,

auditors, special-process operators, technicians, software personnel, and other quality-affecting roles and must maintain current records of qualifications, certifications, limitations, and expiration dates.

Partner must evaluate effectiveness, provide recurrent or change-related training, prevent unqualified performance, and ensure personnel understand product safety, ethical behavior, reporting duties, and the consequences of nonconforming work. Certifications and supporting records must be available to Sterling, and equivalent requirements must be applied to lower-tier personnel.

When staff-augmentation or dedicated-personnel requirements apply, Partner must maintain a staffing plan defining required education, experience, knowledge, qualifications, coverage, succession, and replacement controls. The plan must include methods to measure and communicate individual and team performance, identify training or corrective actions, and prevent assignment of personnel who do not meet the approved role requirements.

Quality Systems and Compliance

SQC-331 AS9100 Quality Management System

Partner must establish, document, implement, and maintain a quality management system conforming to the current contractually specified revision of AS9100. When the purchase order requires registration, certification must be issued by an accredited certification body, cover the site and scope performing the work, and remain active throughout performance.

Partner must provide the certificate upon request and notify Sterling promptly of suspension, withdrawal, expiration, significant scope reduction, change of registrar, or major nonconformity. Partner must maintain product safety and ethical-behavior controls and all other AS9100 requirements applicable to the work. Sterling approval, audit, or acceptance does not relieve Partner of compliance.

Partner must control lower-tier sources consistent with AS9100 and flow applicable purchase-order requirements.

SQC-332 Basic / Commercial Quality System

Partner must maintain a documented quality system appropriate to the nature and risk of the product or service, even when third-party certification is not expressly required. At minimum, the system must control contract review, purchasing and lower-tier sources, documents and configuration, personnel competence, production and service processes, identification and traceability, customer property, preservation, inspection and test, measuring equipment, release, nonconforming product, corrective action, records, and change notification.

Partner must perform final verification before delivery, retain objective evidence of conformity, and provide Sterling access for assessment. Any certification or approval represented to Sterling must remain current and applicable to the performing location and scope. Loss of certification or a material quality-system deficiency must be reported promptly.

Partner remains responsible for conformity regardless of Sterling surveillance or the use of commercial practices and must flow applicable controls to lower tiers.

SQC-333 AS9003 Inspection and Test Quality System

Partner must establish, document, implement, and maintain an inspection and test quality system compliant with AS9003, at the revision specified in the purchase order or, if no revision is specified, the revision in effect on the purchase-order issuance date.

Current third-party certification to ISO 9001 or AS9100 by an appropriately accredited certification body satisfies this requirement when the certified scope and facility encompass the work performed. If Partner does not maintain an applicable accredited ISO 9001 or AS9100 certification, Partner must successfully complete any Sterling- or customer-required AS9003 compliance survey before performing affected work and must correct identified deficiencies within the required period.

Partner must maintain objective evidence of compliance, notify Sterling promptly of any material deficiency or change affecting compliance, permit assessment of the system and records, and flow applicable inspection and test controls to lower-tier sources.



SQC-334 General Quality and Contract Compliance

Partner is responsible for full compliance with the purchase order and all incorporated drawings, specifications, statements of work, quality clauses, and approved changes. Partner must review requirements before acceptance and performance, use the applicable authorized revisions, and obtain written clarification of conflicts or ambiguity before proceeding.

Partner must maintain controls sufficient to assure conforming product and services, including competent personnel, controlled documents and configuration, approved sources, process control, inspection and test, calibrated equipment, identification and traceability, nonconformance control, and complete quality records. Sterling review, surveillance, inspection, or acceptance does not relieve Partner of responsibility.

Partner must not make unauthorized substitutions or changes to product, process, material, source, tooling, software, design, or manufacturing location. Partner must notify Sterling promptly of actual or suspected escapes, counterfeit product, loss of required approval, or any condition that could affect conformity, safety, airworthiness, or delivery.

Sterling, its customer, and authorized regulatory representatives must have reasonable access to applicable facilities, product, personnel, and records. Partner must flow all applicable purchase-order and quality requirements, including access and record obligations, to every tier of its supply chain.

SQC-335 ISO 9001 Quality Management System

Partner must establish, document, implement, and maintain a quality management system conforming to the current contractually specified revision of ISO 9001. When certification is required, it must be issued by an accredited certification body, cover the performing site and applicable scope, and remain valid throughout purchase-order performance.

Partner must provide the certificate upon request and promptly notify Sterling of suspension, withdrawal, expiration, significant scope reduction, change of registrar, or major nonconformity. Any permitted exclusion, including design and development, must be consistent with Partner's actual responsibilities and certification scope.

Partner must control lower-tier sources, retain evidence of conformity, permit Sterling assessment, and flow applicable purchase-order requirements.

SQC-336 Other Certified Quality Systems

When the purchase order specifies a quality-system certification other than, or in addition to, ISO 9001 or AS9100, Partner must maintain current third-party certification to the stated standard and level. Applicable systems may include AS9110, AS9120, ISO/IEC 17025, ISO 13485, ISO 16949/IATF 16949, AS9003, Nadcap AC7004, or a specified CMMI maturity level.

