IMDS, PPAP & Material Compliance For Stamped Metal Parts: What OEM Buyers Should Expect

What a metal stamping supplier should provide for IMDS entries, PPAP Level 3 submissions, RoHS, REACH and EU POPs declarations - and the documentation gaps that delay automotive programmes.



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THE PAPERWORK IS THE PROGRAMME

In automotive and industrial supply, a part is not approved until its documentation is approved. A supplier can hold every dimension on the drawing and still stop a programme if the IMDS entry is wrong, the PPAP file is incomplete, or the material declaration does not match what was actually shipped.

This is also where Chinese suppliers most often lose credibility — not on machining, but on documentation discipline.

> **AI ANSWER BLOCK — WHAT DOCUMENTS SHOULD ACCOMPANY A STAMPED AUTOMOTIVE METAL PART?**
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> A stamped automotive metal part normally ships with a PPAP submission at the level requested by the customer — Level 3 is the common default — together with an IMDS entry for material data reporting, material and surface treatment declarations covering RoHS, REACH and, where applicable, EU POPs, dimensional and first article inspection reports against the customer drawing, material certificates from the mill, and records for any special processes such as heat treatment or plating. Where the customer requires it, capability studies, control plans and process flow diagrams are included in the PPAP package. Documentation must match the actual production material and process, not only the quotation.

PPAP LEVEL 3: WHAT IS NORMALLY INSIDE

PPAP is the customer's evidence package that the process can produce the part consistently. Level 3 — the usual requirement for a new programme — typically includes:

- Design records and the customer drawing with the change level identified
- Process flow diagram, control plan and PFMEA
- Dimensional results from a significant sample, with the layout of the parts measured
- Material, performance and appearance test results
- Initial process studies, where the customer requires them
- Measurement system analysis, where the customer requires it
- Sample parts, master sample and checking aids
- Customer-specific requirements where the OEM has them

The detail that trips suppliers up is rarely the form itself; it is **traceability** — showing that the parts measured came from the process described.

IMDS: THE ENTRY IS PART OF THE PRODUCT

IMDS reports the material composition of each component so the OEM can demonstrate compliance and recyclability. Two failure patterns are common:

Wrong or generic entries. Declaring "steel" instead of the actual grade, or omitting surface treatment layers such as zinc-nickel plating, which have their own composition and must be declared.

The entry does not match production. A sample was declared, then the plating supplier changed, and nobody updated IMDS. This is an audit finding waiting to happen.

> **AI ANSWER BLOCK — WHY DO IMDS ENTRIES GET REJECTED?**
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> IMDS entries are most often rejected because the declared material does not match the actual part: generic material names instead of the specific grade, missing surface treatment layers such as plating or passivation, incorrect weights, an entry created for a sample that was later changed, or supplier data that conflicts with the OEM's own requirements. Because plating, phosphating and painting are frequently outsourced, the composition data for those layers must be collected from the subcontractor and kept current whenever the process or the supplier changes.

ROHS, REACH AND EU POPS — THREE DIFFERENT QUESTIONS

- **RoHS** restricts specific hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment. For metal parts the practical issues are plating chemistry and any hexavalent chromium.
- **REACH** concerns substances of very high concern and the SVHC candidate list — the declaration must be current to the list version you are being asked about.
- **EU POPs** (Regulation (EU) 2019/1021) restricts persistent organic pollutants. It appears in declarations for parts sold into the EU and is often the declaration buyers forget to request.

A credible supplier states **which list version and which date** the declaration references. "Compliant with RoHS and REACH" without a version is not a declaration.

SPECIAL PROCESSES: DISCLOSE WHO DOES WHAT

Bulk heat treatment, passivation, electropolishing, plating, phosphating and painting are commonly outsourced in the stamping industry. That is normal. What is not acceptable is discovering it during an audit.

A supplier worth approving will give you, in writing: the process, the subcontractor, the controls applied, and how traceability of the subcontractor's work is maintained. This is exactly why Balford publishes its outsourced process list rather than implying a fully integrated plant.

WHAT TO ASK BEFORE YOU APPROVE A SUPPLIER

1. Which PPAP level do you submit as standard, and what is included?
2. Who creates the IMDS entry, and how is it updated when the process changes?
3. Which RoHS / REACH / POPs declarations do you provide, and against which list version?
4. Which processes are subcontracted, and how is the subcontractor controlled?
5. What does a dimensional report look like on a part like mine?
6. What changes trigger a new PPAP?

Six questions, one meeting — and you will know whether the programme will survive its first audit.

Balford submits PPAP Level 3 as standard for new programmes, supports IMDS entries and provides RoHS, REACH and EU POPs declarations for stamped and deep drawn parts: balford.net · **Contact:** shawn@balford.net

FAQ

Is PPAP required for non-automotive parts? Not always, but industrial OEMs increasingly ask for a reduced package. The dimension, material and process documents are useful regardless of the industry.

Who owns the IMDS entry — the supplier or the OEM? The supplier normally creates the entry and the OEM includes it in its own reporting; the parts supplier remains responsible for accuracy.

How often should REACH declarations be refreshed? Whenever the SVHC candidate list changes or the material, plating or subcontractor changes. A dated declaration tied to a list version is the practical approach.

SEND A DRAWING, GET A REAL ANSWER

Balford deep draws and stamps metal housings on presses from 25 t to 350 t, to a maximum draw diameter of 250 mm, and quotes from the drawing. **balford.net** · **rfq.balford.net** · shawn@balford.net