
VSM Automation

MIL-Comply / VSM Vendor Shipment Module Automation

<i>Automating VSM with MIL-Comply</i>	1
VSM Automation - A Simple Example	1
FOB Destination Shipments	3
FOB Origin Shipments	3
Small Parcel versus Freight Shipments	5
Small Parcel Shipments of Multiple Containers	5
Freight Shipments (FOB Origin)	7
Label Printing in VSM Dashboard	8
Using VSM Automation with MIL-Comply Modules	9
Comply / Shipper	9
Use with Electronic Orders (EDI) from Government	9
Comply / Labeling	10
DCMA Accepted Shipments / WAWF	10
VSM Error Handling	11

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Automating VSM with MIL-Comply

The Vendor Shipment Module (VSM) is a web application operated by the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) to manage of shipments made to its depots and customers by defense contractors. Its primary function is to provide the current address of military recipients and assign Transportation Control Numbers (TCNs) to shipments. More recently VSM has begun to provide pre-assigned shipment labels for small parcel services, such as FedEx and UPS. For larger shipments (TL/LTL), VSM provides the necessary paperwork for transportation carriers.

Defense contractors remain responsible for labeling their shipments in accordance with Mil-Std 129 and invoicing the Government with its Wide Area Workflow (WAWF) web application. Contractors using compliance labeling products like MIL-Comply would prepare the container labels then access the VSM web application for the TCN and Ship-To address data necessary to prepare Military Shipment Labels, transcribing the data between these applications.

The MIL-Comply VSM integration eliminates the need to access the VSM web application as well as transcribing information from the VSM web application. Users downloading electronic contract data into MIL-Comply can prepare container and shipment labels, and invoice the Government, with minimal data entry and without accessing either web site. Shipments that require acceptance prior to shipment can achieve that electronically rather than entering data into the WAWF web site.

VSM Automation - A Simple Example

The first step in VSM automation is loading the shipment data into Comply/Shipper or Comply/Labeling by either:

- Entering the shipment data by hand
- Copying a similar shipment
- Receiving the data from electronically, from DIBBS or WAWF¹
- Importing data from a business system or other source

Once your basic shipment details are defined in Shipper or Labeling, the next step is to tell VSM how many exterior containers you are shipping, and how big they are, how much they weigh. The units can be all in one container, one per container, or include a short container. Unit and exterior container labels can be printed here if desired.

										Len	Width	Ht	
Exterior:	<input type="text" value="1"/>	Unit Containers per	Case	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>	@	<input type="text" value="1"/>	EA	<input type="text" value="45"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="14"/>	<input type="text" value="12"/>	<input type="text" value="8"/>
			Case	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value=""/>	@	<input type="text" value=""/>	EA	<input type="text" value=""/>	<input type="text" value=""/>			
											Pack:	<input type="text" value="Box"/>	

Container Detail for 5 Units, Packed 1 per Case

										Len	Width	Ht	
Exterior:	<input type="text" value="2"/>	Unit Containers per	Case	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	@	<input type="text" value="2"/>	EA	<input type="text" value="45"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="14"/>	<input type="text" value="12"/>	<input type="text" value="8"/>
			Case	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>	@	<input type="text" value="1"/>	EA	<input type="text" value="28"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="14"/>	<input type="text" value="12"/>	<input type="text" value="6"/>
											Pack:	<input type="text" value="Box"/>	

CONTAINER DETAIL FOR 5 UNITS, PACKED 2 PER CASE, WITH A SHORT REMAINDER CASE

Besides defining the number of cases and their dimensions for VSM, this feature can be used for container labeling.

¹ Requires Shipper with the eAwards option.

VSM Shipping Automation

Once a shipment has been created, the Shipment Dashboard comes into play for interacting with the VSM servers.

There are buttons for defining the line item(s) to be shipped, and for declaring the number of containers to be shipped, as described above. The Pickup Date is selected here, and for Destination shipments, the shipping carrier is selected.

Notice that there are two groups of operations, one for FOB Destination shipments and the other for FOB Origin. Notice also that the Ship-To and Mark-For addresses are blank, as are the TCN and VSM Control Number, all which VSM will provide.

Clicking on [Shipment Request] will communicate directly with the VSM server.