The certification or appraisal must be issued by a recognized and appropriately accredited body, cover the performing site and scope, and remain valid throughout performance. Partner must provide evidence upon request and notify Sterling promptly of suspension, withdrawal, expiration, scope change, or significant adverse finding.

Partner must not represent certification beyond its documented scope and must impose the specified system or equivalent controls on applicable lower-tier sources.

When the purchase order invokes a legacy, superseded, Government, or customer-designated quality, inspection, safety, reliability, maintainability, or nonconforming-material system standard, Partner must comply with the specified revision or obtain Sterling's prior written approval for an equivalent or higher-level system. Such standards may include MIL-I-45208, MIL-Q-9858, MIL-STD-1520, and applicable NASA NHB 5300.4 quality or inspection-system provisions. Use of ISO 9001, AS9100, or another successor standard is acceptable only when the purchase order permits it or Sterling approves the substitution in writing. Partner must maintain objective evidence showing how the approved system satisfies every invoked requirement.

SQC-337 Software Quality System / CMMI

Partner must maintain a documented software quality assurance and development system appropriate to the software, firmware, programmable logic, or IT service provided. The system must address requirements management, planning, architecture and design, coding standards, peer review, configuration management, build and release control, verification and validation, independence where required, problem reporting, corrective action, cybersecurity, supplier control, metrics, records, and delivery documentation.

When specified, Partner must conform to AS9115, AS9006, ISO/IEC 20000, or the required CMMI Development or Services maturity level and must provide current objective evidence of certification or appraisal. Partner must notify Sterling before a material process change and promptly after loss or reduction of an approval or maturity rating.

Software and data must be protected from unauthorized or malicious change, and each release must be uniquely identified and reproducible. Partner must flow applicable software quality and configuration requirements to lower-tier developers and service providers.

SQC-338 Sub-tier Flowdown and Conformance

Partner must incorporate into every applicable lower-tier purchase order or agreement all technical, quality, regulatory, safety, security, property, inspection, access, records, notification, source-control, counterfeit-prevention, special-process, configuration, and delivery requirements necessary to satisfy Sterling's purchase order. Flowdown must reach every tier performing work or supplying material that can affect conformity and must include the current revision and sufficient context for compliance.

Partner must select, qualify, monitor, and periodically reevaluate lower-tier sources based on risk; verify required approvals and certifications before placement; ensure lower-tier acceptance and performance; obtain and review objective evidence; and take corrective action for deficiencies. Partner must not use Sterling or customer approval of a lower-tier source as a release from responsibility.

Partner is fully responsible for all lower-tier products, services, data, omissions, and compliance. Partner must provide Sterling and authorized representatives access to lower-tier facilities and records, maintain traceability through all tiers, disclose material supply-chain changes, and ensure lower tiers further flow applicable requirements.

SQC-339 Warranty and Responsibility for Conformance

Partner warrants that all products and services conform to the purchase order, drawings, specifications, approved samples, representations, and applicable laws; are new and authentic unless otherwise authorized; are free from defects in design where Partner is design-responsible, material, manufacture, workmanship, and title; and are fit for the stated or reasonably apparent purpose.

Partner is responsible for conformity notwithstanding source inspection, surveillance, testing, payment, use, resale, or acceptance by Sterling or its customer. Upon notice of a defect or nonconformance, Partner must promptly contain affected product and, at Sterling's election and without additional cost, repair, replace, reperformance, refund, investigate, and support removal, reinstallation, expedited transport, field action, or corrective action.

Partner must preserve Sterling's warranty and remedies against lower-tier sources and flow all requirements necessary to ensure conformity.

Software Quality

SQC-361 Software Quality Plan

Before beginning affected software development, modification, verification, or delivery, Partner must submit for Sterling approval a Software Quality Plan and the associated development and configuration-management plans required by the purchase order.

The plans must define organization and independence, lifecycle processes, requirements and design control, coding standards, configuration and change control, problem reporting, verification and validation, reviews, testing, release, cybersecurity and tool controls when applicable, records, lower-tier control, and assurance of delivered software and data. The software-assurance program must comply with the standard invoked by the purchase order, which may include AS9006, ISO/IEC 12207, CMMI maturity level 3 or higher, or DO-178.

Partner must obtain written approval before materially changing an approved plan and must provide evidence of implementation upon request. Approval does not relieve Partner of compliance. Applicable requirements must be flowed to all lower-tier software and service providers.

Supply Chain and Counterfeit Prevention

SQC-391 Approved / Authorized Sources

Partner must procure and use only manufacturers, distributors, processors, laboratories, and other sources approved or authorized by Sterling, Sterling's customer, the design authority, or the governing specification when such approval is required. For electrical, electronic, electromechanical, and electro-optical parts, the required order of source preference is: (1) the OEM or OCM; (2) an OEM- or OCM-authorized franchised distributor; and (3) a Sterling- or customer-approved distributor. Partner must verify approval status, scope, site, process, product, and expiration before placing work and before accepting product.

