

RL-SR-001 - Supplier Quality Manual

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1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to formally communicate Rocket Lab quality requirements to our suppliers. The objective of these quality requirements is to ensure the conformity of material and products delivered to Rocket Lab.

2 **Scope**

These requirements apply to all Rocket Lab suppliers globally.

3 Quality Requirements

3.1 Quality Management System

Supplier shall maintain a quality management system to ensure the organization's processes, procedures and responsibilities are formalized and support the organization in meeting or exceeding internal, customer and regulatory requirements. Rocket Lab encourages suppliers to achieve this through AS9100 or ISO 9001 certification, to the latest released revision, and obtained through an accredited third-party registrar. The supplier's quality management system is subject to Rocket Lab review and audit to verify its performance is adequate to ensure product conformance.

The supplier shall notify the Rocket Lab Buyer within three (3) business days via email of any suspension or disapproval of the supplier's Quality Management System by their certification body. Supplier shall also notify Rocket Lab of any work delivered during the period of any such suspension or disapproval.

3.2 Supplier Access Rights & Audits

Rocket Lab reserves the right, possibly accompanied by its customers and/or regulatory authorities, to audit or assess the supplier and/or its sub-tier suppliers where production, maintenance, or servicing activities are performed. The right to audit or assess is specified in the Rocket Lab contract terms and conditions.

Rocket Lab carries out audits and assessments to inspect, evaluate, review and/or witness the execution of a process or build performed at the supplier's facilities. The goal is to review documentation, processes and tools in support of any applicable scope of work necessary to meet the requirements of the material or product to be delivered to Rocket Lab. At the end of the audit/assessment, Rocket Lab will provide the summary and results to the supplier in a written report. In the event that Rocket Lab identifies one or multiple non-conformities, the supplier shall define the appropriate corrective action(s) for each non-conformity and submit a corrective action plan to Rocket Lab within two weeks of receiving the written report. Upon completion of the action plan, the supplier shall submit evidence to validate implementation and effectiveness of each corrective action to Rocket Lab.

3.3 Competence, Training, Awareness

The supplier shall ensure the personnel processing orders and performing work affecting the conformity of the product are trained and aware of the relevance and importance of their activities in relation to meeting Rocket Lab's requirements. The training and awareness shall include the supplier's contribution to product or service conformity, their contribution to product safety and the importance of ethical behavior.

The supplier shall ensure these persons are competent and retain appropriate documented information as evidence of compliance.

3.4 Requirements Implementation and Flow Downs

The supplier shall be responsible for meeting all requirements. When the supplier uses sub-tier sources to perform work on products for Rocket Lab, the supplier shall flow down to its sub-tier sources all of the applicable technical and quality requirements contained in the Rocket Lab contract.

3.5 Identification and Traceability

Supplier and/or supplier's sub-tiers shall maintain serial number, date code, and/or lot traceability at the highest assembly level down to the component level.

Serialization and part marking identification shall be in accordance with the purchase order, design data, drawing or any contractually agreed specification or standard.

The supplier shall ensure that full traceability is maintained throughout its own supply chain and can be provided on Rocket Lab request. Material shall be identified and traceable to manufacturer's part number, lot number, date code for all electronic and electrical parts, raw material, mechanical machined parts, assemblies, subassemblies, special processes, and acceptance tests.

Commercial of the Shelf items (COTS) will only require traceability to original manufacturer unless otherwise stated on the Purchase Order.

Raw material traceability: Supplier shall furnish a certificate traceable to lot, batch, block, and/or heat number of the manufacturer, mill, or producer. Certifications generated by the producer shall attest to the conformity of the material or be signed by the material supplier's authorized quality representative and indicate the representative's title.

3.6 Control of Equipment, Tools, and Software

Equipment, tools, and software programs used to automate, control, monitor or measure production processes shall be validated prior to release for production and shall be maintained. The supplier shall be responsible for maintaining traceability whether those items are calibrated internally or externally. Storage requirements shall be defined for production equipment or tooling in storage including any necessary periodic preservation or condition checks.

