

An Engraver's Guide:

# New Employee Handbook

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**Created for:** The Trophy Case  
Engraving/Trophies Dept.

**Created by:** Megan Wittorp

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## Table of Contents:

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Shop Policies .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1.	Dress Code .....	4
2.2.	Schedules .....	4
2.2.1.	Work Schedules .....	4
2.2.2.	Shop Schedule .....	4
2.2.3.	Pay Schedule .....	5
2.3.	Phones .....	5
2.3.1.	Personal Phones .....	5
2.3.2.	Shop Phones .....	5
<b>3.</b>	<b>Order Types .....</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1.	Trophies .....	6
3.2.	Plaques .....	7
3.3.	Resins .....	7
3.4.	Medals .....	8
3.5.	Plates .....	8
3.6.	Heavy Duty Name Tags .....	8
<b>4.</b>	<b>Ordering Products .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Understanding an Order .....</b>	<b>10</b>
5.1.	Shop Numbers .....	10
5.2.	Files .....	11
<b>6.</b>	<b>Heavy Duty Name Tag Instruction Manual .....</b>	<b>12</b>

# Introduction

Welcome to Team Trophy Case! The Trophy Case (TTC) is Huntsville's one-stop-shop for awards, embroidery, silk screening, TDCJ accessories, and many other things! We're excited to have a new addition to our engraving department and hope you'll be able to learn a lot in your time with the team.

This manual serves as a guide to getting started at TTC. We understand that starting a new job can be a little nerve-racking and working in a niche shop like this one can feel a little overwhelming at first. This manual is here to help alleviate some of that stress and cover some of the basics of the shop. If you're not sure of certain policies, look no further than this book; It's here to cover those bases so you can spend more time getting hands-on learning experience. The best way to learn here is by doing, and we want to focus our time on helping you learn and get accustomed.

The job — and, overall, the shop — may seem a little intimidating, and there is a lot to learn, but once you know the basics of the job, everything else comes easy. If you ever feel like you need help, don't be afraid to reach out as someone is always available to assist you.

This manual contains shop policies and information about the engraving department to help get you started, including an instruction manual for one of engraving's most common and important products, Heavy Duty Name Tags (HDNT's), which you can find at the back of this manual.

Again, welcome to The Trophy Case and we can't wait to work with you!

# Shop Policies

There are a few shop-wide policies for employees. If you have questions about something not covered in this section, reach out to a manager for more information.

## Dress Code

The shop dress code is very casual and employees are able to wear whatever is comfortable as long as it is work appropriate (ex. No short-shorts, inappropriate graphics, cleavage, or mid-riffs). Employees working in production are required to wear closed-toe shoes. Shorts are allowed if they are an appropriate length. Tank tops are only allowed if a cover or layer is worn with it. Sleeveless blouses are allowed. Apparel with the shop logo is encouraged but not enforced.

## Schedules

### Work Schedules

Work schedules are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. unless otherwise specified and arranged with the owners. Employees manually clock in and out every day, starting upon arrival at 9:00 and clocking out at 5:00, and doing so for lunch breaks as well. It is important to document the exact time of arrival or departure by referring to a clock, watch, phone, or the time-clock. Employees can take up to one hour for lunch during the day. It is important to check with a manager before taking a lunch break. Ten minute smoke breaks are at 11:00 and 3:00. Employees work Monday-Friday unless otherwise specified. If an employee has an appointment, it is important to let an owner know as soon as possible. If sick, call the shop or get in touch with an owner as soon as possible. Personal days off should be requested at least 2 weeks ahead of time and are approved if all immediately necessary work is done.

### Shop Schedules

The shop is open to customers 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday. The shop is not open on weekends. In regards to three-day weekend holidays, whether the shop is open is determined on a case-by-case basis, and, if closed, the shop may have optional partial-day shifts available. Extended breaks (2+ days closed) are Thanksgiving break and Christmas/New Year's break (typically 1-1.5 weeks). If the Christmas/NY break is 1.5 weeks long, some skeleton crew shifts may be available. Depending on a

department's workload, employees may need to stay late, come in early or work holidays or weekends as needed.

## **Pay Schedules**

Physical paychecks are issued every Thursday afternoon. The pay period is from Thursday of the previous week to Wednesday of the current week (the day before pay day). Pay day can be adjusted on a case-by-case basis to accommodate holidays and personal days off.

## **Phones**

### **Personal Phones**

Cell phone usage is kept to a minimum. Employees may listen to music or podcasts aloud if it is work appropriate or use headphones if it does not interfere with work or communication. Employees can use their phones to check the time and date, use the calculator app and access shared shop documents via their respective apps. Employees are not allowed to browse social media, take personal phone calls, text, or play games on their phones while clocked in. If an employee is expecting or needs to make an important call or has received a text or call that asks the employee to step away from work, it is best to speak to a manager about clocking out and provide an expected amount of time to be gone if possible.

