



# UPC Link

## Frequently Asked Questions

February 2023

### **1. What is UPC Link?**

UPC Link is a simple tool created to allow for data synchronization of generic UPCs and company-specific or brand owner UPCs. UPC Link is designated for sellers and retail buyers of packaged produce items as they transition from using generic UPCs (those beginning with the prefix '033383') to brand-owner or company-specific UPCs.

### **2. I received a communication from a retailer I conduct business with regarding registering my GTINs with IFPA, what do I need to do?**

The first piece of material you should read is on [Universal Product Codes](#) under the UPC Link section, where you will learn about the initiative and the UPC Link tool. It will take you through the steps to register with IFPA to utilize the tool so that retailers can download the data you are required to upload for them.

### **3. Why am I being asked to make this transition?**

The produce sector in the United States and Canada is gradually making a transition away from the use of generic UPCs for packaged produce to the use of brand owner specific UPCs. The use of standard GTINs allows for the globally

unique identification of fresh produce by capturing the brand owner and product identification while also providing a number of other benefits.

#### **4. Where can I find more information about transitioning from generic UPCs to company-specific UPCs?**

Please refer to the UPC Link section on [Universal Product Codes](#) of IFPA's website.

#### **5. What are the benefits of using UPC Link?**

The use of company-specific GTINs on retail selling units enable trading partners to tie product information to brand owners, providing the ability to address a variety of business process needs and capabilities across the supply chain, including improved category management, enhanced traceability and a more accurate and expedited checkout process.

#### **6. Why do I need to use UPC Link?**

This tool enables you to upload your data file of individual product data in one place for all buyers to access, making the transfer of data much more efficient. As a supplier, you will need to register for the product and then build a text file using a text editor, such as Notepad, with your company-specific UPCs and corresponding generic UPCs. You can then upload this data so that the retailer can automatically download this information into their point-of-sale systems.

#### **7. Is there a cost for using this product?**

UPC Link has a one-time fee of \$300 for IFPA members and \$1100 for non-IFPA members. Please complete the [UPC Link registration process](#) to order the product. If you are interested in learning about IFPA Membership, please contact Member Services at 1(302)738-7100.

## **8. Do I have to register to gain access to UPC Link?**

Yes, whether you are a IFPA member or non-member, all suppliers must register to gain upload access to UPC Link. Please use the [UPC Link registration process](#).

## **9. How do I register my UPCs?**

After you complete the [UPC Link registration process](#), you only need your IFPA login credentials to access the tool. Once logged in, you will upload your company-specific and generic UPCs.

Remember that your GS1 UPC company prefix is 6–9 digits long and is provided to you by GS1 on the GS1 Company Prefix Certificate. This will be the first component of your company-specific UPC code.

Please access the UPC Link section on [Universal Product Codes](#) for the step-by-step process for accessing the UPC Link tool. Please note the [Tutorial](#) will provide much more detail and is worth reviewing. If you do not have a GS1 UPC Company Prefix, please contact GS1 at [www.gs1.org](http://www.gs1.org).

## **10. What if I don't know my IFPA company ID or individual ID?**

Please contact IFPA's Member Services at 1(302)738-7100 to obtain that information. They can also provide you with your password, which you'll need to access UPC Link once registered.

## **11. Where do I obtain a GS1 UPC link prefix?**

It is located on your GS1 Company Prefix Certificate. If you don't have one, you need to contact the GS1 office in your country of residence. The website is [www.gs1.org](http://www.gs1.org).

**12. I don't know my GSI prefix but have my company-specific UPCs, how can I identify my prefix?**

GSI has a website, [www.gepir.org](http://www.gepir.org), that enables you to enter your GTIN and identify your GSI company prefix or GCP. For company-specific UPCs, you would enter the GTIN-12.

**13. How long does it take to gain access to UPC Link?**

If paying with a credit card, you will have immediate access to UPC Link. If paying by check or wire, access will be granted following clearance of the payment.

**14. How will I know when I have access to UPC Link?**

Once access is granted, you will find *UPC Link* under Subscription in the top menu of your account page. For more detailed information please review the *UPC Link Tutorial* for assistance on gaining access and uploading your data.

**15. How do I format a company-specific UPC?**

Refer to the UPC Link section on [Universal Product Codes](#) on the site for more information.

