



Deciphering the Symbols and Codes on Footwear Labels



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Need for Information

In the course of footwear impression casework and entry into a reference database, there is often the need to know the make, model, and other information about an item of footwear. This information is frequently present on the shoe in the form of various codes on the label. The information presented on the label and the codes used vary by manufacturer. The manufacturers do not provide readily accessible information on how to decipher the information presented on the labels, and many of the companies do not have individuals readily available to assist with law enforcement inquiries.

Use in Forensic Casework

An example of the use of manufacturer label information is a case in which a pair of shoes submitted to the laboratory for comparison was found to be similar in overall tread design to an impression from another unsolved case that was stored in the casework database*. Information on the label of the shoe indicated that the shoe was manufactured after the date of the incident and could not have made the questioned impression from the database. The shoe was eliminated as a possible source of the impression using only the label information.

* The Oregon State Police currently uses the SICAR software application by Foster and Freeman for the storage and searching of casework impressions and footwear.

Project Design

A list of manufacturers was developed representing some brands of shoes commonly encountered in laboratory casework. Shoes of these brands were located at retail stores and images of the labels were taken. Gathering the images from retail locations ensured that the information obtained was from current products available in the retail market. Contact was then made with representatives from each of the manufacturers. The representatives were provided with the images that had been gathered from labels on footwear manufactured by their respective companies and asked to provide assistance in deciphering the information present on the labels.

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Adidas



- #1: Factory information
- #2: Article number
- #3: Production month/year
- #4: Database code (can be entered to access information regarding shoe)
- #5: Two-dimensional barcode (can be scanned to access information regarding shoe)

Asics



- #1: Style number (first # in the style indicates year that model was released, numbers are recycled every 10 years - i.e. 2 could be 1992 or 2002)
- #2: Manufacture information (F= season, 59= unable to obtain reliable information, 1209= month and year of manufacture)
- #3: Factory identification

Note: There is no information on the label that indicates color scheme.

C1RCA (and Axion)



- #1: Style name/code (Women's styles have a W inserted. This label is from a women's 8 Track, code 8WTK. The comparable men's model is 8TK.)
- #2: Color code (The color code may be absent, on a separate line as in this example, or adjacent to the style name/code.)

#3: Vendor name (2-3 digit ID code)

#4: Season (first two digits) and year (second two digits) Together #3 and #4 constitute the "vendor code". 01-04= Spring season, 05= Summer, 06-08= Fall, 09-12= Holiday

Note: Axion shoes have similar labels and can also be deciphered using the above information.

Converse



- #1: SKU or style #
- #2: Internal # system (confidential information)
- #3: Purchase order #
- #4: Factory identification

Element



- #1: Style # (Example: FMWACCHU F= Footwear, M=Men's WA= Water (marketing category) C= Season item introduced (not produced) CHU= Churchill (model name)
- #2: Production and sales season (Example: FG09 F= Fall production season G= Fall 2009 (runs A-Z and starts over, there are 4 seasons for retail sales, F= Summer09, G= Fall09, H= Holiday09, etc.) 09= Year)

Note: Element is a Billabong brand.

Etnies (and America)



- #1: Manufacture date (month-year)
- #2: Factory identification
- #3: Model name (may be followed by a color code)

Note: America shoes have similar labels and can also be deciphered using the above information.

Fallen



- #1: Model name
- #2: Factory identification
- #3: Date of manufacture (month/year)

Globe



- #1: Model name
- #2: Factory identification

Hi-Tec (and Magnum)



- #1: Style information
- #2: Global style # (uniform style # for factory use)
- #3: U.S. style # (sales style #, varies by country)
- #4: Production information (Example: HS09E HS= Factory code 09= Year of manufacture E= Month of manufacture represented by letters A-L)

Notes: Magnum shoes have similar labels and can also be deciphered using the above information. Label information for Hi-Tec and Magnum steel toed footwear differs from the above example. Hi-Tec and Magnum style #s are specific to each style and size combination. Future labels may include purchase order information.