3.7 Packaging

The supplier shall adequately plan for packaging design and shipment to prevent product contamination, deterioration, damage, or loss.

Supplier shall include a packing sheet with each shipment and, at a minimum, include:

- Packing sheet number,
- Rocket Lab PO number,
- All Rocket Lab PO line and item numbers, exactly as referenced on the Rocket Lab PO, being delivered (this includes intangible items such as software),
- PO item quantity being shipped.

Supplier shall ensure that different manufacturing lots of the same part number are not mixed within a package. Each manufacturing lot shall be clearly identified and segregated in separate packages.

Supplier shall ensure that serial numbers of the same part number are individually packaged. Each serialized part shall be clearly identified and in a separate package.

Supplier shall package each purchase item separately within the main package/container with the corresponding packing slip or labelling affixed to the internal package/container.

Supplier shall mark each unique item or group of packaged items (part numbers) such that they may be cross-referenced to a unique PO line item on the bill of lading or air bill without removing its protective packaging.

Supplier shall ensure that the packaging and preservation is adequate to protect the products during transportation, handling, and storage. Packaging shall be appropriate for the size, weight, and fragility of the products being packed, and shall ensure there is no metal-to-metal or part to part contact of finished features. Supplier shall use part separation/dividers or unitized packing to prevent part-to-part contact or packaging damage.

Supplier shall clearly state the shelf life/expiration date on the packaging and the shipping paperwork for material with shelf-life requirements. Supplier shall ensure that all chemicals are accompanied by a relevant Safety Data Sheet (SDS) with each shipment.

Goods and products containing items with finite shelf life shall have the expiry date identified on the product and the delivery documentation with the information regarding the recommended storage conditions. The remaining shelf life shall be a minimum of 80% of the total shelf life for the material at time of delivery unless otherwise specified. This applies to items such as, but not limited to, adhesives, compounds, and elastomers. Elastomers' shelf life shall be based on AS5316.

3.8 Packaging - ESD Sensitive Parts

The supplier shall designate, handle, and package all products susceptible to damage from ESD in compliance with ANSI/ESD 20.20 or MIL-STD-1686, in static shielding conductive containers meeting requirements of MIL-PRF-81705. Protection shall be provided to prevent physical damage and to maintain leads and terminals in the manufactured condition under normal handling and transportation environments. Unless otherwise specified on the subcontract/purchase order, discrete EEE components shall be packaged such that each individual component is isolated from contact with other components in the shipment; parts shall not be shipped using bulk packaging. Component tubes/rails are permitted to allow component contact as long as the component leads / terminations are isolated from inter-component contact.

Supplier shall use ESD bags, ESD boxes, ESD bubble wrap, and / or ESD Foam as needed to ensure adequate protection of hardware when shipping PCBs and PCBAs.

For suppliers shipping harnesses, packaging shall ensure all connectors are covered & protected and packaging does not violate minimum allowable bend radius.

The outside of packages containing ESD sensitive products shall have a clearly displayed ESD warning label conforming to ANSI/EOS/ESD S-8.1.

3.9 Foreign Object Damage - FOD

Supplier shall maintain a program to prevent and control Foreign Object Damage (FOD) in accordance with the requirements of AS9146 and/or NASA 412.

Supplier shall use appropriate tools and techniques to manage part-level FOD risk throughout the entire manufacturing process, documenting risks, and associated mitigation actions in a part-level risk register or control plan as applicable.

Supplier shall ensure production, test, and handling equipment & environment are maintained in an appropriate state of cleanliness to prevent FOD. The supplier shall inspect for foreign objects, materials and contaminants prior to closing inaccessible or obscured areas during assembly.

Supplier shall ensure that all incidents of actual or potential FOD are reported, investigated, and corrected. Rocket Lab reserves the right to require suppliers to undertake appropriate containment actions pending implementation of robust preventative and control actions.

