



SUPPLIER QUALITY MANUAL_ENGLISH

7TH EDITION 2023

VALD. BIRN A/S
Frøjkvej 75, 7500 Holstebro, Denmark



Vald. Birn A/S comprises the following companies. Unless otherwise documented, the requirements contained in this manual are valid for all units in the BIRN group.

**VALD. BIRN A/S**

Frøjkvej 75, 7500 Holstebro
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Preface

This manual has been created to assist our suppliers in understanding the purchasing expectations and quality requirements for products/provided processes and or services that will directly impact the quality of a BIRN Group final product. These guidelines are valid for all BIRN Group locations worldwide.

Note: In this document, Vald. Birn A/S and all affiliates will be referred to simply as BIRN Group. This manual will be reviewed and updated when needed. The latest released version is available to all suppliers at the BIRN Supplier page. The current web location for this page is: <http://www.birn.com>.



Content

Preface..... 2

Content 3

1. Introduction..... 5

1.1 Scope 5

1.2 Purpose 5

1.3 Whistleblowing..... 5

2. BIRN Group Expectations 6

2.1 Product quality..... 6

2.2 Delivery..... 6

2.3 Cooperative management attitude 6

2.4 Rights to verification of products/processes..... 6

2.5 Non-disclosure Agreement (NDA)..... 6

3. Quality Requirements..... 7

3.1 Quality Management System..... 7

3.2 Environmental Management System 7

3.3 REACH 7

3.4 BIRN Group Substance Black/Grey List..... 7

3.5 Code of conduct..... 7

3.6 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Compliance..... 8

3.7 Regulatory Compliance 8

3.8 Material Safety Data Sheet..... 8

3.9 IMDS (International Material Data System) 8

3.10 Tools and Gauges Labeling..... 8

3.11 Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan 8

3.12 Document and Product Sample Retention 8

4. Supplier Selection and Performance 9

4.1 Audits..... 9



- 4.2 Evaluation 10
- 4.3 Escalation..... 10
- 5. Quality Assurance..... 11
 - 5.1 Production Part Approval Process (PPAP) 11
 - 5.2 Requalification 11
 - 5.3 Statistical Process Control (SPC)..... 12
 - 5.4 Traceability & Storage management..... 12
 - 5.5 Faulty Products..... 12
 - 5.6 Changes..... 12
- 6. Complaint Handling 13
 - 6.1 Timeline requirements 13
 - 6.2 Containment Action (D3)..... 13
 - 6.3 Root Cause Analysis (D4) 13
 - 6.4 Corrective Action (D5 & D6)..... 13
 - 6.5 Preventive Action (D7)..... 14
 - 6.6 Problem Solving Performance 14
- 7. Repair or Rework..... 15
- 8. Product Discontinuation 15
- 9. Guidance 15
- Appendix A – Change History..... 16
- Appendix B – PPAP Agreement 17
- Appendix C – 8D Report 18
- Appendix D – List of Abbreviations 19



1. Introduction

1.1 Scope

This manual has been developed to communicate the operating principles, general expectations, requirements and procedures of BIRN Group. Adherence to the guidelines described in this manual, is required by all BIRN Groups suppliers and their supply chain. Acceptance of any and/or all purchase orders constitutes acceptance and commitment on behalf of the recipient to comply with this manual's content. This manual and the General trade terms are provided as a supplement to, and does not replace or alter, any purchase agreement or requirements included in applicable engineering drawings, specifications and other contractual documents. Consequently, any deviation to a particular requirement must be separately defined in a purchase agreement.

This Manual describes the minimum requirements for which the supplier has responsibility. However, system improvements that exceed the requirements specified within this manual are always encouraged.

BIRN Groups suppliers are responsible to communicate and ensure conformity to BIRN Groups requirements throughout the entire supply chain.

1.2 Purpose

Both BIRN Group and suppliers must strive for a fundamental quality management system that provides for continuous improvement in the quality of product, processes, delivery and services. Emphasis should be on defect prevention and the reduction of variation throughout the supply chain.