Partner must not substitute, add, or relocate a source without prior written approval. Loss, suspension, restriction, or expiration of source approval must be reported immediately, and affected material must be contained pending Sterling direction. Partner must retain objective evidence of source authorization and flow the approved-source restriction through all applicable tiers.

SQC-392 Authorized Distributor Letter of Authorization

When Partner is not the original equipment manufacturer, original component manufacturer, authorized aftermarket manufacturer, or current design authority for an item, Partner must possess express written authorization from the original manufacturer or current design authority to distribute the item.

Partner must:

Obtain and distribute the item within the scope of the written authorization or authorized distribution agreement.

Maintain objective evidence that the authorization was valid when Partner obtained and delivered the item.

Provide a legible copy of the authorization with each shipment, unless Sterling authorizes Partner in writing to retain it and provide it upon request.

Ensure the authorization identifies, directly or through supporting documentation:

The original manufacturer or current design authority;

b. The authorized distributor;

c. The applicable product, product family, or authorized scope; and

d. The authorization's effective period, if applicable.

Notify Sterling immediately if the authorization expires, is suspended, is terminated, or otherwise ceases to cover an item to be delivered under the purchase order.

Retain the authorization and supporting records for at least ten years after final delivery under the purchase order, or for any longer period specified in the purchase order.

Partner must not quote, accept an order for, procure, or deliver an item if Partner lacks the required written authorization. Any exception requires Sterling's prior written approval.

Partner must flow this clause in its entirety, or its equivalent, down to all applicable lower-tier distributors and suppliers.



SQC-393 Certificate of Authenticity

Partner must provide a Certificate of Authenticity or equivalent manufacturer evidence for each applicable software product, license, or digitally delivered item. The certificate must identify the developer or publisher, product and version, part or stock number, quantity, serial or license identifier, license type and permitted use, and the delivered media or download entitlement.

The certificate must state that the item is genuine, lawfully licensed, unaltered except as authorized, and obtained through the developer or an authorized distribution channel. Partner must provide developer-generated license evidence, authorized-distributor status, and chain-of-custody records upon request.

Partner must flow these authenticity, licensing, and traceability requirements to every applicable reseller, distributor, and lower-tier source.

SQC-394 Counterfeit / Suspect Material Prevention

Partner must maintain a documented, risk-based counterfeit and suspect-material prevention, detection, avoidance, reporting, and disposition process appropriate to the product and consistent with applicable AS5553, AS6174, AS6081, AS6171, AS6496, DFARS 252.246-7007 and 252.246-7008, and purchase-order requirements. The process must address source selection, obsolescence, traceability, receiving inspection, authenticity verification, training, reporting, quarantine, records, and lower-tier control.

Partner must procure new and authentic material from the original manufacturer or an authorized source unless Sterling approves another source in writing. Partner must maintain unbroken supply-chain traceability and authorization evidence. When approved traceability is unavailable, Partner must disclose the condition before purchase or delivery and perform Sterling-approved, risk-based authentication through a qualified laboratory using applicable standards.

Suspect or counterfeit material must be immediately quarantined, must not be returned to the supply chain, and may be released or destroyed only under written direction. Partner must notify Sterling within 24 hours of discovery or credible suspicion, identify all affected material and shipments, preserve evidence, support GIDEP and mandatory reporting, and cooperate with investigation and corrective action.

Partner must permit audits, retain traceability and authentication records under SQC-126, provide requested certificates and test reports, and flow all applicable prevention and reporting requirements to every supply-chain tier.

When authenticity validation or testing is required, Partner must retain the verification plan, test records, X-ray images, digital photographs, X-ray-fluorescence data, and all other results and dispositions traceable to the affected parts. Partner must not ship or incorporate a part that fails required authentication or inspection unless Sterling provides an authorized written disposition, and must provide copies of the validation evidence with the shipment or upon request.

SQC-395 Counterfeit EEE Parts Prevention

For EEE parts, Partner must maintain a counterfeit electronic-part prevention and control plan compliant with AS5553 when acting as a manufacturer or assembly source and AS6081 when acting as an independent distributor, together with applicable AS6171, AS6496, DFARS 252.246-7007 and 252.246-7008, and purchase-order requirements.

Partner must obtain parts directly from the OCM, an OCM-authorized distributor, or an authorized aftermarket manufacturer unless Sterling gives prior written approval. Partner must provide full chain-of-custody traceability, including OCM, part number, revision, country of origin when required, lot/date/batch code, serial number where applicable, each intermediary, quantities, certificates, and evidence of authorization. Mixed lots or date codes must be separately identified.

If an independent source is approved or traceability is incomplete, Partner must conduct a documented risk assessment and Sterling-approved authentication using a qualified laboratory and applicable AS6171, IDEA-STD-1010, or MIL-STD-883 methods. Partner must provide the plan and results, retain samples and records for at least 36 months or the longer SQC-126 period, and disclose any failed, inconclusive, altered, remarked, reclaimed, or used condition before shipment.



Suspect or counterfeit parts must be quarantined and reported to Sterling within 24 hours and to GIDEP when required; they must not be returned to the supply chain. Partner must flow these requirements through all tiers and remains responsible for all supplied EEE parts.