VSM Shipment Dashboard: VSM-DEST-SW04008215050-003

Options

Contract: SW0400-82-1-5050 Order: Shipment: MPT0003 Requisition Number: SW322782190501

Vendor Ref Num: VSM-DEST-SW04008215050-003 Ship From: 1HLD9

Invoice: Date: Edit Line Items: Containers / Labels:

Ship To: Edit Mark For: Edit

FOB: Origin Destination Shipment Type: Partial Total

VSM Control Num: TCN: Shipper: < Add Carrier >

Shipping Tracking Number Pickup Date: 11/25/2018 Errors(s): None Call Back: n/a

Buttons: Done, Cancel, Shipment Request, Close Out Shipment, Mil-Std MSL, FOB Origin Fields, Shipment Request, Request Doc Gen, Request Addresses, Parcel Label, Packing List, Bill of Lading, DD1387, 1907

Mil-Pac VSM Web Services Client

Communicating with DLA VSM server. Please wait...

The VSM server processes the shipment data, just as if it had been entered on the web site.

VSM Shipment Dashboard: VSM-DEST-SW04008215050-003

Options

Contract: SW0400-82-1-5050 Order: Shipment: MPT0003 Requisition Number: SW322782190501

Vendor Ref Num: VSM-DEST-SW04008215050-003 Ship From: 1HLD9

Invoice: Date: Edit Line Items: Containers / Labels:

Ship To: SW3227 Edit Mark For: SW3227 Edit

DEF DIST DEPOT RED RIVER RECEIVING BLDG 499 10TH STREET AND K AVENUE TEXARKANA, TX 75507-5000

FOB: Origin Destination Shipment Type: Partial Total

VSM Control Num: 20003984 TCN: SW322782190501XJX Shipper: CROWLEY AMERICAN TRANS

Shipping Tracking Number Pickup Date: 11/25/2018 Errors(s): None Call Back: n/a

Buttons: Done, Cancel, Shipment Request, Close Out Shipment, Mil-Std MSL, FOB Origin Fields, Shipment Request, Request Doc Gen, Request Addresses, Parcel Label, Packing List, Bill of Lading, DD1387, 1907

The TCN and the Ship-To and Mark-For addresses are provided by VSM. Simply click on the [Mil-Std MSL] button to print the shipment label(s).

And that's it, all ready to ship!

If you want to submit an invoice to WAWF, MIL-Comply/Shipper can do that with just a few more keystrokes (with the WAWF option).

Shipping Companies

- STANDARD FORWARDING
- SUNLINE EXPRESS
- TEAM AIR
- TRANS TECH LEASING
- UNKNOWN CARRIER
- UPS FREIGHT
- UPS GROUND FREIGHT
- UPS SMALL PARCEL
- US POSTAL SERVICE
- USF BESTWAY**
- USF FREIGHTWAYS CORPORATION
- USF HOLLAND MOTOR EXPRESS
- USF RED STAR
- USF REDDWAY
- VITRAN EXPRESS
- WARD FREIGHT
- WATKINS MOTOR LINES

Buttons: OK, Cancel

VSM Shipping Automation

FOB Destination Shipments

The process for FOB Destination VSM shipments was almost entirely demonstrated in the [Simple Example](#). The selection of the Shipping Carrier was glossed over, but really is simply a matter of clicking on the field when the Shipper field displays <Add Carrier>. A list of carriers acceptable to VSM will be displayed.

MIL-Comply will ask for the carrier's tracking number, which is necessary to close the shipment out in VSM. You can provide it prior to requesting shipment approval, or later, in cases where it is known only after shipping. Simply revisit the VSM Automation screen, add the tracking number and click on [Close Out Shipment].

FOB Origin Shipments

Acceptance at Origin shipments slightly more complicated than those at destination, if only because the Government requires more paperwork. Beyond a couple of additional

fields to be entered, the process is much the same. Within MIL-Comply the two methods are entirely different because VSM uses two different data interchange technologies them.



VSM Shipment Dashboard: VSM-ORIG-W62G2T81450728-008

Options

Contract: SPE5EJ-18-V-8167 Order: Shipment: XYZ0008 Requisition Number: W62G2T81450728

Vendor Ref Num: VSM-ORIG-W62G2T81450728-008 Ship From: 1HLD9

Invoice: Date: Edit Line Items: Containers / Labels:

Ship To: Edit Mark For: Edit

FOB: Origin Destination Shipment Type: Partial Total

VSM Control Num: TCN: Shipper: Shipping Tracking Number

Pickup Date: 11/26/2018 Errors(s): None Call Back: n/a

Buttons: Done, Cancel, Shipment Request, Close Out Shipment, [FOB Origin Fields] , Shipment Request, Request Doc Gen, Request Addresses, Parcel Label, Packing List, Bill of Lading, DD1387, 1907

Selecting FOB Origin, either when the shipment is created or on the Shipment changes the available buttons and availability of some fields.

