RP Oversight in Practice

RP Considerations when Delegating Outsourced Activities (3PLs) – Pitfalls and Watchouts

June 2026

Considerations at the 3PL (1)

- Cross-docking – temperature excursions may occur without it being obvious why at first. Time to investigate and understand impact adds to RP batch release timelines
- Data loggers are off-loaded/replaced at intermittent warehousing/storage locations thereby reducing your visibility on the complete journey's transport conditions
- Inbound consignments containing multiple products/batches are unloaded as is. They are not segregated at the inbound staging area prior to any labelling activity
- Transport temperature verification upon goods receipt – 3PL not verifying transport temperature for shipments without temperature data loggers
- Temperature readings of inbound trucks are not actively requested by the 3PL. Expectation that the Contract Giver (CG) will request from the carrier
- If a partial box quantity is not found to be correct, no deviation/notification/other QA process is opened. The CG does not become aware of the situation and therefore no improvement work/CAPA is initiated with the CMO
- Cycle Counts are performed at the end of an order pick wave / at the end of the day. This is considered to be too late as the operations are continuous at the 3PL. By the time any discrepancy is identified, the stock may have moved out, making the situation difficult to investigate

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Considerations at the 3PL (2)

- 3PL transporting to customers with their own vehicles and using subcontractors. CG's may have limited visibility on this. Temperature excursions may not be communicated by the subcontractor, we assume that everything is ok

- Complaints / Investigation handling – insufficient detail and root cause analysis (warehousing staff not trained in root cause analysis techniques and furthermore, not sufficient Quality oversight during review)
  - no true root cause analysis or robust CAPAs, no effectiveness checks
  - high level of repeat deviations but no trending

- Returns – when stock has to be repacked it is first sold back to the selling entity. This may not be considered as a return for the 3PL and therefore no paperwork is generated for the CG

- Returns not processed on time, thereby delaying returns processing at your end and consequently not being able to return to sellable stock

- Shrink wrap applied too tight and damaging boxes/units as a consequence

- Holding expired stock until there is sufficient volume to fill a truck (paying for storage of dead stock). This is likely to be a 3PL requisite in the business contract, so look out for this and challenge.

Miscellaneous…?! (1)

- Some products default to 'Unrestricted' status upon goods receipt at 3PL, resulting in goods being shipped to market before any temperature excursion is detected

- Shared packs between different countries – batch number the same however SKU IDs are different. Packs end up in the same storage location. Packs of one country go to the wrong country

- Delays between CG WMS interfacing with 3PL's WMS (and vice versa). May need to babysit critical and time sensitive quantity and status changes to ensure it has happened
    - WMS blocked status – when stock is blocked by the CG, orders may have or are still being processed. If there is 1 batch on 1 pallet, this can be stopped before it gets onto the truck. If multiple products are stacked (after picking and packing) on a pallet it cannot be stopped

- Recalls – no detail in QTA for out of hour mock recalls. No out of hour contact details (as people may not read emails in the evening / over the weekend)

Sample & Complaint Management

Larger organisations – multiple entities using the same 3PL for their warehousing activities…..

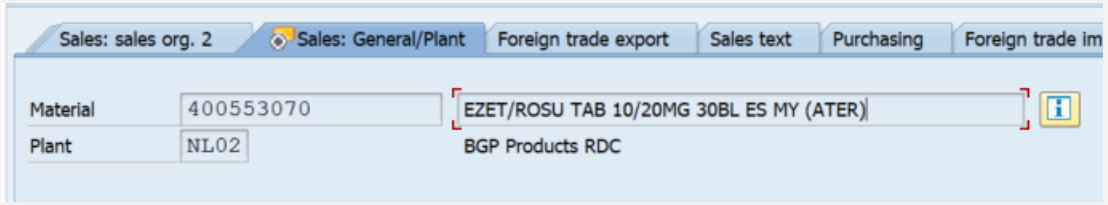
3PL's can manage several types of samples:

- Retain samples (samples kept for the entire shelf life of the batch (and sometimes beyond) for investigation or regulatory inspection)
- Tailgate/test samples (EU testing)
- Stability samples (samples stored under controlled environmental conditions to verify the product remains within specification throughout its shelf life)
- Visual assessment samples
- Investigation Samples (taken when there are deviations, complaints, or suspected quality issues)

Different Quality departments may have varying requirements (quantities, processing lead times etc), which reduces process efficiency at the 3PL and increases the risk of errors. Important for the CG to internally harmonise practices and expectations for a more consistent and accurate service from the 3PL.

Incorrect Product Descriptions

Master data at 3PL ≠ labels on shippers received



Incorrect Product Descriptions

Incorrect Product Descriptions

Which is an ‘Each’?

is

Contributes to quantity discrepancies between physical stock and what is recorded in your WMS and that of the 3PL

Packaging configuration can change over time (single unit to multi-units shrink wrapped). Be aware of this and update your material masterdate / quality screens

And finally……

They will do whatever you want them to do….FOR A FEE!!

The Contract Giver will always have to pay, even for mistakes during routine services provided, so keep a close eye and keep that QTA up to date!!