1.3 Whistleblowing

We have established a whistleblower scheme to enable former and current employees in the Birn Group. Suppliers, business partners and other external parties (whistleblowers) to report suspicions and concerns about actual or potential breaches, unethical and/or illegal activities, irregularities, wrongdoings, unlawful behavior and financial misconduct.

A link to the whistleblower hotline can be found at the bottom of our homepage www.birn.com.



2. BIRN Group Expectations

2.1 Product quality

Zero-defect products are required from suppliers to BIRN Group. Any deviation from this will result in rejection and return of the product to the supplier, although in some cases, an agreement can be made between BIRN Group and supplier to repair or rework the product. In all cases subsequent charges will be attached.

Payment by BIRN Group shall not constitute acceptance. Even after acceptance of a shipment, BIRN Group reserves the right to return any material that proves to be defective for full credit. Defective material will be returned at the supplier's expense and account debited accordingly. Additional charges for, but not limited to sorting, administrative fees (see section 6.1), and other related costs, such as extra transport, and customer charges/claims/penalties put forward by BIRN Groups end customer, including product liability and re-call campaigns, will also be added. BIRN Group reserves the right to withdraw these charges from payments to the supplier.

2.2 Delivery

BIRN Group requires all suppliers to provide on-time delivery performance with the correct quantity, packaging and pricing as agreed upon. Monitoring of performance levels in this area will be ongoing with formal reporting monthly. To further clarify this, we consider unauthorized early or late deliveries and partial or over shipments to be unacceptable. The quantity shipped per order or release cannot vary from specified quantity without the consent of the planner who is responsible at the receiving plant.

The supplier shall pack, label and ship products according to the agreed packaging instruction and shipping agreement.

2.3 Cooperative management attitude

BIRN Group expects our supplier's top management to share our commitment to meet or exceed our customer's quality expectations through continuous improvements. It is also expected that they will give their full support to a good relationship between our companies and demonstrate flexibility in assisting BIRN Group in meeting all our customer's requirements.

2.4 Rights to verification of products/processes

BIRN Group reserves the right to verify the products/processes on the supplier's premises by a representative. This can be done by different kinds of audits and the supplier will be notified in a timely manner.

2.5 Non-disclosure Agreement (NDA)

A potential supplier must sign an NDA to regulate the protection of business information before engaging in detailed discussions.



3. Quality Requirements

3.1 Quality Management System

Suppliers are responsible for the development, documentation, implementation and maintenance of a quality management system that is certified to ISO 9001. Suppliers (for automotive products) are encouraged to become certified to the quality management system standard IATF 16949. This is to ensure that supplier's products conform to the identified purchase specifications, engineering or material specifications and/or contract requirements.

Suppliers must also guarantee that sub-suppliers have provided for adequate quality-assurance measures. Suppliers to BIRN Group are solely responsible for all purchased subcomponents used in their products/services.

3.2 Environmental Management System

BIRN Group has established an environmental management system in accordance with ISO 14001 requirements. The BIRN Group environmental policy contains a commitment to continuously improve environmental performance and to prevent environmental pollution and uphold relevant laws and regulations. BIRN Group transfers this self-commitment to all suppliers.

3.3 REACH

The REACH-regulation (EC) nr. 1907/2006 is an EC-Regulation on chemicals. REACH stands for Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals. Suppliers shall comply with all applicable REACH requirements that affect the products that they supply to BIRN Group.

BIRN Group shall not be regarded and will not act as an importer of chemical substances and/or preparations under REACH.

3.4 BIRN Group Substance Black/Grey List

Supplier must not use or supply products and substances that are on BIRN Groups Black/Grey List. Suppliers must ensure that the latest version of BIRN Groups black/grey list is used, and the BIRN Group supplier is solely responsible for ensuring updates are communicated internally in Supplier's organization.

As a part of the BIRN Groups sourcing process, potential suppliers are requested to complete the Black/Grey list template and submit it to BIRN Group for verification.

Latest version of BIRN Groups supplier Black/Grey list can be found here: <http://www.birn.com/leverandorerer.html>.

3.5 Code of conduct

BIRN Group has a Code of Conduct policy for responsible and ethical business behavior. BIRN Group encourages its suppliers to apply standard of business conduct, consistent with the principles of "Birn Group – Supplier Code of Conduct".