Like Destination shipments, the *Shipment Type (Partial/Total)* should be selected, and the *Pickup Date* should be updated by clicking on it if necessary.

Notice that the [FOB Origin Fields] button is available. The checkmark beside it

indicates that required data has been completed. This is because the shipment was copied from a prior one, and that specific data carried over. Clicking the button will allow review of it. The *Equipment Type* is required, so that DLA can determine the appropriate carrier.

FOB Origin Specific Fields

Equipment Type: Van, closed, 30 ft and less Select Small Parcel:

Carrier Remarks: Enter Gate 2, proceed to 2987 Nimitz Blvd, Bldg 24

Use Doors 4 - 7

Buttons: OK, Cancel

VSM Shipping Automation

Once container(s) are defined and Equipment Type is selected, clicking the [Shipment Request] button (shown above) will send a request to the VSM server. If successful, the [Request Doc Gen] button is then enabled. Clicking it asks VSM to start their internal process of arranging for transportation. When that is successful the [Request Addresses] is made available, along with buttons for other documents that have been prepared by DLA for the shipment.

Use [Request Addresses] to retrieve the Ship-To and Mark-For addresses from VSM, along with the TCN. That information will be inserted into the MIL-Comply database. This allows Comply/Shipper to create a WAWF Receiving Report and Invoice and Labeling to print a Mil-Std-129 Military Shipment Label (MSL) rather than the VSM DD1387.

The MSL may be printed by clicking [Mil-Std MSL] or by using any Comply/Labeling that shares the database. The TCN and addresses sent by VSM will be included.

The DD1387 created by VSM can be used instead of the Military Shipment Label by clicking [DD1387]. It will be retrieved from VSM and opened in your PDF viewer. The other document options include:

- Parcel Label (such as UPS or FedEx)
- Packing List as generated by VSM
- Commercial Bill of Lading
- DD1907 (Signature and Tally Record)

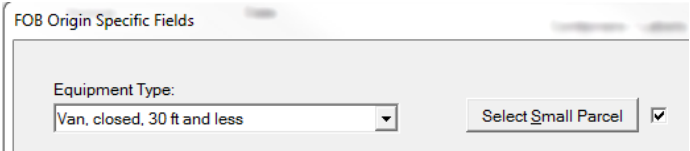
A document button that is greyed out indicates that VSM has not made the document available, or it is not applicable for the transportation type.

VSM Shipping Automation

Small Parcel versus Freight Shipments

VSM defines Small Parcel (SP) shipments to be those up to 150 pounds that are destined for CONUS locations, and up to 300 pounds outside CONUS (OCONUS). There are also container size restrictions. VSM will issue a shipping label for an appropriate carrier, such as UPS or FedEx, for SP shipments. More about FOB Origin [freight shipments](#) later.

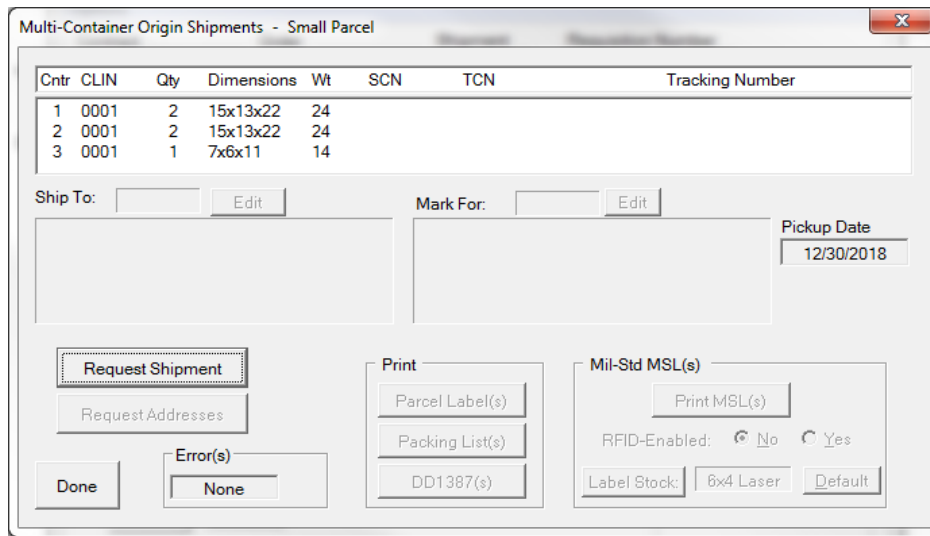
The Equipment Type for SP shipments is "Van, closed, 30 ft and less", also known as "Truck Load, Less than Truck Load" (TL/LTL). The [Select Small Parcel] button makes it easy to remember this. And when equipment type is selected from the list, the Small Parcel check box will be marked if the current Equipment Type is TL/LTL.