### **Shop Phones**

Shop phones are answered by the front-room customer service employees. If short-staffed in that department, other employees may be approached about assisting in answering phones and can redirect calls. Once knowledgeable about the shop and departments, employees are able to regularly answer phone calls. Phone calls are accepted 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., after 5:00 if the caller ID indicates something important, or when the shop is closed to the public but departments are still operating such as during holiday weekends (whether phones are to be answered on these days is determined on a case-by-case basis).

## Order Types

“Awards” is an umbrella term which includes traditional trophies, trophy cups, plaques, resins, medals, and other freestanding acrylic/glass/crystal awards. The engraving department works with traditional trophies, trophy cups, plaques, resins, and medals, and also does other work to create plates and heavy duty name tags.

## Trophies

The shop classifies traditional trophies as an award with a base (typically plastic or wood), a plastic figure — more commonly referred to as a “trophy topper” — and, often, column(s) which can hold either a base, tier or a trophy topper. Figure 1 below is a representation of what the shop classifies as a traditional trophy. These awards are built by hand, and these orders are best learned through hands-on experience.

Trophy cups are often preassembled cups ordered through a supplier. They are typically composed of several parts of metal and/or plastic held together by a rod. Some trophy cups are done in house using smaller plastic cups attached to a trophy base. An example of a preassembled trophy cup is seen in figure 2 below.



*fig. 1*



*fig. 2*

## Plaques

Plaques are classified as a wooden board with an engraved metal plate on top. These boards come in various sizes, colors and qualities. Most often these boards are what the shop calls a “maywood” board, a particle-board type plaque with a high quality veneer. These are the cheapest option and give the illusion of real wood, making them the most popular option. Walnut boards are a high-quality, all wood plaque with a stain applied. Piano finish boards are thick wood with a rosewood, black or walnut color and covered with a high-gloss finish. Some plaques can be ordered preassembled and have a removable plate, but most plaques are completely done in house.

Not all plaques have engraved plates. Some plates are done in the laser department or are sublimated — a process of using heat and pressure to transfer ink from paper onto another surface. No matter how the plates are done, the engraving department always assembles and cleans plaques.

Assembling a plaque by hand is best learned through hands-on experience and practice.

## Resins

Resins are cast awards with a painted finish. These are ordered through suppliers as completed pieces. They often have a small flat edge on the front for a plate to be placed. These come in a variety of sizes, colors, themes, and prices. Figure 3 below is an example of a resin.



*fig. 3*

## **Medals**

Medals are the traditional medal with a neck ribbon. These come in a variety of sizes and themes with almost all being available in gold, silver and bronze. Some are made with small hints of colored enamel. Some medals have a blank circle which fits a disk that can be personalized by the customer to fit their needs; these customized disks are done in house. A variety of neck ribbons are available in an array of colors, lengths and band thicknesses.

## **Plates**

Plates are made to order. The size is based on the customer's needs and is cut to fit the order. The customer is able to pick from a small variety of metal types and sometimes colors. They also have options for fonts and can add additional features to the plates such as holes or double-sided tape for mounting and a selection of corner styles for aesthetics. Plates are most typically engraved with a few exceptions that are lasered or sublimated.

## **Heavy Duty Name Tags**

Heavy duty name tags (HDNTs) are metal name tags often ordered by correctional officers of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. These name tags are popular for their bold lettering, choices of backings and colors, option for enamel state seals, and their durability. They are one of the most time-sensitive orders in the engraving department as they are due the next business day at noon. This should be the first task of the day. HDNTs are explained in more detail in the instruction manual at the end of this handbook.



## Ordering Products

Ordering products is done through a spreadsheet on Google Sheets. This is called the order list. It's where the engraving and laser departments put items that need to be ordered from suppliers, often to complete orders in the shop. To gain access to the list, the computer must be logged into the shop's team-wide Google account. From there, employees are able to access the "Orders Recieved" list, which has an "Awards" tab at the bottom for ordering parts. Enter all the information about the items needed and fill out applicable columns to help the manager who is ordering to know what products are needed and where they come from. Items come from several different vendors. It can take a while to understand what vendors sell certain items, but, until then, it is best to work with a manager to find which catalog has the products needed, then the spreadsheet can be filled out with the product number and vendor for the item.

For the first few weeks of employment it is best to work with a manager on filling out the list together before receiving an invitation to edit the spreadsheet. This time allows a manager to help explain each supplier's strengths and weaknesses for products and gives valuable knowledge about who to look to when ordering specific items.