Supplier shall flow down FOD prevention requirements to its sub-tier suppliers.

3.10 Counterfeit Product Prevention

The supplier shall establish, implement, and control processes appropriate to its organization and its products to prevent the delivery to Rocket Lab of counterfeit parts or suspected to be. All parts, materials, and assemblies (electrical, mechanical, raw material) included in the hardware delivered to Rocket Lab shall be procured directly from the Original Component Manufacturer (OCM) / Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), or from the OCM/OEM authorized distributor.

The supplier shall notify Rocket Lab if suspect or counterfeit parts has been furnished. (See 2.15)

This requirement shall be flowed down to sub tier suppliers and subcontractors as applicable.

Further guidance on counterfeit parts avoidance can be found in SAE documents AS5553 (Electronics) and AS6174 (Material).

3.11 First Article Inspection

When required as part of the Rocket Lab contract or purchase order, the supplier shall complete and include a First Article Inspection Report (FAIR) or delta First Article Inspection Report (dFAIR) for the part/assembly submitted to Rocket Lab. The FAIR and dFAIR shall be in compliance with AS9102.

Supplier shall perform a new First Article Inspection on a representative part of the first production run. FAI units shall be clearly labeled to be easily identifiable.

Per AS9102, supplier shall perform a full FAIR or partial FAI for affected characteristics, when any of the following occurs:

- A change in the design characteristics affecting fit, form, or function of the part,
- A change in manufacturing source(s), process(es), inspection method(s), location of manufacture, tooling, or materials that can potentially affect fit, form, or function,
- A change in numerical control program or translation to another media that can potentially affect fit, form, or function,
- A natural or man-made event, which may adversely affect the manufacturing process,

- An implementation of corrective action required to complete a previous FAI. (See AS9102 4.4.),
- A lapse in production for two years shall require an update for any characteristics that may be impacted by the inactivity. This lapse is from the completion of last production operation to the actual restart of production.

The completed First Article Inspection Report (full or partial) shall accompany the product on which the First Article Inspection was performed when shipped to Rocket Lab. Once the complete First Article Inspection Report has been sent in with the shipment it was performed on, only a reference to it on the Certificate of Conformance (CoC) is needed for future shipments. When the end item deliverable for this purchase order is software or includes embedded software, the supplier shall account for the software testing, installation, and configuration verification within the First Article Inspection documentation.

3.12 Notification of changes

The supplier shall notify Rocket Lab in writing prior to any proposed change to products, materials, processes, facilities or sub-tier suppliers that may affect fit, form, function, reliability or safety. For Rocket Lab owned designs, the supplier shall seek approval from Rocket Lab prior to implementing the change.

3.13 Certificate of Conformance (CoC)

Supplier shall include a Certificate of Conformance (CoC) with the packing sheet for each shipment.

Supplier's original Certificate of Conformance shall be maintained by supplier and, upon Rocket Lab's request, shall be made available.

The CoC document shall be written in the English language, cover no more than one (1) purchase order/delivery to be addressed in one CoC and be protected from any deterioration or damage and is fully legible upon arrival to Rocket Lab's facility.

Supplier's Certificate of Conformance shall include the following:

- Date of shipment,
- Supplier's name and address,
- Country of origin,
- Rocket Lab purchase order number,
- Part number including revision,
- Quantity of product,
- Serial numbers, and/or lot date code information,
- Statement attesting that goods and services conform to the contract requirements and applicable Government and Rocket Lab specifications. If material is furnished by Rocket Lab, so indicate,
- Export Control classification (for COTS and supplier owned designed parts),
- Signature or stamp with title of supplier's authorized personnel signing the certificate,
- Date of signature.

Distributors shall, in addition to the above, include the manufacturer's name for each item shipped.