Small Parcel Shipments of Multiple Containers

VSM's FOB Origin process for multiple small parcel containers is complicated by a limitation in VSM that prevents it from obtaining multiple shipping labels from small parcel carriers. The VSM web site treats each such container as a separate shipping event, issuing separate Shipment Control Numbers (SCN), Transportation Control Numbers (TCN)

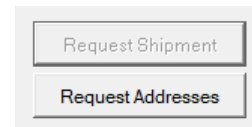
and shipping tracking numbers for each container. MIL-Comply handles that automatically. This can be done by container, or by document type, so one could, for example, retrieve and print all of the packing lists for an order in a single operation.



This screen appears when the [Request Shipment] on the Shipment Dashboard is made for a shipment consisting of multiple small parcels.

The containers defined for the shipment will be displayed. Clicking [Request Shipment] here starts a series of interactions with the VSM servers, resulting in an SCN and TCN being assigned to each container. At that point the [Request Addresses] button will be activated.

Cntr	CLIN	Qty	Dimensions	Wt	SCN	TCN	Tracking Number
1	0001	2	15x13x22	24	20004060	W62G2T81450728XBX	
2	0001	2	15x13x22	24	20004061	W62G2T81450728XCX	
3	0001	1	7x6x11	14	20004062	W62G2T81450728XDX	



Exterior: 2 Unit Containers per Case

Case	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	@	2	EA	24	3	15	13	22
Pack	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	@	1	EA	14	1	7	6	11

Pack: Box

VSM Shipping Automation

Performing [Request Addresses] (above) for a multiple container Small Parcel shipment requests the addresses and Small Parcel labels (UPS, FedEx, etc.) from VSM. VSM also generates the Packing List and DD1387 for each container. The carrier-assigned Tracking Number received for each container will now be displayed. At this point everything is ready for document and label printing for the shipment.

Cntr	CLIN	Qty	Dimensions	Wt	SCN	TCN	Tracking Number
1	0001	2	15x13x22	24	20004060	W62G2T81450728XBX	794651938248
2	0001	2	15x13x22	24	20004061	W62G2T81450728XCX	794651938259
3	0001	1	7x6x11	14	20004062	W62G2T81450728XDZ	794651938178

Ship To:
 W1BG DEF DIST DEPOT SAN JOAQUIN
 25600 S CHRISMAN ROAD
 REC WHSE 16B PH 209 839 4307
 TRACY, CA 95304-5000

Mark For:
 W1BG DEF DIST DEPOT SAN JOAQUIN
 25600 S CHRISMAN ROAD
 REC WHSE 16B PH 209 839 4307
 TRACY, CA 95304-5000

Pickup Date:

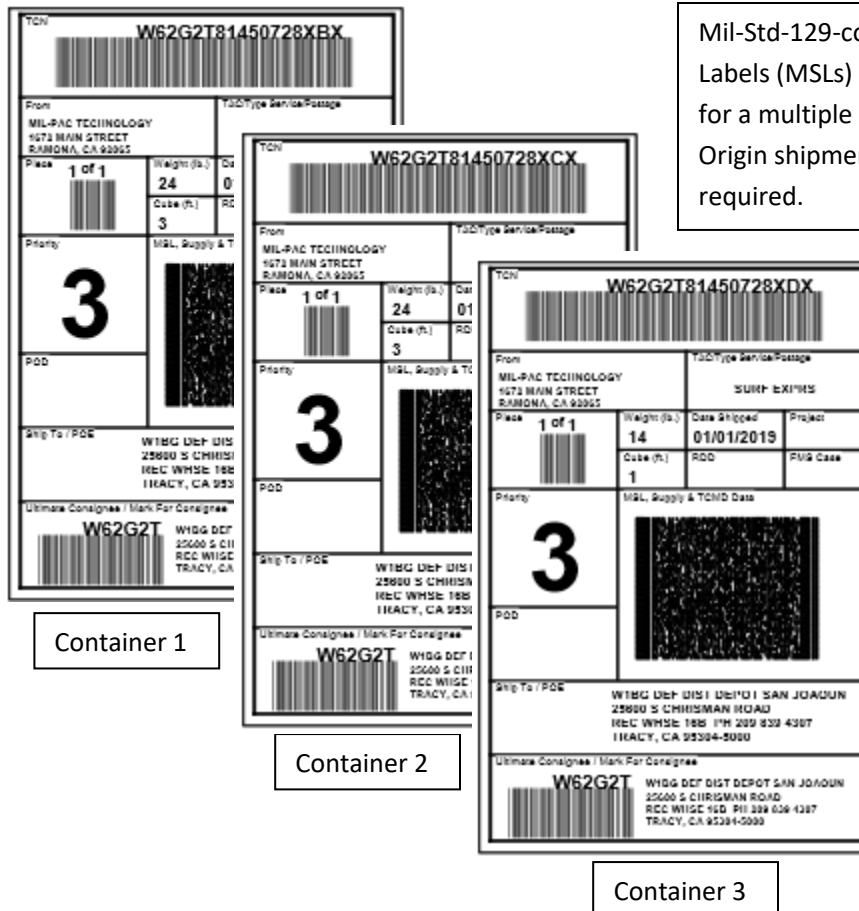
Request Shipment
 Request Addresses
 Done
 Error(s)

Print
 Parcel Label(s)
 Packing List(s)
 DD1387(s)

Mil-Std MSL(s)
 Print MSL(s)
 RFID-Enabled: No Yes
 Label Stock:

The [Parcel Labels], [Packing Lists] and [DD1387s] buttons open PDF files that may be printed in Acrobat, all at once, or by document type.

Comply/Labeling users will likely find it easier to print its Mil-Std MSL labels. These will come out perfectly aligned on laser label sheets or thermal-transfer rolls.



Mil-Std-129-compliant Military Shipment Labels (MSLs) printed by VSM Automation for a multiple container, Small Parcel, FOB Origin shipment. No additional data-entry required.

VSM Shipping Automation

Freight Shipments (FOB Origin)

DLA transportation specialists will arrange transportation for shipments that do not fit into the Small Parcel criteria. This changes the response to requests for shipments. While it is arranging transportation VSM will respond that "GFM Freight Release (is) in Process".

To get an update, click on [Request Doc Gen] later.

Comply/Shipper identifies such shipments as being in **VSM Hold**, and includes a filter to allow one to quickly identify shipments requiring attention.

Ship To: Edit

Mark For: Edit

*** GFM Freight Release in Process.

*** GFM Freight Release in Process.

FOB: Origin Destination

Shipment Type: Partial Total

VSM Control Num: 20004029

TCN: W62G2T81450728XRX

Shipper:

Shipping Tracking Number:

Mil-Std MSL:

GD: ?

n/a

FOB Destination Ops

Shipment Request

Close Out Shipment

Shipping Document

FOB Origin Operations

FOB Origin Fields

Shipment Request

Request Doc Gen

Request Addresses

Parcel Label

Packing List

Bill of Lading

DD1387 1907

Reference Number	Contract	Order	Shipment	Status
VSM-ORIG-W62G2T81450728-012	SPE5EJ-18-V-8167		XYZ0012	Shipment Made
VSM-ORIG-W62G2T81450728-001	SPE5EJ-18-V-8167		XYZ0001	Shipment Made
VSM-ORIG-W62G2T81450728-003	SPE5EJ-18-V-8167		XYZ0003	Shipment Made
VSM-ORIG-W62G2T81450728-013	SPE5EJ-18-V-8167		XYZ0013	RR Submitted
VSM-ORIG-W62G2T81450728-014	SPE5EJ-18-V-8167		XYZ0014	VSM Hold
VSM-ORIG-W62G2T81450728-015	SPE5EJ-18-V-8167		XYZ0015	New Shipment
VSM-ORIG-W62G2T81450728-NNN	SPE5EJ-18-V-8167		TEMPLATE	New Shipment

The Shipper display can be quickly filtered to display shipments that are pending VSM update by using the View menu command. Future versions of Comply/Shipper may simplify this by allowing the status of transportation by right-clicking on items are under **VSM Hold**.