## Understanding an Order

Order forms can feel very overwhelming at first glance. There are many lines and boxes to fill out, not to mention the abbreviations and letters all over the page. Very rarely does the entire page get filled. Instead, the page is divided into sections for different types of awards and lines, letters and abbreviations are used to help understand the specifics of an award. Once these are understood, completing orders becomes a breeze.

## Shop Numbers

All awards are organized using a shop-created numbering system. These numbers are assigned to an award, which can be used as a code for what type of item is being ordered and can be cross-referenced to a price book — each number having a price and, often, small description of the award it represents. This makes finding information and awards easier for the engraving department since everything has its own identity.

Trophies, resins and acrylic/glass/crystal awards are typically labeled with a number. When a trophy or resin order comes in, there is a number listed in the appropriate row on the order form. Once that number is found in the show room, one is able to tell which award it is. At first, these numbers can be a little hard to find, but after some time some awards can be identified off the top of the head, and those are usually the most commonly ordered awards. There is no rhyme or reason to *how* these awards are numbered, but some similar styles will be close in number to each other.

Plaques are labeled with a combination of letters and numbers. The letter refers to the type of board — walnut, maywood or something else. For numbers one through seven, the number represents the board's size with the smaller numbers correlating to a smaller board. The number/size relationships can be found on several charts around the shop. Numbers above seven have no relation to the size, other than the occasional plaque which comes in two sizes, then the correlation is still true. Plaques with numbers above seven will have to be found in the showroom and the sample plaque used as a reference.

Some awards do not use the shop's numbering system and instead are preassembled items using the product codes from their supplier. These are usually a letter followed by three or four numbers, whereas the shop's numbering system uses a one or two letters for plaques — typically M, W or SM — and one or two numbers.

## Files

Frequent customers often have a file with the shop. These customers can be churches, organizations, clubs, departments, businesses, or even individuals. These files are split between three categories: Embroidery, SHSU Engraving and Engraving. All files are kept in alphabetical order in their respective filing cabinets, have a specific color to represent its category, and contain all orders from the past five years.

For orders that have a name listed on the department/organization line, there is likely a folder for that group. Some individuals may even have a folder. Since these folders contain five years worth of orders, there is likely a plethora of information about how to go about completing the current, active order. This can be anything from colors to fonts to engraving files on the computer. Referencing these files helps keep orders consistent and customers happy.

An Engraver's Guide to Creating:

# Heavy Duty Name Tags (HDNTs)

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**Created for:** The Trophy Case  
Engraving/Trophies Dept.

**Engraving device:** Vision 810

**Engraving program:** Vision PRO 9

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## Table of Contents:

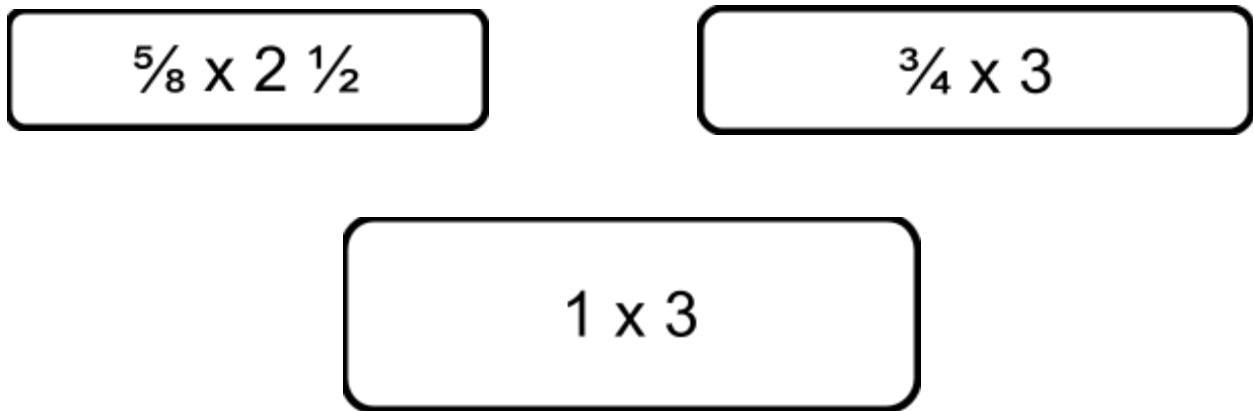
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>14</b>
1.1. Sizes and styles .....	14
1.2. Schedule .....	15
<b>2. Preparation .....</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1. Organization of orders .....	16
2.2. Finding and sorting name tags .....	16
<b>3. Opening files .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>4. Using the engraver .....</b>	<b>18</b>
4.1. Preparation .....	18
4.2. Using the vise .....	18
<b>5. Changing and preparing engraving .....</b>	<b>19</b>
5.1. Changing name .....	19
5.2. Previewing name .....	19
5.3. Changing device .....	19
<b>6. Engraving .....</b>	<b>20</b>
6.1. Sending and starting .....	20
6.2. Removing name tag .....	20
6.3. Changing name, sizes and styles .....	20
<b>7. Blackening name tags .....</b>	<b>21</b>
7.1. Blackening .....	21
7.2. Cleaning and polishing .....	21
7.3. Fixing flawed blackening .....	21
<b>8. Finishing touches .....</b>	<b>22</b>
8.1. State seals .....	22
8.2. Magnets .....	22
8.3. Pin-backs .....	22
8.4. Multiple name tags in an order .....	22
8.5. Sorting and shelving .....	23
<b>9. Additional notes and tips .....</b>	<b>24</b>