3.6 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Compliance

BIRN Group are committed to CSR aspects in the international community. BIRN Group transfers this commitment to all suppliers and expect all suppliers and sub-suppliers of products/processes/services to adhere to CSR guidelines.

3.7 Regulatory Compliance

In general, BIRN Group expects all suppliers to comply with all applicable national and international legal requirements. Suppliers to BIRN Group are solely responsible for ensuring that all their sub-suppliers comply with applicable regulations/guidelines and legal requirements.

3.8 Material Safety Data Sheet

A material safety data sheet in accordance with EU guidelines must be sent and approved by the receiving plant before delivery is allowed, of any chemicals used in production processes.

3.9 IMDS (International Material Data System)

The supplier is responsible for reporting all substances and components, delivered to BIRN Group, to the IMDS register when required.

3.10 Tools and Gauges Labeling

All tools & gauges, property of BIRN Group or belonging to BIRN Group on the behalf of BIRN Group customers, must be properly labeled and registered as being BIRN Group property, by the supplier according to BIRN Group requirements. An inventory of BIRN Group owned tooling equipment shall be done once a year.

3.11 Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan

The supplier shall implement a risk management and disaster recovery plan for potential catastrophes or work interruptions that would interrupt the supply of their product/processes/services to BIRN Group. This plan shall as a minimum include contingency plans to address interruptions due to material supply, transportation, computer, personnel or sub-supplier issues.

As part of the contingency plan, the supplier is recommended to locate other locations with identical or substitute production equipment and possibly establish emergency agreements with those manufacturers.

3.12 Document and Product Sample Retention

Documents, records, data and reference samples that are elements of the PPAP submission, must be maintained for the length of the time that the product/process/services is active including spare parts (when the product/process is being supplied to BIRN Group for original equipment or service applications) and plus 15 additional calendar years after the normal production and the production of spare parts has stopped.

Quality requirement documents and quality records must be maintained for the length of at least 15 years after the product/process has been discontinued.



4. Supplier Selection and Performance

BIRN Group has a defined procedure for selecting, evaluation, approval, monitoring, developing & settling of suppliers. A supplier may be the manufacturer of the product to be delivered, a process provider who modifies a BIRN Group responsible product or a distributor of products. The target is to use a supplier only after it has been established that the supplier can fulfill BIRN Groups requirements.

Dependent on the supplier approval category and type of product to be delivered to BIRN Group, the BIRN Group requirements for the supplier may vary and will be agreed during the preliminary negotiations.

The supplier is approved for use only after positive results from an overall evaluation of registration documents, audit results, meetings with supplier, supplier's experiences and delivered sample parts.

A supplier approval given by BIRN Group does not imply an obligation for BIRN Group to place any orders at this supplier.

4.1 Audits

BIRN Group reserves the right to conduct process audits according to IATF 16949 at the supplier's site or at any sub-supplier site at any time to evaluate the supplier's production line and process capability to produce parts according to BIRN Groups requirements.

BIRN Group employs several audit/assessment tools to ensure that suppliers meet appropriate quality levels. These tools are used at various stages throughout the supplier approval and supplier development process, as well as in case of any problems during serial production. Audit types include the following:

Supplier Stage	Audit Type	Done by BIRN Group	Self-assessment
Selection / Approval	Site Assessment	X	
	VDA 6.3 Potential analysis	X	X
Development	VDA 6.3 Process Audit, Section 2-7	X	X
Product/Process release	VDA 6.3 Process Audit, Section 2-7	X	X
Co-operation	VDA 6.3 Process Audit, Section 2-7	X	X
Escalation	VDA 6.3 Process Audit, Section 2-7	X	X

During the selection and approval process, BIRN Group retains the right to perform a Site Assessment and a Potential Analysis at the supplier, to determine the supplier's technical capability and potential of the supplier's manufacturing process, to provide products and services that meet BIRN Groups requirements.



The Site Assessment must be based on processes/equipment like those that are needed for the manufacturing of products/services to be supplied to BIRN Group.