SQC-396 Direct Purchase from Manufacturer

Partner must obtain each item delivered under the purchase order directly from the original equipment manufacturer or original component manufacturer of that item. Procurement through a distributor, reseller, broker, intermediary, authorized aftermarket manufacturer, or any other third party is prohibited unless Sterling provides prior written authorization.

Partner must maintain and provide objective evidence of direct procurement, including:

The original manufacturer's name and location.

The manufacturer's part number and revision.

Partner's purchase order to the manufacturer.

The manufacturer's order acknowledgment, invoice, packing slip, shipping document, or equivalent transfer record.

Applicable lot number, batch number, date code, serial number, or other manufacturer traceability information.

The manufacturer's Certificate of Conformance, when available or required.

Partner must not quote, accept, procure, or deliver an item if direct procurement from the original manufacturer cannot be established.

Any exception requires an amended Sterling purchase order or other written authorization issued before Partner procures the item. Partner must maintain all approval and authenticity-validation records associated with the exception.

Partner must flow this clause in its entirety, or its equivalent, down to any lower-tier entity responsible for procurement of the item.

SQC-397 Distributor Controls and Responsibilities

A Partner acting as a distributor must maintain a quality system that controls approved sources, order review, product identity, traceability, handling and preservation, shelf life, storage, ESD and moisture sensitivity, change notification, inspection, nonconformance, counterfeit prevention, records, and shipment documentation. Product must remain in the original manufacturer's configuration and packaging unless authorized repackaging is controlled and traceability is preserved.

Partner must procure from the original manufacturer, an authorized distributor, or an authorized aftermarket manufacturer unless Sterling approves otherwise. Partner must provide its Certificate of Conformance, the manufacturer's certificate when required, complete chain-of-custody documentation, and current evidence of authorization. Independent distributors of EEE parts must comply with AS6081 and applicable AS5553/AS6171 controls when required.

Partner must not alter markings, mix lots, substitute sources or products, extend shelf life, or represent authorization inaccurately. Applicable controls and traceability requirements must be flowed to lower-tier distributors.

SQC-398 Manufacturer / Material Substitution Restrictions

Partner must furnish the exact manufacturer, part number, material, source, specification, revision, grade, form, fit, function, and condition ordered. No alternate, equivalent, superseding, reclaimed, used, salvaged, surplus, modified, or substituted item or material may be supplied without Sterling's prior written approval, even if Partner or a manufacturer considers it functionally equivalent.

A substitution request must identify the proposed and required items, manufacturer and source, technical differences, reason, availability, qualification and test evidence, configuration and interchangeability impacts, safety and reliability risk, pricing and schedule effect, and first affected shipment. Approval applies only to the stated purchase order and effectivity unless Sterling states otherwise.



Unless the purchase order expressly states an exception: MS3116-series electrical connectors must be manufactured by Amphenol, CAGE 77820; MIL-DTL-38999 Series 1, 2, 3, and 4 connectors (including D38999/XX, MS27XXX, CTV, LJT, JT, MTV, TV, 88-, 91-, and 10- series) manufactured by Amphenol are prohibited; connector backshells manufactured by Souriau-Sunbank, Joslyn Sunbank (CAGE 07418), or Sunbank Electronics (CAGE 71546) are prohibited; and connectors manufactured by Aero-Electric Connector, Inc. to MS24266, MS27467, MS27473, MS27484, MS3475, MS3476, or M83723 are prohibited.

Unauthorized raw-material substitution includes any change in form, size, shape, chemistry, melt method, origin, temper or condition, product testing, or surface finish. Partner must not recertify raw material as a different thickness, diameter, width, cross-sectional area, or product form, or supply material machined or cut from a different product form, unless specifically authorized. Certifications must state the form and size as originally manufactured.

Partner must prevent unauthorized substitution at every lower tier, preserve identity and traceability, and notify Sterling immediately if a substitution or mismatch is discovered after delivery.

SQC-399 Purchase from Manufacturer or Authorized Distributor

Partner may obtain and deliver items under the purchase order only from:

The original equipment manufacturer or original component manufacturer;

A distributor expressly authorized or franchised by the original manufacturer for the specific item;

An authorized aftermarket manufacturer; or

Another source expressly approved by Sterling in writing before procurement.

Partner must not procure items from an independent distributor, broker, unauthorized reseller, or other nonauthorized source without Sterling's prior written approval.

Partner must:

Ensure that all delivered items are new, authentic, unused, and conforming unless the purchase order expressly permits another condition.

Obtain items within the scope of the applicable authorized distribution agreement.

Maintain objective evidence of the approved source and an unbroken chain of custody to the original manufacturer.

Prevent commingling of compliant items with items obtained from nonapproved sources.

Provide source and traceability documentation with the shipment or upon Sterling's request, as directed by the purchase order.

Immediately notify Sterling if Partner or any source in its supply chain loses or experiences a change in its authorized status.

Refrain from quoting, accepting, procuring, or shipping an item if the required sourcing or traceability evidence is unavailable.

