ISBT 128 is a standardized approach for labeling blood components, cellular and tissue products to provide international consistency in label contents. ISBT 128 offers a unique system of labeling that can be interpreted worldwide.

The information contained on the label is a result of several layers that are required to achieve standardization. These layers consist of: Definitions, Reference Tables, Data Structures, Delivery Mechanisms and Labeling. Detailed explanations of these layers can be found in the “ISBT 128 – An Introduction” document. It is important that you become familiar with this document and others as they are instrumental in assisting your facility move towards ISBT 128 implementation. Other relevant documents include the “ISBT 128 Technical Specification Version 3.3.0” and “United States Consensus Standard for the Uniform Labeling of Cellular Therapy Products using ISBT 128, Draft G”. Follow the links below.

Canadian Blood Services (CBS) is planning to implement ISBT 128 in May 2009. CBS has made available through its website several documents for reference to assist its customers with background information.

In preparation for this transition, regional coordination of hospital facility resources will be required as this initiative will affect almost every aspect of blood component receipt and distribution throughout its facilities. Project planning is essential to facilitate the revision of operating procedures and associated forms, perform software upgrades, purchase hardware such as bar code scanners and printers, identify impacts on maintenance of medical records and reporting systems, education for physicians, nurses and laboratory staff. Other areas impacted include the revision of operating procedures, forms and labels.

Registration and licensing with ICCBBA is required for transfusion services (that do not collect blood but only transfuse blood):

- if your facility applies ISBT 128 labels. This includes facilities that pool, aliquot or modify products and label them with ISBT 128 bar codes.
- if your facility uses ISBT 128 data structures in other than labeling products such as patient identification wrist bands, crossmatch tags or electronic messaging. Health Authorities should ensure the conditions for registration and licensing are clearly understood as it relates to their facilities. For more information on registration and licensing follow the link below.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Blood Coordinating Program will be presenting a session on “ISBT 128” at the Newfoundland and Labrador Society for Medical Laboratory Science Conference in Corner Brook in October, 2008.

For more information on ISBT 128, follow the links below.

- Customer Letter 2008-06 - Important Information Regarding ISBT 128;
- CBS Information and Resources in Preparing for ISBT 128;
- ICCBBA (ISBT 128 Information);
- ISBT 128 – An Introduction;
- ISBT 128 Technical Specification Version 3.3.0;