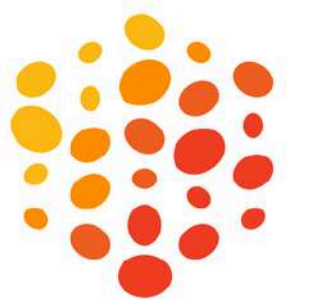


# Best practices for product descriptions



**Spring**  
GDS



# Best practices for product descriptions

**Accurate product descriptions play a more important role than ever before** in customs clearance. We use your product description to validate the best fitting 10-digit HS code. The HS code determines the applicable duties and taxes, and can also influence whether a shipment is selected for additional inspections or documentation requirements.

Investing time in creating clear and detailed product descriptions can help **reduce delays** and avoid **unnecessary costs**.

For example, we regularly see cases where products shipped to the United States of America are categorised to the highest duty levels (48%), when a more accurate description could have resulted in a much lower rate (lowest: 7.5%). With increased regulatory scrutiny, vague or incomplete product descriptions risk triggering **additional reviews** by U.S. Partner Government Agencies (PGAs). Similarly, EU customs authorities are already **blocking shipments** when the product description is unclear.

To help you get started, we have included some practical guidance below on how to improve your product descriptions and support faster, more efficient customs processing.

# The golden rule of product descriptions

To ensure shipments are processed efficiently, product descriptions must **be clear, specific and easy to understand**.

## Be clear

Include only information that helps to identify the product. **Avoid unnecessary details** such as colours (e.g. black/blue/multicolour), sizes (e.g. 40/M), SKUs (e.g. KKFX-3315), or promotional language (marketing terms like premium, best-selling, or high quality).

## Be specific

Clearly describe the **type of the item, what the item is made of** and, where relevant, **who it is intended for**. For example, descriptions such as men's woolen jacket, leather bag, or carbon steel frying pan provide the level of detail needed for accurate classification.

If a shipment contains multiple different products, each item should be listed separately unless they are sold as a single set (e.g. cutlery set). Accessories included with a product do not need to be listed separately.

## Avoid ambiguity

Descriptions should leave no room for interpretation. A customs officer should be able to understand exactly what the product is based on the description alone. For example, women's cotton shirt is clear and specific, while clothing or indoor/outdoor apparel is too broad and may lead to additional checks.

## Stay within the character limit

Please note that customs systems commonly allow a maximum product description length of **44 characters**.



# Examples of incorrect and correct product descriptions:

The following table includes examples of common product description mistakes, explanations of why they are insufficient, and recommendations for writing compliant product descriptions.

| Incorrect description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | What’s wrong with it?                                                                       | Correct description                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| THE FLOWER IS ASPERSED FIXATOR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | The description is unclear and ambiguous. Is it a flower or is it a flower holder?          | Planter                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| WALL STICKER&STORAGE<br>BASKET&REPTILE & GAME<br>PAD&RASCHEL<br>BLANKET&PANTYHOSE,<br>BASE SOCKS, BASE SO&OBJECT<br>SHAPING PANTS&MAN-MADE<br>NAILS&MAN-MADE<br>EYELASH&EYEBROW CUTTER &<br>EYEBROW SCISS&EAR<br>HOOKS&DOUBLE-SIDED STICKER &<br>MAGIC S&DESKCLOTH & DESK<br>SEAT SET | Multiple items are listed in one description. Each distinct item should be on its own line. | Wall sticker<br>Storage basket<br>Game pad<br>Blanket<br>Men's cotton underwear<br>Socks<br>False nails<br>Eyelash eyebrow trimmer<br>Scissors<br>Hooks<br>Stickers<br>Polyester cloth<br>Desk set |

| Incorrect description                              | What's wrong with it?                                                                                                   | Correct description       |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| CLOTHES (KKFX-3315-BEIGE6-12M                      | The description is ambiguous, not specific enough and contains irrelevant information for customs (SKU, colour, size)   | Women's woven nylon shirt |
| THE BELT                                           | The description uses irrelevant words (the) and is missing relevant information (material)                              | Leather belt              |
| LITCHI GRAIN PURE COLOR<br>ASLANT BAG SHOULDER BAG | The description is unclear, contains irrelevant information for customs (texture, colour) and repeats information (bag) | Faux leather shoulder bag |

Source of the examples above: Hurricane Commerce

If you need assistance identifying the most appropriate product description, please contact your Account Manager.  
**We are happy to help.**

The Spring GDS Team



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We deliver.**

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