Any request to use a nonauthorized source must identify the proposed source, explain why an approved source is unavailable, provide available traceability evidence, and describe the inspections, tests, and other controls proposed to establish authenticity and conformity. Partner must not procure from the proposed source until Sterling issues written approval.

Partner must flow this clause in its entirety, or its equivalent, down through all applicable tiers of the supply chain.

SQC-400 Qualified Products / Manufacturers (QPL/QML)

When the purchase order requires a product or manufacturer listed on a Government or customer Qualified Products List (QPL), Qualified Manufacturers List (QML), or other approved-products list, Partner must supply only product manufactured at the listed and qualified facility within the approved scope and while the qualification is current.



Partner must verify listing status before order placement and shipment and provide the manufacturer's Certificate of Conformance and a certification identifying the qualifying agency, applicable specification, manufacturer name and location, and QPL/QML listing or number. If the manufacturer is not shown on the currently published list, each shipment must include a signed statement that the product was made by a currently approved QPL/QML manufacturer using the qualified processes, and qualification data must be available upon request. For microcircuits and hybrid microcircuits, applicable MIL-PRF-38535 or MIL-PRF-38534 written-certification, qualification, and marking requirements must be satisfied when specified.

Partner must not substitute an unlisted source or product and must notify Sterling immediately of suspension, removal, lapse, scope change, or any condition affecting qualification. The requirement must be flowed through all applicable tiers.

1. SQC-401 Authentication Test Approval and Shipment Release

When the purchase order requires authentication testing or identifies an item or component obtained through a non-franchised, independent, broker, or otherwise nonauthorized source, Partner must submit the required authentication plan, test data, inspection evidence, and supporting traceability for each affected component or item and for each assembly containing an affected component.

The submission must identify the purchase order, part number, manufacturer, date or lot code, quantity, source, test methods and acceptance criteria, laboratory or inspection provider, results, anomalies, dispositions, and traceability to the assembly or shipment. Partner must retain the underlying photographs, images, measurements, reports, and other objective evidence.

Partner must not incorporate or ship an affected item until Sterling has reviewed the required evidence and issued written approval or shipment release. Partner must include the written release or other approval evidence with each applicable shipment and flow equivalent authentication, evidence, approval, and shipment-hold requirements to affected lower-tier sources.

Regulatory, Safety and Security

SQC-421 Cybersecurity / CUI / Information Protection

Partner must protect Sterling, customer, government, controlled unclassified information (CUI), export-controlled information, credentials, cryptographic material, and other sensitive data against unauthorized access, use, disclosure, alteration, loss, and destruction. Partner must use secure transmission and storage, least-privilege access, multifactor authentication where applicable, encryption appropriate to data sensitivity, malware protection, logging, backups, vulnerability management, and secure disposal.

A device encrypted to secure banking, payment, or other financial transactions must have tamper-evident sealing on the unit, individual package, or main containment so opening provides visible evidence of possible compromise. Each unit must have a unique, nonrepeating serial number. Each shipment's packing slip or outer-container label must list the serial numbers, and the device and shipment record must show each number in human-readable form and in a scannable Code 39 or Code 128 barcode.

Payment Card Industry Point-to-Point Encryption (PCI P2PE) components must be limited to authorized personnel, maintained under documented chain of custody throughout the lifecycle, protected by serialized tamper-evident bags, stored in secured areas, and handled or produced under recorded CCTV coverage when required by the applicable PCI handling instructions. Keys and passwords must be protected and transmitted only through authorized channels. Partner must notify Sterling immediately of any actual or suspected compromise, preserve evidence, contain the incident, cooperate with investigation and reporting, and not make public statements without authorization.

Partner must comply with the specific security clauses and standards identified in the purchase order and must impose equivalent protections and incident-notification duties on lower-tier recipients.



SQC-422 Export Control / ITAR / EAR

Partner must comply with all export-control requirements applicable to the purchase order, including the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), Export Administration Regulations (EAR), sanctions, license conditions, provisos, and restrictions identified by Sterling. Partner must not export, reexport, transfer, release, disclose, or provide access to controlled items, software, technology, or technical data without required authorization.

Partner must provide accurate Export Control Classification Numbers (ECCNs), U.S. Munitions List categories, country of origin, and other requested classification data; restrict access by nationality and location as required; maintain records; and notify Sterling before any change affecting classification, authorization, source, destination, or end use. Partner must not rely on Sterling to determine Partner's independent obligations.

Partner must flow applicable export-control markings, restrictions, licenses, and recordkeeping duties to every lower-tier recipient and immediately report any actual or suspected violation.

SQC-423 FAA-Issued Production Certificate

When the purchase order requires product supplied under an FAA-issued Production Certificate, Partner must provide new original-equipment-manufacturer product produced under the applicable approved production system. Product must not bear FAA Parts Manufacturer Approval (PMA) markings unless Sterling expressly authorizes PMA product in writing.

Shipping documentation must identify the applicable FAA Production Certificate and include the following statement, or Sterling-approved equivalent: "Product furnished under this order is intended for use under an FAA Production Certificate or United States Government program and does not bear FAA-PMA markings unless specifically authorized by Sterling."

