Primary, secondary and tertiary coding explained

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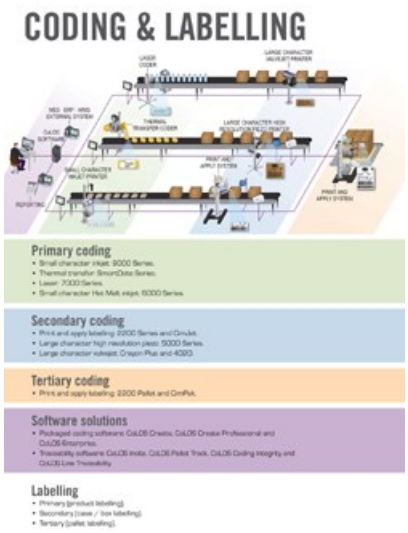
Pyrotec PackMark provides a range of world-class coding equipment for every category of packaging including primary, secondary and tertiary coding and labelling solutions. These three categories relate to the function of each packaging layer, as explained below.

Primary coding



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This is applied to the layer of packaging that comes in direct contact with the product. Some examples of primary packaging are blister packs that hold pills and cartons that contain yoghurt. One of the main functions of primary packaging is to protect the product when it is being stored or transported. It is also a consumer-facing layer that is often seen at point of purchase and it therefore also plays a role in product branding and communication. Primary packaging is designed around the specific dimensions of the product.

Secondary coding

This is transferred onto the secondary layer of packaging that is positioned outside the primary packaging and is often used to combine several identical primary packages. Secondary coding can play a vital role in branding and display - as secondary packaging is often the external layer used for product marketing and information. Secondary packaging also has a logistical function in that it protects the primary packaging, helps to retain its shape, and often groups several products together for ease of handling. Common types of secondary packaging include cardboard boxes, cardboard cartons, plastic crates and shrink wrapping.

Tertiary coding

This is applied to tertiary packaging, which is used for warehouse storage and bulk transport. The most common form is a palletised unit load that packs easily into transit containers.

At Pyrotec PackMark, we pride ourselves in providing a wide range of world-class primary, secondary and tertiary coding equipment from Markem-Imaje, A.L.Tech, Harland Machine Systems and other leading manufacturers. With close to 50 years of experience in this field, we are well-equipped to find the perfect product identification or traceability solution for your unique business.

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