For parts returned by Rocket Lab to the supplier, the CoC for the new shipment shall contain a debit memo number (accounting info), the non-conformance report number (provided by Rocket Lab), and a summary of the work performed on the part or a statement confirming the part was replaced.

For parts that are shipped using a *Supplier Concession Request* (SCR) form, the supplier shall reference the SCR form record number in the CoC.

Any delivery with a certificate of conformance (CoC) not meeting the above requirements is subject to rejection by Rocket Lab upon receipt.

3.14 Travelers

Suppliers shall maintain a traveler, router, process flow sheet, or equivalent control mechanism that directs procedures appropriate for the control of quality and configuration through all stages of production. For Rocket Lab designed hardware for which Rocket Lab releases a change in part numbers, dash numbers, or part number revisions and there is work in process (WIP) for a given contract, the rework instructions shall be submitted in writing to the Rocket Lab Buyer to obtain Rocket Lab Engineering approval prior to rework. Only product that conforms to specified requirements shall be shipped to Rocket Lab unless approved via a supplier concession request.

3.15 Non-Conformance Management

Suppliers shall ensure that non-conforming products are identified, segregated, and properly dispositioned as required per the supplier's internal procedures. Only product that conforms to specified requirements shall be shipped to Rocket Lab.

Suppliers shall:

- Establish a process for detection and feedback of product non conformances and process non-compliance,
- Maintain records related to the control of non-conforming product,
- Perform containment of non-conforming product by segregating, identifying, and controlling, the product or process to prevent unintended delivery or misuse,
- Re-inspect and retest any reworked parts prior to shipment to Rocket Lab,
- Take necessary actions, within 48 hours, to ensure containment of the effect of the non-conformance on other processes or products, i.e. work-in-progress, stores stock, shipping areas, in transit, sub-tier / subcontract activities, similar products, products already dispatched and delivered to Rocket Lab,
- Clearly and permanently mark product dispositioned for scrap until physically rendered unusable.

3.16 Supplier Concession Requests (SCR)

Supplier shall not ship non-conforming or suspected to be non-conforming hardware to Rocket Lab without prior written authorization using Rocket Lab's *Supplier Concession Request* process. Supplier shall notify Rocket Lab of any non-conforming hardware that has been identified or suspected non-conforming at the supplier's facility.

Supplier shall not continue the process and/or ship the hardware until receipt of the completed and signed *Supplier Concession Authorization* form from the Rocket Lab Buyer or Quality Representative.

Supplier shall include a physical copy of the completed and signed *Supplier Concession Authorization* form (RL-TMP-058) when shipping the hardware and reference the SCR number in section 1 of RL-TMP-058 on the CofC.

3.17 Notices of Escape

Suppliers are required to notify Rocket Lab, in writing, within 24 hours of discovering any nonconformance that exists or is suspected of existing on hardware that has previously been shipped to Rocket Lab. This notification shall include the following information, at a minimum:

- Affected Part number(s),
- Description of the nonconforming condition and the affected requirement (Is and Should be),
- Quantities, dates, purchase orders, and destination of delivered shipments,
- Lots, batch numbers, serial numbers, or date codes of the affected items as applicable,
- Containment activities.

3.18 Corrective and Preventative Actions

Rocket Lab will inform the supplier of nonconformities that are highlighted at any stage of Rocket Lab's process flow. In some cases, these non-conformances will need to be addressed through a Supplier Corrective Action Request (SCAR). The supplier shall respond to the SCAR when raised. SCARs shall be processed in a timely manner by the supplier following this process:

- **Containment** – Acknowledge receipt and undertake containment action within 3 days. The problem shall be contained to prevent further escapes. Perform initial "look across".
- **Root Cause** - The supplier shall respond with Root Cause Analysis and a detailed corrective and preventative action plan within 10 working days.
 - Process – Define why the escape happened,
 - Detection – Define why the problem escaped detection.
- **Corrective Action** – Immediate actions taken or intended to be taken to correct the root cause(s) of the escape.
- **Preventative Action** – Actions taken to planned to prevent problem reoccurrence at the systemic level. Finalize look across activities of other similar parts or processes.

