

General Rules for the Interpretation of the Harmonized System

Classification of goods in the Nomenclature shall be governed by the following principles:

1. The titles of sections, chapters and sub-chapters are provided for ease of reference only; for legal purposes, classification shall be determined according to the terms of the tariff headings and any relative section or chapter notes and, provided such tariff headings or notes do not otherwise require, according to the following provisions.
2.
 - a) Any reference in a tariff heading to an article shall be taken to include a reference to that article incomplete or unfinished, provided that, as presented, the incomplete or unfinished article has the essential character of the complete or finished article. It shall also be taken to include a reference to that article complete or finished (or falling to be classified as complete or finished by virtue of this Rule), presented unassembled or disassembled.
 - b) Any reference in a tariff heading to a material or substance shall be taken to include a reference to mixtures or combinations of that material or substance with other materials or substances. Any reference to goods of a given material or substance shall be taken to include a reference to goods consisting wholly or partly of such material or substance. The classification of goods consisting of more than one material or substance shall be according to the principles of Rule 3.
3. When by application of Rule 2 b) or for any other reason, goods are, prima facie, classifiable under two or more tariff headings, classification shall be effected as follows:
 - a) The tariff heading which provides the most specific description shall be preferred to tariff headings providing a more general description. However, when two or more tariff headings each refer to part only of the materials or substances contained in mixed or composite goods or to part only of the items in a set put up for retail sale, those tariff headings are to be regarded as equally specific in relation to those goods, even if one of them gives a more complete or precise description of the goods.
 - b) Mixtures, composite goods consisting of different materials or made up of different components, and goods put up in sets for retail sale, which cannot be classified by reference to 3 a), shall be classified as if they consisted of the material or component which gives them their essential character, insofar as this criterion is applicable.
 - c) When goods cannot be classified by reference to 3 a) or b), they shall be classified under the tariff heading which occurs last in numerical order among those which equally merit consideration.
4. Goods which cannot be classified in accordance with the above rules shall be classified under the tariff heading appropriate to the goods to which they are most akin.
5. In addition to the foregoing provisions, the following rules shall apply in respect of the goods referred to therein:
 - a) Camera cases, musical instrument cases, gun cases, drawing instrument cases, necklace cases and similar containers, specially shaped or fitted to contain a specific article or set of articles, suitable for long-term use and presented with the articles for which they are intended, shall be classified with such articles when of a kind normally sold therewith. This Rule does not, however, apply to containers which give the whole its essential character;
 - b) Subject to the provisions of Rule 5 a) above, packing materials and packing containers presented with the goods therein shall be classified with the goods if they are of a kind normally used for packing such goods. However, this provision is not binding when such packing materials or packing containers are clearly suitable for repetitive use.
6. For legal purposes, the classification of goods in the subheadings of a tariff heading shall be determined according to the terms of those subheadings and any related Subheading Notes and, mutatis mutandis, to the above Rules, on the understanding that only subheadings at the same level are comparable. For the purposes of this Rule the relative Section and Chapter Notes also apply, unless the context otherwise requires.

Additional Swiss Rules

1. The classification of goods in Swiss subheadings shall be determined according to the terms of those subheadings and, Any related Swiss notes and, mutatis mutandis, to the above Rules, on the understanding that only Swiss subheadings at the same level are comparable. For the purposes of this

Rule the relative section, chapter and subheading Notes also apply, unless the context of Swiss subheadings otherwise requires.

2. Unless the context of the Tariff and the Customs Law otherwise requires, used articles shall be assessed to duty at the rates applicable to new articles.
3. Unless the context of the Tariff otherwise requires the unit-weight shall be taken to mean the effective weight of the goods concerned.
4. The term "container", as used in certain subheadings, shall be taken to mean any immediate packing containing goods, of wood, sheet metal, glass, paperboard, paper, plastic or any other material.