VSM Shipping Automation

Label Printing in VSM Dashboard

The Container Matrix exists primarily to collect the container information required by VSM. However, container labels compliant with Mil-Std-129 can be printed as well². The screen is opened from the VSM Shipment Dashboard via the [Containers / Labels] button. Compliant labels for VSM shipments may also be printed by Comply/Labeling.

This example shows the Container Matrix in its simplest use in support of VSM data requirements, which are to provide the number of containers, their size and weight, and the number of CLIN units in each. The exterior containers in this example have two unit containers in each case. MIL-Comply determines the number to go into the partial case. The number of containers needed is calculated and the user is left to fill in the weights and dimensions.

All that is required for label printing is to select the label format. The default label stock is automatically selected. It can be changed by clicking on it. The standard Military Shipment Label may also be printed, using the [Mil-Std MSL] button on the VSM Dashboard. It will include the TCN, Project, FMS and addresses supplied by VSM.

² A Comply/Labeling license is required for printing labels from the VSM Shipment Dashboard.

VSM Shipping Automation

Using VSM Automation with MIL-Comply Modules

The VSM Automation is designed to fit into normal MIL-Comply processes, or in some cases, replace them. The features described below and in the rest of this document, are optionally licensed, first appearing in MIL-Comply Release 1.3.0201.

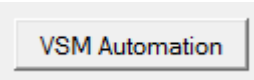
Comply / Shipper

MIL-Comply/Shipper is a good tool for defense shippers for organizing shipment documents. Its integrated VSM Automation can perform required VSM operations while streamlining standard container labeling³. Used in conjunction with Shipper's WAWF capability⁴, one can very quickly label containers, receive VSM approval, and send an invoice to WAWF, all without accessing either Government web site. And using eAwards⁵ even eliminates most data entry by allowing the Shipper to create shipment records directly from contract orders from electronic contract-orders (EDI) supplied by the Government.

The starting point for users without eAwards to auto-populate their shipment data is creating a new shipment like any other. The only difference is selecting *VSM Shipment* as the *Document Type*. This can also be done later on the Shipment Details dialog.

VSM shipments may also be copied to eliminate redundant data entry.

The VSM Shipment designation will carry forward from the source shipment. In either case, the result is a [VSM Automation] button



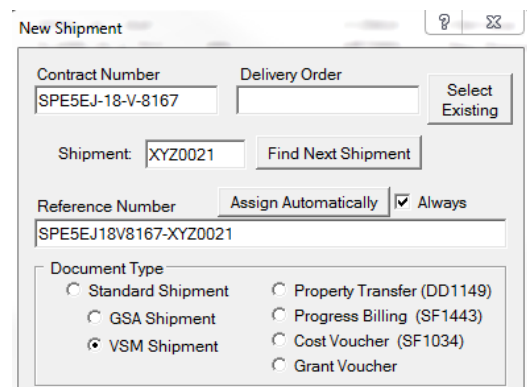
appearing in Shipment Details in place of

[Barcodes / RFID]. That is because tVSM Automation includes access to Labeling's MSL and container labels⁶. With VSM Automation, one would typically complete all labeling and VSM activities from within Comply/Shipper.

Use with Electronic Orders (EDI) from Government

Most contract-orders originating from the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) are available electronically via Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) transactions delivered to Comply/Shipper and/or Labeling via a Value-Added Network (VAN) such as the one operated by Mil-Pac⁷.

Using MIL-Comply's eAwards and WAWF features with VSM Automation greatly simplify the processing of VSM shipments, reducing data-entry to essentially just the size of the boxes and an invoice number.



³ Container labeling beyond the Parcel Labels and DD1387s provided by VSM require optional Labeling license feature.

⁴ Submitting Receiving Reports and/or Invoices to WAWF requires optional WAWF license feature.

⁵ The eAwards is a separately licensed feature, may require a Value-Added-Network subscription.

⁶ Mil-Std-129 MSL and container labeling requires optional Labeling feature. VSM Parcel Labels and DD1387s are available in VSM Automation.