Keds



- #1: Stock keeping # (WF= Women's fabric M= Medium fitting)
- #2: Date of production (months A-L & year)
- #3: Factory identification

Keen



- #1: Style #
- #2: Color code
- #3: Factory identification
- #4: Date of manufacture (month/year)

Note: Information in boxes #1 and #2 was recently added. Older Keen labels may not have this information.

K-Swiss



- #1: Style # & color code (First digit can be: 0= Men's 9= Women's 8= "Varsity", sizes 3 1/2-7 5= Boys or girls 10 1/2 -3 2= Infant sizes)
- #2: Production information (Example: L08/064 L= Month, represented by letters A-L 08= Year 064= Factory identification)



- #1: Same as above
- #2: Purchase order #
- #3: Production information (K= Month, represented by letters A-L 63= Factory identification)

Lakai



- #1: Inventory code & season (Inventory code: Belmont Season: HO (holiday))
- #2: Factory identification
- #3: SKU

Magnum (and Hi-Tec) steel toe



- #1: Style name and width
- #2: ASTM standard for steel toe
- #3: Global style # (uniform style # for factory use)
- #4: U.S. style # (sales style #, varies by country)
- #5: Production information (Example: IC08J IC= Factory code 08= Year of manufacture J= Month of manufacture represented by letters A-L)

Notes: Hi-Tec steel toe footwear has similar labels and can also be deciphered using the above information. Label information for Hi-Tec and Magnum footwear without steel toe differs from the above example. Hi-Tec and Magnum style #s are specific to each style and size combination. Future labels may include purchase order information.

Merrell



- #1: Manufacture date (month/year)
- #2: Stock #
- #3: Purchase order #

New Balance (domestic)



- #1: Width
- #2: Model #/Color code (Example: MR737GR M= Men's (a W would= women's) R= Running 737= Style number GR= Color/Color combination (Grey/Red))
- #3: Two-dimensional barcode
- #4: Factory #
- #5: Date of manufacture (month/week)
- #6: SKU

New Balance (fully imported)



- #1: Width
- #2: Model #/Color code (Example: MT621GR M= Men's (a W would= women's) R= Running 621= Style number GR= Color/Color combination (Grey/Red))
- #3: Two-dimensional barcode
- #4: Factory #
- #5: Date of manufacture (year/month)
- #6: SKU
- #7: Purchase order #

Nike (and Jordan)



- #1: Style #
- #2: Color code
- #3: Factory identification
- #4: Order date
- #5: Label print date
- #6: Barcode #
- #7: UPC & patent numbers

Note: Jordan shoes (including Air Jordan) have similar labels and can also be deciphered using the above information.

Osiris



- #1: Factory identification
- #2: Season & year (BTS09= Back to School 09 Other season codes: SPG (Spring) and HO (Holiday))
- #3: Shipping date (2= 2nd shipping date There are multiple shipping dates per season.)

Pony



- #1: SKU (Example: ML005WNR ML=Men's lifestyle 005= 5th shoe in collection WNR= white, navy, red)
- #2: Model name
- #3: Factory identification
- #4: Production date (month/year)

Puma



- #1: Factory identification
- #2: Manufacture date (month/year)
- #3: Style code
- #4: Color code

Saucony



- #1: Style
- #2: Color code
- #3: Factory identification #
- #4: Month & year of manufacture
- #5: Purchase order #

Timberland



- #1: Size and width
- #2: Style #
- #3: Date & factory identification
- #4: Internal code for factory use
- #5: ASTM standard information
- #6: ANSI standard information



Note: The label bearing ASTM and ANSI standard information appears in protective footwear such as steel toe boots. This label appears in addition to a label like those shown above.

Vans



- #1: Model name
- #2: Material # (a tracking number tied to style name and color)
- #3: Factory identification
- #4: Production date (year/month)

Common Symbols from Footwear Labels

Parts of Footwear	
	Upper
	Lining or Lining & Sock
	Outsole
Materials	
	Leather
	Textile
	Other Materials