The Process Audit is aimed to assess the effectiveness/efficiency of all relevant processes to evaluate the process performance, internal incompliances in the process, staff competence, production capacities and others.

Supplier shall perform self-assessments where applicable at least 3 weeks before a BIRN Group Process Audit. Complete access must be granted to all phases of the manufacturing and business processes.

Depending on the results of an audit, the supplier or its sub-supplier is required to establish and implement an action plan, which shall be defined and agreed upon within the context of the audit. The Criteria for need/frequency of the 2nd party audit is determined based on a supplier risk assessment which is carried out regularly over the year.

4.2 Evaluation

BIRN Group will make frequent supplier evaluations. Target of the evaluations is to identify and report good or bad supplier performances, and to make opportunities for improvements visible and transparent. The evaluation results will be reported internally at BIRN Group as well as externally to the supplier.

Supplier evaluation will be based on the following:

- On-time deliveries.
- Deliveries of the right amount.
- Complaints.
- Co-operation between BIRN Group and supplier.

4.3 Escalation

BIRN Group has a defined process for supplier escalation, and includes the following steps:

- Remedial actions -> BIRN Group can initiate the remedial action step when the supplier does not meet BIRN Groups requirements. Supplier has to inform BIRN Group about the remedial actions that has been initiated, including supplier responsible persons and deadline. BIRN Group will monitor the effectiveness of these remedial actions.
- Escalated remedial actions -> BIRN Group will initiate a management level meeting and present deviances, expectations and reporting process to the supplier.

BIRN Groups escalation process may be triggered by the following situations:

- Insufficient quality performance.
- Insufficient delivery performance.
- Insufficient co-operation.



5. Quality Assurance

The supplier must guarantee that supplied products meet the required quality targets during production. All necessary actions to assure quality, needs to be performed at the supplier.

In case of an identified quality setback, suppliers shall investigate the root cause(s), identify and implement containment and corrective actions to avoid any negative impact on supplies to BIRN Group. BIRN Group expects to be informed by supplier proactively on these issues and BIRN Group reserves the right to request an 8D report (see appendix C).

See chapter 6 for requirements to the complaint handling process.

5.1 Production Part Approval Process (PPAP)

The PPAP procedure shall provide evidence that all requirements in the drawing and specifications are met and that the product is manufactured in a controlled and capable process. Before start of serial production, the supplier has to submit the required PPAP documentation to BIRN Group, and then wait for BIRN Group approval.

A PPAP agreement will be signed between BIRN Group and supplier, where it is mentioned which level and amount of documentation is necessary for each product (see appendix B).

Suppliers are expected to adhere to the production processes and product documented in the PPAP. If/When a deviation from these are needed, supplier must obtain written approval from BIRN Group before shipment of the product.

5.2 Requalification

On products that requires PPAP the supplier shall on a regularly basis (yearly, if not otherwise agreed) verify that all product requirements are still met.

It shall be done with focus on the product.

The purpose is to verify compliance to customer design records and suppliers' own requirements.

Should include as a minimum:

- Applicable Measurement System Analysis
- Measurement of all product dimensions
- Material and functional verification

Special agreements to be made with BIRN Group SQA if necessary.

Reports shall be available for BIRN Group upon request.



5.3 Statistical Process Control (SPC)

The supplier must verify capability with the help of SPC for specific product and process characteristics. It must be proven that the product is produced with capable and controlled processes. For the machine capability (cmk) as well as for the process capability (cpk) the value of minimum 1,67 (short term) & 1,33 (long term) must be maintained and verified.

In the event of noncompliance with the capability requirements, the supplier is required to perform 100 % inspection. VDA standards, the AIAG PPAP and SPC manuals provide requirements and methods for the calculation of capability.

5.4 Traceability & Storage management

All suppliers to BIRN Group must have an identification system that distinguishes one lot/batch/part from another when shipping products/processes/services. Each lot/batch/part of material should be clearly identified on the product (where applicable) according to the part drawing or as agreed if not specified on the drawing, and on the product packaging. The traceability system must comply with the FIFO (first in – first out) principles for incoming and outgoing material.

The supplier must maintain a product change history to keep a history of all changes to the product/process delivered to BIRN Group.