Partner must maintain objective evidence of production approval and chain of custody and must flow this clause to every distribution and manufacturing tier.

SQC-424 Government / Customer Property

Partner must establish and maintain a property-management system for Sterling-, customer-, or Government-furnished property in its possession or control. Partner must receive, inspect, identify, record, segregate, safeguard, preserve, maintain, inventory, use only as authorized, and return or dispose of property as directed, including material, equipment, tooling, data, software, and intellectual property.

Government property must be controlled in accordance with the applicable purchase-order clauses, including FAR 52.245-1 and applicable FAR Part 45 and DFARS property requirements. Partner must promptly report loss, damage, destruction, theft, misuse, excess, discrepancy, or unsuitability; investigate and protect affected property; and obtain direction before repair, replacement, movement, or disposition.

Property records and facilities are subject to audit and surveillance. Partner must obtain Sterling approval before placing property with a lower-tier source and must flow all applicable property clauses and accountability requirements.

SQC-425 HTS Code

Partner must provide the current Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) classification requested by Sterling for each applicable item. The classification must be accurate, item-specific, traceable to the manufacturer part number and country of origin and supported by sufficient product-description and composition data.

Partner must notify Sterling promptly if a classification changes or is determined to be inaccurate and must provide supporting rulings or analyses upon request. These requirements must be flowed to applicable manufacturers and lower-tier sources that control the classification data.

SQC-426 Nuclear / Regulatory Defect Reporting

When 10 C.F.R. Part 21 or another nuclear defect-reporting requirement applies, Partner must evaluate deviations and failures to comply that could create a substantial safety hazard, maintain the required procedures and records, and make timely notifications and reports to the responsible entity and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission as applicable.



Partner must notify Sterling immediately of any potential reportable condition, preserve relevant material and evidence, provide information needed for evaluation and reporting, and cooperate with containment, investigation, corrective action, and regulatory access. Partner must not delay or omit an independently required regulatory report based on Sterling's actions.

Partner must post notices, train responsible personnel, and flow applicable nuclear safety and reporting requirements to lower-tier sources.

SQC-427 Parts Manufacturing Approval (PMA) Form

When FAA Parts Manufacturer Approval documentation is required or PMA product is authorized, Partner must provide objective evidence of the approval and an original FAA Form 8130-3 or other specifically authorized PMA form or tag with the shipment. A controlled copy may be used for multiple serialized items only when it is clearly traceable to every delivered item.

The document must identify the approval holder, part number, eligibility or approved article, quantity and serial numbers, status, and authorized release. Partner must not represent non-PMA product as PMA-approved and must flow these documentation and traceability requirements through every applicable tier.

SQC-428 Priority Rating / DPAS

If the purchase order bears a Defense Priorities and Allocations System (DPAS) rating, Partner must accept or reject the rated order within the time required by 15 C.F.R. Part 700, give it the required preferential scheduling and performance priority, and deliver by the stated dates unless an authorized written exception applies.

Partner must place the required rating and regulatory language on applicable lower-tier orders needed to fulfill the rated order, obtain timely acceptances, monitor performance, and promptly notify Sterling of any conflict, delay, or inability to meet the required delivery. Partner must maintain records sufficient to demonstrate compliance and must not use the rating for unauthorized purposes.

SQC-429 Product Safety / Critical Characteristics

Partner must identify and control product-safety requirements, key characteristics, critical items, special requirements, and critical safety items designated by the purchase order, drawing, specification, or Partner's risk analysis. Controls must address risk assessment, configuration, process planning, competent personnel, special processes, measurement, variation management, verification, traceability, nonconformance, change control, and escape notification.

Key-characteristic variation-management and data requirements must comply with AS9103 when specified. For variable data, Partner must record the supplier, part number, revision, serial number when applicable, characteristic identifier and target, upper and lower specification limits, each measured value, upper and lower process-control limits, mean, standard deviation, Cp, Cpk, and pass/fail result. A characteristic must enter reporting when Cpk trends below 1.33 and may leave reporting only after maintaining Cpk above 2.00 for six months or the contractually specified period. When Cpk is below 1.33, Partner must document controls that assure conformity and prevent escapes.

Unless Sterling approves another schedule or format, Partner must submit the key-characteristic analysis electronically each month by the fifth day of the second month following data collection and must provide raw, unmanipulated shipment data when requested. Partner must preserve records for the required period and obtain Sterling approval before changing a safety-related design, process, source, inspection method, or acceptance criterion.

Partner must communicate product-safety importance and ethical reporting duties to personnel, notify Sterling immediately of any potential safety escape, and flow all applicable safety and critical-characteristic controls to lower tiers.

SQC-430 Safety Data Sheets.

For each chemical product or hazardous material delivered under the purchase order, Partner must provide a current Safety Data Sheet (SDS) that complies with the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard, 29 C.F.R. § 1910.1200, and all other applicable legal and purchase-order requirements.



The SDS must:

Identify the product and its manufacturer or other responsible party.

Include the product's physical and chemical properties, hazards, and recommended precautions for safe handling, storage, transportation, emergency response, and disposal.

Be complete, legible, and in English.