⁷ Electronic order processing requires the eAwards feature, and access to ANSI-X12-850 transactions typically provided by a DOD-certified VAN, such as Mil-Pac's. MIL-Comply is compatible with compliant transactions from other VANs.

VSM Shipping Automation

Comply / Labeling

VSM Shipments may also be created in Comply/Labeling. One could start by labeling unit containers if that is preferred over the VSM Automation [Container Matrix](#). At any point in time the VSM menu option can be used to bring up VSM Automation in order to get Military Shipment Labels, packing lists, and parcel labels or commercial bills of lading.

DCMA Accepted Shipments / WAWF

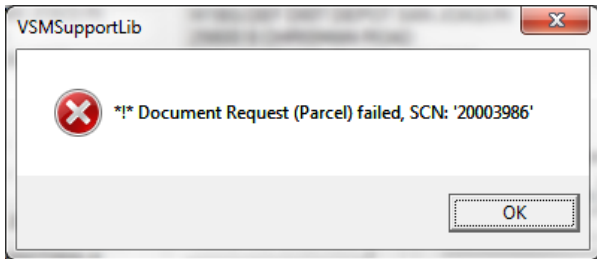
Shipments that require DCMA Source Inspection/Acceptance are handled a little differently. DLA requires that DCMA acceptance must occur in WAWF prior to requesting shipping documents from VSM. This means that the Transportation Control Number (TCN), Ship-To and Mark-For addresses provided in the contract must be included on the Receiving Report / Combo submitted to WAWF for acceptance. The VSM process should be started only after acceptance by DCMA.

VSM Shipping Automation

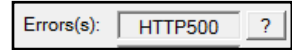
VSM Error Handling

The complexity of the VSM process means that errors will eventually happen. VSM goes offline occasionally, as does some of its back-end systems. The Internet data communication protocols are complex, and can error out, just like web pages do sometimes. Occasionally data might entered into MIL-Comply in a format that is not acceptable to VSM, but not detected by MIL-Comply.

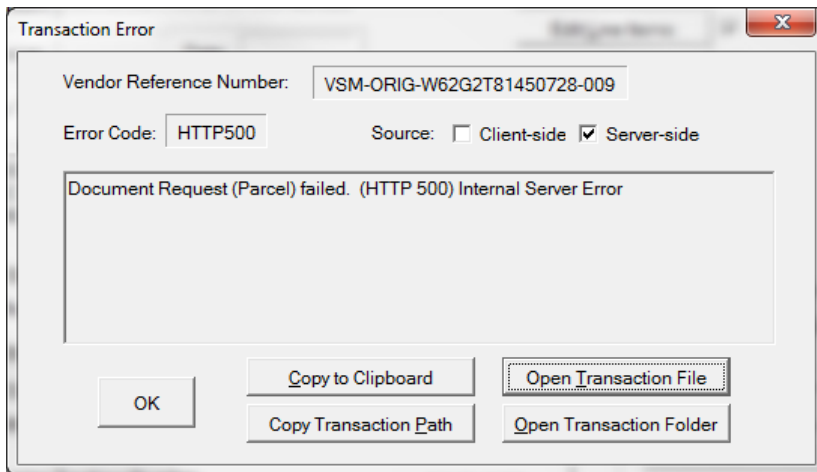
What happens when you get an error like this?



Look for the Error(s) field at the bottom of the Dashboard, which displays the most recent error code. Clicking on the error or [?] will bring up more detail about the error.



Sometimes the information displayed in the error message is enough for the Mil-Pac Help Desk to determine the problem. In this case, the issue is internal to VSM. MIL-Comply records most of the transaction details, including error messages and detailed responses from VSM.



The first step can be using to [Copy to Clipboard] which allows a summary of the error to be easily copied into an email to the Mil-Pac Help Desk. For more complex errors, refer to transaction file which includes all of the data sent to VSM and its responses.

The transaction file itself may be opened for look, or better yet, sent to the Mil-Pac Help Desk. To make that easier, use the [Copy Transaction Path] button. It will copy the location of the file to the clipboard. Create an email to support@milpac.com and attach the file. When your email client asks you to "open" the file simply paste in the transaction file path.

Easy access to the transaction file is also available if that is the preferred method for sending email attachments. Use the [Open Transaction Folder] button and look for a LOG file with the Vendor Reference Number, e.g. VSM-ORIG-W62G2T81450728-009.log in this case.