

INTERPRETATION OF SEGMENT MEA FOR SHIPPING TOLERANCES

REQUEST

Letter of October 11, 1989 from Boeing Support Services requests an interpretation regarding conveyance of shipping tolerances in the X12 Purchase Order Transaction Set (850).

In some cases a minimum and/or maximum quantity needs to be sent. Example: for printed forms, where shipping tolerances are typically "plus or minus" 10%, or for tools or electronic parts, where the exact number of shippable pieces is impossible to predict and a range is given.

We have been using the MEA segment to express tolerance:

MEA*SH*PO*ZZ*range minimum*range maximum

SH=shipping tolerance

PO=percentage of order

ZZ=mutually defined (if on an entire order, the unit of measure is meaningless, however conditionally mandatory)

ISSUES

Whether the MEA segment can be used, as above, to convey shipping tolerances.

INTERPRETATION

The MEA segment can be used to convey shipping tolerances according to the segment specifications in Release 002040.

The segment's purpose states it may be used to specify tolerances. For MEA01, SH (Shipping Tolerance) is a legitimate code. For MEA02, PO (Percent of Order) is a legitimate code. For MEA04, ZZ (Mutually Defined) is a legitimate code. However, the use of ZZ is discouraged. For use of the ZZ code, refer to the following instruction:

"Where mutually defined codes such as 'ZZ' are allowed in accordance with this standard, interchange partners shall agree on the meaning of this code prior to the interchange. Mutually defined codes are intended only for temporary use pending assignment of a specific code value by ASC X12." (ref. Release 003010, Introduction to Data Element Dictionary, Section 2.1.2)

If this is not clearly understood between trading partners, the business purpose may not be fulfilled.

Values for range minimum and maximum are placed in MEA05/MEA06. MEA04 defines the unit of measure for MEA03 (Measurement Value), MEA05 (Range Minimum), and MEA06 (Range Maximum).

Example for this interpretation follows:

MEA*SH*PO*value*ZZ*range minimum value*range maximum value N/L

This is an acceptable use of the segment.

Preferred examples are:

1. MEA*SH*PO*5000*RM*4500*5500 N/L

The order is for 5000 reams of paper with a shipping tolerance of 4500 to 5500 reams.

2. MEA*SH*PO*40000*24*36000*44000 N/L

The order is for a 40000 pound coil of steel with a -10% - +10% shipping tolerance (expressed as 36000/44000 pounds).

3. MEA*SH*PO**P1*-10*+10 N/L

The order is for a 40000 pound coil of steel with a -10% - +10% shipping tolerance.