The supplier shall submit evidence of the implemented corrective/preventive action within 30 working days. This evidence will allow the Rocket Lab Supplier Quality Engineer to close the SCAR.

The SCAR can be rejected by Rocket Lab; the supplier will have a further 10 working days to resubmit for approval and closure.

The supplier shall use the appropriate problem-solving tools such as 5 Why, Ishikawa Diagram, 8D/9S and include them as supporting evidence in SCAR response.

3.19 Special Processes

Supplier shall implement and maintain appropriate process controls to ensure that special processes are performed in accordance with the applicable specification(s) and consistently achieve the expected output. To support this requirement, Rocket Lab encourages suppliers to achieve NADCAP certifications.

This clause is applicable, but not exclusively, to the following special processes:

- Plating Operations,
- Specialty Coating,
- Chemical Cleaning,
- Welding/Brazing,
- Materials Testing,
- Heat Treating,
- Surface Treating/ Surface Enhancing,
- Non-Destructive Testing,
- Chemical Processing,
- Composites (non-metallic materials manufacturing, including non-metallic),
- Non-Conventional Machining (including but not limited to EDM, water jet, laser beam machining).

The certificate shall be signed by the supplier's authorized representative and shall include name, date, and title. Any delivery with a certificate not meeting the above requirements is subject to rejection by Rocket Lab upon receipt.

The supplier is responsible of notifying Rocket Lab regarding any change of NADCAP certification status during time of the contract/purchase order.

The supplier shall guarantee that all processes and work operations are performed by trained and/or certified personnel. Certification shall be to an industrial, military or NASA standards. Supplier personnel responsible for performing special processes shall also be certified.

Supplier's utilization of NADCAP-accredited sources does not relieve supplier from the obligations to ensure sub-tier sources are in full compliance with applicable process specifications and to deliver conforming items.

Special process certifications shall contain, at a minimum, the following:

- Part number,
- Quantity,
- Supplier name and address,
- Unique identifying number: lot numbers or serial numbers.

Supplier shall certify all parts are qualified to applicable industry and regulatory standards. Certification shall include the exact specifications requested by Rocket Lab on the drawing or purchase order. Certificate shall also include any other special process that were performed outside of what was specified by Rocket Lab. Records of NADCAP certification/audits shall be maintained and provided for review when requested by Rocket Lab.

3.20 Record Retention & Destruction Requirement

The supplier undertakes to preserve all records regarding quality of delivered products for at least 15 years unless otherwise stated by contract. Upon request, Rocket Lab shall be able to consult those records at any time. At the end of the archiving time, the supplier is responsible for the destruction of the records by a suitable method.

At a minimum, all official hard copy information shall be destroyed using a cross-cut shredder which makes the reconstitution of the material highly unlikely. Unwanted official information/material that cannot be destroyed in such a way shall be returned to the Authority.

3.21 Obsolescence Management

The supplier shall alert Rocket Lab at least one year in advance before stopping the manufacture of a supplied product or a service provision.

4 Revision History

Rev	Author	Date	Change Log / ECN
1	@Merelin Antoni Ruiz	11 Jul 2023	First Release - Baseline
2	@Mark Heneghan	20 Jul 2023	Updated for clarifications and corrections. Section 'Notification of Changes' added.
3	@Merelin Antoni Ruiz @Mark Heneghan	29 Jan 2024	Formatting / table of contents corrected for section 3.13 (CoC). Edited SCR terminology. Update QMS and NADCAP requirements

5 Document Properties

Document Type	Quality Standard (Doc Type) ¹
Summary	Standard Quality Requirements for all Rocket Lab Suppliers.
References	N/A
Notes	N/A
Parent Manual	RL-QM-010
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Legal Warning

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¹ <https://confluence.rocketlab.global/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=126437534>