5.5 Faulty Products

At the supplier:

- The supplier must ensure that all non-conforming products are clearly labelled and separated from conforming parts in all processes and areas.
- Systems must exist to ensure that non-conforming products are not used in production or shipped to BIRN Group or BIRN Groups customers.

At BIRN Group:

- Should the supplier suspect/discover that there is a possibility that non-conforming material has been delivered to BIRN Group, the supplier is responsible for immediately informing BIRN Group SQA (sup.q@birn.dk).

5.6 Changes

Requested by supplier:

- In the case of changes requested by supplier, which will include changes to the manufacturing materials, processes, services, or locations as well as any design changes, the supplier shall submit a Product Change Notification (PCN) to BIRN Group.
- It is required that the supplier notifies BIRN Group as far in advance as possible to give BIRN Group the opportunity to examine the consequences of the change. Implementation of such change is only permitted after approval by BIRN Group.
- A Production Part Approval Process (PPAP) of the part and process may be requested if the change is approved.



6. Complaint Handling

Suppliers are responsible for providing defect-free product/services on time, correctly packed and at the specified quantities/quality to BIRN Group and BIRN Groups customers. When quality or delivery issues do occur, the supplier is required to initiate problem-solving, containment and corrective actions to resolve the issue and prevent reoccurrence, using the 8D format.

6.1 Timeline requirements

A copy of the BIRN Group complaint will be distributed to the supplier when defective material has been found.

- Initial containment must be completed and returned latest within 24 hours (D1 to D3 to be completed).
- Long-term actions must be defined and reported within 14 workdays unless otherwise agreed (D4 to D7 to be completed).
- 8D completion is depending on the scope of the permanent solution.

BIRN Group reserves the right to charge a flat rate admin fee of 150 Euro per complaint in the case of repeated and/or serious deviations/lack of feed-back.

6.2 Containment Action (D3)

Initial containment action shall ensure that further shipment of affected parts/services to BIRN Group is avoided, and that affected parts at BIRN Group or within the supply chain can be identified and separated. Supplier shall ensure that the supply to BIRN Group will not be disrupted.

6.3 Root Cause Analysis (D4)

Supplier shall use a systematic approach for root cause analysis based on findings during failure confirmation, review of production/processes and physical analysis. In general, a non-destructive analysis method should be preferred over those that might destroy the failure condition.

6.4 Corrective Action (D5 & D6)

Supplier shall identify corrective actions for all identified occurrences and devise a plan and schedule for implementation. Immediate containment actions must be kept in place until effectivity of the corrective actions has been validated to be effective.

Supplier shall identify the first date code/lot code and shipment of conforming parts and provide this information to BIRN Group.



6.5 Preventive Action (D7)

Supplier shall ensure that findings/knowledge gained while going through the 8D process are extended across similar products/processes. This should include review of related process FMEAs, standard operating procedures, work instructions and similar documents as well as consideration in the lessons learned process.

6.6 Problem Solving Performance

BIRN Group evaluates effectivity of supplier's problem-solving process based on quality performance data and 8D reporting. Insufficient performance might result in escalation and ultimately blocking of supplier for new business.



7. Repair or Rework

Under normal production circumstances, only repair or rework which has been approved by BIRN Groups SQA is allowed. Where repair or rework is necessary, the supplier must ensure conformance with all applicable requirements to the products. All repaired/reworked products must be clearly identified in the delivery papers and on the product.

8. Product Discontinuation

If a product/service is to be discontinued, supplier must inform BIRN Group in writing as early as possible, including last time buy schedule.

9. Guidance

Should quality assurance problems occur with fulfilling the requirements from this Supplier Quality Manual or other quality standards, BIRN Group may be able to support the supplier regarding training. BIRN Group can provide assistance regarding the following topics:

- BIRN Group requirements.
- PPAP.
- Complaint handling (8D reporting).
- Audit.
- APQP.
- IMDS.
- Customer requirements.
- IATF 16949.
- ISO 9001.



