

# How to Determine an Export Control Classification Number (ECCN)



**U.S. Department of Commerce  
Bureau of Industry and Security  
Office of Exporter Services**

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If you ship an item (commodity, software, or technology) from the United States to a foreign destination, your transaction is likely to be subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) within the U.S. Department of Commerce has jurisdiction over the export of commercial or certain military items that have, or may have, military, terrorist, or proliferation applications. These controls are implemented through the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) (15 CFR Parts 730-774).

If your item is subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Commerce, you should first determine if your item is designated by an Export Control Classification Number (ECCN) on the Commerce Control List (CCL) (Supplement No. 1 to Part 774 of the EAR). The ECCN is a key factor in determining whether you need a license to export items from the United States, or to transfer controlled technology to a foreign national within the United States.

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## **What is an ECCN?**

An Export Control Classification Number (ECCN) is an alphanumeric designation (*e.g.*, 1A984 or 4A001) used in the Commerce Control List (CCL) to identify items for export control purposes. An ECCN categorizes items based on the nature of the product, *i.e.* type of commodity, technology or software and its respective technical parameters.

Once the ECCN has been identified, you can determine the reasons for control of the item, which transactions may require an export license based on the country of destination or the end user or end uses, and which license exceptions, if any, may apply.

## **What is an EAR99 designation?**

Items that are subject to the jurisdiction of the EAR, but are not described on the CCL, are designated EAR99. EAR99 serves as a “basket” category for all such items.

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## Determining Your ECCN

There are three approaches to determine an ECCN:

- 1. *Go to the Source:*** Contact the manufacturer, producer or developer to see if they have a current ECCN for the item. In addition, BIS has a [Classification Information Table](#) on its website listing companies that have voluntarily provided information for 3<sup>rd</sup> parties to receive classifications.
- 2. *Self-Classify:*** In order to self-classify your item, you need a technical understanding of the item. Additionally, you need to be familiar with the structure and format of the CCL which is made up of ten categories (0-9). The first digit of an ECCN represents the category (see Exhibit A). Each of the ten categories is divided into five product groups (A-E), which are represented by the second digit of the ECCN (see Exhibit B).

Before beginning to self-classify, consult the Order of Review (Supplement No. 4 to Part 774 of the EAR). First, you will determine whether your item is subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of another

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agency. If it is not, you will consult the CCL. To classify your item against the CCL, begin with a review of the general characteristics of your item. This will usually guide you to the appropriate category on the CCL. Once you identify the potential applicable CCL categories, determine which product group within the CCL category or categories is applicable to your item.

***Exhibit A: CCL Categories***

- 0 = Nuclear materials, facilities and equipment (and miscellaneous items)
- 1 = Special Materials and related equipment, Chemicals, "Microorganisms" and "Toxins"
- 2 = Materials Processing
- 3 = Electronics
- 4 = Computers
- 5 = Telecommunications and "Information Security"
- 6 = Sensors and Lasers
- 7 = Navigation and Avionics
- 8 = Marine
- 9 = Aerospace and Propulsion

***Exhibit B: Product Groups***

- A. "End items,"  
"Equipment,"  
"Accessories,"  
"Attachments," "Parts,"  
"Components," and  
"Systems"
- B. Test, Inspection and  
"Production  
Equipment"
- C. "Materials"
- D. "Software"
- E. "Technology"

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If your item is a spacecraft-related item or a military item, first consult the 9x515 ECCNs and “600 series” ECCNs (in which the third digit is “6”) within the ECCN category and product group of your item to compare the particular characteristics and functions of your item to those ECCNs. If you have determined that your item is not in a 9X515 or 600 series ECCN, then start from the beginning of the product group to determine if any other ECCN describes your item.

If your item is not described in a specific ECCN in any category of the CCL, then your item is designated as EAR99.

Keep in mind that ECCNs may change over time, remember to include in your compliance program periodic review of your ECCN to ensure that your classification is current.

[Decision tree tools](#) are available on the BIS website to assist you with the Order of Review and with “specially designed,” a term found in many ECCNs.

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**3. *Official Request to BIS:*** You may request an official classification from BIS using the secure online web portal, [Simplified Network Application Process Redesign \(SNAP-R\)](#). You must create a SNAP-R account and obtain a Company Identification Number (CIN) to access the online system. Visit the [BIS website](#) for further information regarding SNAP-R and CINs.

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## Web Links

Classification Information Table

<https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/licensing/commerce-control-list-classification/publicly-available-classification-information>

Decision Tree Tools

<https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/decision-tree-tools>

Export Administration Regulations

[https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/regulations/export-administration-regulations-ear.](https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/regulations/export-administration-regulations-ear)

SNAP-R

<https://snapr.bis.doc.gov/snapr/>

SNAP-R Guidance

<http://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/licensing/simplified-network-application-process-redesign-snap-r>



## **Need Further Assistance?**

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