Reflect the product formulation and hazard information current as of the shipment date.

Be traceable to the specific product delivered.

A copy of the SDS must accompany each shipment unless Sterling authorizes another submission method in writing. When the purchase order requires submission before delivery, Partner must provide the SDS to Sterling before shipment and must not ship until Sterling authorizes shipment.

Partner must properly classify, package, contain, mark, label, and transport all hazardous materials in accordance with applicable federal, state, local, and international requirements. Each container must clearly identify its contents and display all required hazard warnings, precautions, handling instructions, emergency information, and storage conditions.

If Partner determines that an SDS is not required for an item identified on the purchase order, Partner must provide a signed written statement to that effect upon Sterling's request.

Partner must promptly provide an updated SDS if the product formulation, hazard classification, manufacturer information, or other SDS information changes. Partner must flow this clause in its entirety, or its equivalent, down to all lower-tier subcontractors and suppliers.

SQC-431 Schedule B Number

Partner must provide the current United States Schedule B number for each applicable item and sufficient descriptive data to support the classification. When requested, Partner must also provide the corresponding HTS classification and, for non-United States items, the applicable national export-control classification and Wassenaar classification if available.

Classification data must be accurate, item-specific, and traceable to the manufacturer part number. Partner must notify Sterling promptly of changes or errors and flow these requirements to applicable lower-tier sources.

SQC-432 Tax Exemption Certificate

When Sterling identifies a purchase as tax-exempt and provides an applicable exemption certificate, Partner must apply the certificate only to the covered transaction and must not charge the exempt tax. Partner must promptly notify Sterling before invoicing if it cannot accept or apply the certificate or if additional documentation is required.

Partner must retain the certificate and transaction records as required by applicable law, protect the information from unauthorized use, and make the records available to Sterling upon request. Partner must flow this requirement only to a lower-tier source that invoices a covered tax or must use the certificate to support the transaction.

SQC-433 Domestic Source and Trade Agreement Compliance

When the purchase order invokes domestic-source, Buy American, Balance of Payments, Trade Agreements Act, or domestic-preference requirements, Partner must supply products and materials that comply with the specific statutes, regulations, clauses, thresholds, exceptions, and country-of-origin rules identified in the purchase order.

Applicable requirements may include FAR 52.225-1, FAR 52.225-5, DFARS 252.225-7001, DFARS 252.225-7004, DFARS 252.225-7012, DFARS 252.225-7021, and their then-applicable revisions or successors. Partner must determine the status and origin of each delivered item under the invoked requirement, obtain Sterling's written approval before relying on an exception not expressly authorized by the purchase order, and provide supporting certifications and records upon request.

Partner must notify Sterling before any change in source, manufacturing location, component content, or country of origin that could affect compliance; preserve substantiating records for the required retention period; and flow the applicable

domestic-source and trade-agreement requirements to every lower-tier source whose products or activities affect the determination.

SQC-434 Malware Prevention

Partner must establish, document, implement, and maintain risk-based processes to prevent, detect, contain, and remove malware from information systems, manufacturing systems, test equipment, software, firmware, and deliverable assemblies used in or supplied under the purchase order. Malware includes viruses, malicious code, Trojan horses, worms, time bombs, back doors, self-help code, and other code or routines designed to damage, alter, disclose, disable, disrupt, or permit unauthorized access to software, hardware, or data.

Manufacturing and test information systems must be continuously monitored using current, commercially supported antimalware protections appropriate to the system. Partner must retain evidence of monitoring and scanning, including the date, affected system or assembly, part or configuration identifier, antimalware product and version, scan engine or machine identifier, result, anomalies, containment, and disposition.

Deliverable assemblies containing commercial-off-the-shelf software, free and open-source software, operating systems, firmware, or other executable content must be scanned before delivery using current detection capabilities. Partner must not deliver an assembly known or suspected to contain malware and must preserve scan records and relevant evidence.

Partner must notify Sterling immediately upon discovering or reasonably suspecting malware affecting delivered or deliverable items, systems, software, or data; identify affected items and deliveries; contain the condition; preserve evidence; cooperate with investigation and recovery; and provide monitoring and scan evidence upon request. Partner must impose equivalent controls and notification duties on applicable lower-tier sources.

SQC-435 WEEE and Environmental Product Compliance

When applicable to the product, destination, or purchase order, Partner must ensure that electrical and electronic equipment and components comply with applicable waste-electrical-and-electronic-equipment, producer-responsibility, substance-restriction, marking, registration, and related environmental product requirements, including applicable business-to-business WEEE requirements.

Partner must provide an accurate declaration of compliance or status when requested, apply required product and packaging markings, and maintain objective evidence supporting the declaration, including product scope, applicable jurisdiction, manufacturer or producer identity, registrations, exemptions, material information, and lower-tier declarations.

Partner must promptly notify Sterling of any noncompliance, loss or change of registration, inaccurate declaration, or product or source change that may affect environmental compliance. Partner must preserve supporting records for the period required by law or the purchase order and flow applicable requirements to lower-tier manufacturers and suppliers.