**16. Is a company-specific UPC the same as a GTIN-12?**

Essentially yes, the GTIN-12 is the data structure which is encoded in the company-specific UPC.

**17. What do I need to upload?**

You will create a text file using a text editor like Notepad with two columns. The first column will contain your company-specific UPCs and the second column will contain the corresponding generic UPCs. The two columns should be separated by a comma. Please note that Retailer Assigned Codes cannot be uploaded into UPC Link. Since they are assigned to different items by multiple retailers, they could inadvertently corrupt a retailer's point-of-sale system.

**18. Who is responsible for establishing the link between the generic and the company-specific UPC?**

The brand owner of the item is responsible for establishing the link.

**19. How do I upload company-specific UPCs that have different GS1 Company Prefixes?**

You can include all prefixes in your csv. file for upload.

**20. Can I link more than one company-specific UPC to a generic UPC?**

Yes. Multiple company-specific UPCs can be assigned to a single generic UPC.

**21. Can I use multiple Company Prefixes?**

Yes, however, use caution. The company-specific UPCs that you upload will be validated against the Company Prefixes you register with.

**22. Once I've uploaded my data, do I need to save the file for any future reference?**

It is a good idea to save the original file in case you run into any computer or technical problems. There is also an update feature which allows you to add, edit or delete individual records if you need to change any data after the initial upload.

**23. What will happen to the old information when I upload a new file?**

The existing data will be preserved and the new data will be appended.

**24. Who can upload the required information?**

Those suppliers who have subscribed to this service and registered their UPC Company Prefixes (i.e., only those individuals who have registered will have access to upload data).

## **25. How can I add or change an individual record?**

From the UPC Link Home page, access the Update Online option and you have the option of adding, editing or deleting entries. Detailed instructions can be found in the [Tutorial](#).

## **26. Why can't I upload Retailer Assigned codes?**

Retailer Assigned codes are assigned to different items by multiple retailers and, if downloaded, could inadvertently corrupt a retailer's point-of-sale system. Records with company-specific UPCs and Retailer Assigned UPCs need to be communicated directly with the retailers who use them.

## **27. As a retailer, will I know when new data has been added/uploaded?**

No, it is recommended that you download your supplier data on a regular basis, possibly once a month to ensure you have the most current item catalog data from the suppliers. You can also utilize the automatic download option from the Download screen. This allows for retailers' web development teams to access the data automatically using a web service and update their point-of-sale systems.

## **28. Can anyone download this information?**

No. Only those buyers and those subscribed to this service can download the data. To subscribe, please complete the [UPC Link registration process](#).

## **29. As a supplier, can I verify the data that I uploaded?**

Yes, you can verify the data you uploaded by selecting the download option and select your company from the 'Suppliers' box on the left and use the arrow in the middle of the boxes to move it to the 'Download' box and then select the 'download' button and you will receive a list of the data confirmed in the upload.

### **30. Can I use this tool for loose or bulk produce?**

No, this tool is designed ONLY for packaged produce carrying a UPC. The tool, DataBar Online is used for loose or bulk produce (i.e., items that carry a PLU code).

### **31. Can this repository be used to communicate the GTIN for case level identification?**

No. This is only for linking package level company-specific UPCs to generic UPCs. This tool is not to be confused with PTI (Produce Traceability Initiative) or DataBar Online.

### **32. What if I am an importer and have multiple suppliers? How do I get their data uploaded?**

As an importer, you can register any GS1 prefixes that are company owned. Any third-party organizations must register their own prefix and thus upload their own data.

### **33. Is there a difference between IFPA's technology product, UPC Link, and GSI US's technology product, Data Driver?**

Yes. UPC Link is an online communication tool for suppliers to upload their generic and brand owner Global Trade Item Numbers (GTINs) for retailers to download into their point-of-sale systems. UPC Link assists the produce industry by simplifying the exchange of necessary data by facilitating the transition process from generic to brand owner GTINs for packaged produce. Data Driver, on the other hand, is an online tool designed to create, manage and print accurate barcodes for all packaging levels of trade items. While UPC Link is tailored to assist the produce industry, Data Driver is much less industry specific. While Data Driver does function as a brand owner GTIN building and labeling printing tool, it does not serve as an online communication tool.