Appendix A – Change History

Version	Description	Responsible	Date
1 ST Edition 2019	New Manual released	SAB	04-04-2019
2 ND Edition 2019	Only changes made in the Danish version, incorrect translation on page 5.	SAB	28-05-2019
3 rd Edition 2020	In chapter 3.5 the line “Birns code of conduct” has been changed to “Birns code of conduct for business partners”. New chapter has been introduced with the title “Requalification” under chapter 5. Added a picture of the “Corrective Action Report for supplier” in the Appendix C.	SAB	14-01-2020
4 th Edition 2020	Changes to the logos and the layout.	LF/SAB	05-05-2020
5 th Edition 2020	Changes in the text on page 7, 9 & 10.	SAB	19-08-2020
6 th Edition 2023	Changes in logo and Birn changed to Birn Group. Appendix C has been updated.	SAB	23-05-2023
7 th Edition 2023	Added chapter 1.3 Whistleblower	SAB	19-06-2023



Appendix B – PPAP Agreement

PPAP agreement																																																																																																															
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<input type="checkbox"/> New part <input type="checkbox"/> Use of new modified tools <input type="checkbox"/> Product modification <input type="checkbox"/> Modification in supplier's purchased parts <input type="checkbox"/> Production relocation <input type="checkbox"/> Changed of 2-nd-tier supplier <input type="checkbox"/> Production Process Modification <input type="checkbox"/> Long-term production stop (more than 12 months) <input type="checkbox"/> Others :																																																																																																															
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2	Engineering Change Notice																																																																																																														
3	Customer Engineering approval																																																																																																														
4	Design FMEA (D-FMEA)																																																																																																														
5	Process Flow Diagram																																																																																																														
6	Process FMEA (P-FMEA)																																																																																																														
7	Control Plan																																																																																																														
8	Measurement System Analysis Studies (MSA)																																																																																																														
9	Dimensional Results																																																																																																														
10	Material / Performance Records																																																																																																														
11	Initial Process Study																																																																																																														
12	Qualified Laboratory Documentation																																																																																																														
13	Appearance Approval Report (AAR)																																																																																																														
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15	Master Sample																																																																																																														
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18	Part Submission Warrant (PSW)																																																																																																														
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<input type="checkbox"/> Technical Customer Documents <input type="checkbox"/> Definition of limit samples <input type="checkbox"/> Definition of zone for optical evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Other standard tests <input type="checkbox"/> Other :																																																																																																															



Appendix C – 8D Report



Afvigelsesrapport til leverandør/ Corrective Action Report for supplier

The one who detects the error

Rapport nr./ Report no.:	_____	Vald. Birn A/S <input type="checkbox"/>
		Kockums Maskin AB <input type="checkbox"/>
		Tasso A/S <input type="checkbox"/>

Opdaget i område/ Detected in area:	Opdaget af/ Detected by:	Opdaget den/ Detection date:
_____	_____	_____

Reklamation/ Claim <input type="checkbox"/>	Antal de sidste 12 mdr./ Amount the last 12 months: _____	KPI: _____
Påtale/ Reprimand <input type="checkbox"/>	Antal de sidste 12 mdr./ Amount the last 12 months: _____	KPI: _____

Rapport åbnet/ Report opened on:	Rapport forventes lukket/ Report expected to be closed on:
_____	_____

SOA

Leverandør information/Supplier information:	
Leverandør kategori/Supplier category: A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/>	
Nr./ No.:	Navn/ Name:
_____	_____
Kontaktperson/ Contact person:	Telefon/ Phone:
_____	_____
	E-mail: _____

Vores information/Our Information:	
Kontaktperson/ Contact person:	Telefon/ Phone:
_____	_____
	E-mail: _____



Appendix D – List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
REACH	Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of chemicals
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
IMDS	International Material Data System
PPAP	Production Part Approval Process
8D	Eight Disciplines Problem Solving
SPC	Statistical Process Control
Cmk	Machine Capability Index
Cpk	Capability Process Index
VDA	German Association of the Automotive Industry
AIAG	Automotive Industry Action Group
FIFO	First In First Out
SQA	Supplier Quality Assurance
PCN	Product Change Notification
FMEA	Failure Mode and Effects Analysis
APQP	Advanced Product Quality Planning
NDA	Non-Disclosure Agreement