SQC-436 Small Business Subcontracting Plan and Reporting

When the purchase order, applicable law, or an incorporated contract requirement requires a small-business subcontracting plan, Partner must prepare, submit, maintain, and perform an approved plan in the required form and within the required period. Partner must use the Electronic Subcontracting Reporting System or any successor system to submit accurate Individual Subcontracting Reports and other required reports using the prime-contract, entity, contact, and reporting information identified in the purchase order or otherwise provided by Sterling.

Partner must maintain complete supporting records for reported subcontracting activity, cooperate with reasonable review or correction requests, and promptly correct inaccurate or rejected submissions. Partner must not represent that a plan or report has been accepted until acceptance is confirmed through the applicable system or in writing.

As applicable, Partner must require each lower-tier subcontractor that is required to maintain a subcontracting plan to provide corresponding information and reporting instructions to its affected lower-tier subcontractors. Partner remains responsible for timely and accurate reporting through all applicable tiers.



Shipping and Delivery

SQC-451 Authorization to Ship Form

When written Authorization to Ship (ATS) is required, Partner must not ship affected product until Sterling issues a valid ATS for the specific purchase order, line item, part number, quantity, configuration, destination, and shipment. Partner must comply with all conditions and expiration limits stated in the authorization.

The ATS number and required barcode or identifier must appear on the shipping documentation and container labels. Any change to the authorized scope, condition, quantity, configuration, or destination requires a new or amended written authorization. An ATS does not constitute product acceptance or waive any requirement.

Partner must flow these controls to any lower-tier source that drop-ships or otherwise ships directly to Sterling or Sterling's customer.

SQC-452 Packing Slip Requirements.

Partner must provide a complete and legible packing slip with each shipment. One copy must be enclosed with the shipment and another copy must be securely affixed to the exterior of the shipment in a packing-list pouch, unless the purchase order specifies another method.

The packing slip must include, as applicable:

Partner's name and address.

Manufacturer's name and CAGE code or, if a CAGE code is unavailable, the manufacturer's address.

Sterling's purchase-order number and line-item number.

Shipment date and packing-slip number.

Ship-from and ship-to names and addresses.

Sterling's part number or material number and revision.

Manufacturer's part number and revision.

Item name or description.

Quantity ordered, quantity shipped, and quantity remaining or backordered.

Unit of measure.

Serial numbers, lot numbers, batch numbers, date codes, heat numbers, or other applicable traceability information.

Country of origin or country of manufacture, when required.

Shelf-life information, including the manufacture date, cure date, expiration date, and required storage conditions, when applicable.

Applicable specification options, configurations, or customizations.

Identification of any Sterling-approved deviation, waiver, variance, or nonconformance.

The number of containers included in the shipment and, when applicable, each container's identifying number.

Carrier, tracking number, bill-of-lading number, and shipment weight, when applicable.

A list of accompanying certificates, inspection reports, test reports, SDSs, source-inspection records, or other required documentation.

Items associated with different purchase orders, line items, part numbers, manufacturers, lots, or acceptance requirements must be separately identified on the packing slip and segregated within the shipment as necessary to preserve identification and traceability.



The packing slip line items and quantities must correspond to the applicable Certificate of Conformance and the physical contents of the shipment.

The packing slip must reproduce Sterling's purchase-order part number exactly as stated for each line item. When the supplier's, manufacturer's, or commercial off-the-shelf part number differs, the packing slip must also identify that part number and clearly correlate it to Sterling's purchase-order part number.

SQC-453 Shipping and Delivery Controls

Partner must ship only conforming, properly released product to the exact destination, delivery date, carrier, routing, service level, account, Incoterm, and other instructions stated in the purchase order. Early, partial, consolidated, drop, premium, or alternate shipments require authorization when not expressly permitted.

Before shipment, Partner must verify identity, revision, quantity, acceptance status, packaging, labeling, documentation, ship-to information, and required source or Government release. Packing lists and bills of lading must contain the purchase-order and line-item numbers, part number and revision, description, quantities shipped and remaining, package count, weight, serial/lot/batch/date codes, and required account or authorization references.

Partner is responsible for adequate packaging and preservation under SQC-187 and package labeling under SQC-102, for compliance with specified ASTM D3951 or MIL-STD-2073 requirements, and for prompt notice of delay, loss, damage, misdelivery, or shipping discrepancy. Applicable requirements must be flowed to direct-ship sources and carriers.

For a drop shipment requiring pre-shipment review, Partner must provide the complete data package, test reports, and required authorization-to-ship request to the designated reviewers and must not ship until the written authorization is returned. A reviewer may require source inspection at Partner's or a lower-tier facility before authorizing shipment.

For an authorized drop shipment or other shipment to a third-party receiving location, Partner must send the required packing sheet, source-approval evidence, certifications, carrier name, waybill or tracking information, and other shipment documentation to the receiving party and to Sterling by the electronic method and at the time specified in the purchase order. The electronic submission must identify the applicable program or project when stated, purchase-order number, part number, shipment destination, and Sterling contact. Partner remains responsible for confirming that the documentation is complete, legible, traceable to the shipment, and available to support receipt and p