## 1. Introduction

Heavy duty name tags (HDNTs) are typically used by correctional officers of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). These name tags (NTs) come in a variety of sizes, colors and styles. This guide is here to help in creating a heavy duty name

### 1.1 Sizes and styles

There are 3 sizes of HDNT (fig. 1):



*fig. 1*

All sizes come in brushed gold and silver. The  $\frac{3}{4} \times 3$  size is available with military style pin-backs (MS) and all sizes are available with magnet backs (MAG).

Some sizes have various styles. The  $\frac{3}{4} \times 3$  and  $1 \times 3$  NTs can have an enamel state seal added to the left of the engraved name. All sizes can have an optional second line of text added below the name; this line can sometimes go above the name. Be aware of what orders request as various styles require different file types for engraving. It can be very easy to make mistakes when not aware of the orders in front of you. It is best to double or triple-check everything to prevent loss of materials.

## **1.2 Schedule**

HDNTs are scheduled for noon on the business day following that when the order was placed. Some are shipped out. Some orders are “RUSH” and are needed the same day or within a few minutes.

## **2. Preparation**

Preparation of orders is important as it helps the process flow easier and the job to get done more efficiently.

### **2.1 Organization of orders**

When HDNTs are received, start by organizing orders by NT size and style. Group pages by size, then divide sizes by styles, as there different files for different styles.

### **2.2 Finding and sorting name tags**

Find the name tags necessary to complete the orders and sort them according to each order. Be aware of quantities, colors, and back styles. Name tags with magnet are blank, flat tags sorted by color and size in an open box next to the computer monitor. Name tags with pin-backs can be found in closed boxes on the wire shelves opposite the computer.

Place name tags in the sequence which orders have been sorted. Place them in groups for orders which have multiple name tags. Separating and placing name tags in order will help the process move more efficiently and help keep track of what is being completed.

**Tip:** It is often helpful to have the first NTs you engrave match the size of that already in the vise, and have your last NTs be a size you will likely use again. You are more likely to engrave a [ $\frac{3}{4}$  x 3] or [ $\frac{5}{8}$  x 2  $\frac{1}{2}$ ] than a [1 x 3], so leaving off on one of the two sizes will make starting the next day's NTs easier.



### 3. Opening files

To open a file, click **Open > C: Drive > 1 Engraving Jobs > 1 Name Tags**

Refer to the table below (fig. 2) for what file corresponds to the size and style of name tag being engraved. All files are set up so only the text needs to be changed. File types only take into account the front side of the name tag. The type of back does not affect what file needs to be used.

<b><math>\frac{5}{8} \times 2 \frac{1}{2}</math></b>	
1 Line	TDC - 58 1L
2 Line	TDC - 58 2L
<b><math>\frac{3}{4} \times 3</math></b>	
1 Line	TDC - 34 1L
2 Line	TDC - 34 2L
2 Line with Name on Second Line	TDC - 34 2LO
1 Line with State Seal	TDC - 34 1LS
2 Line with State Seal	TDC - 34 2LS
<b>1 x 3</b>	
1 Line	TDC - 1 1L
2 Line	TDC - 1 2L
1 Line with State Seal	TDC - 1 1LS
2 Line with State Seal	TDC - 1 2LS

*fig. 2*

## **4. Using the engraver**

### **4.1 Preparation**

Start by turning on the engraver by flipping the switch on the back left side of the engraver. Once it has turned on, press the “Spindle On/Off” button twice so the light is solid green. The engraver should have the silver table attached with the vice accessory, and the spindle should be a .030 burnishing bit. If either of these is incorrect, refer to the **“Eng - Machines”** handbook.

### **4.2 Using the vise**

Peel the protective paper coating off the name tag and place it against the upper left corner of the engraving table. If the vise needs to be adjusted, use the allen wrench on the side of the Phoenix 1212 engraver to loosen the screw on the vise. Adjust to fit the name tag, making sure to leave  $\frac{1}{8}$ ” between the bottom of the name tag and the top of the vise when fully opened. Tighten when desired adjustment is achieved. Turn the handle on the vise to tighten it and keep the name tag snug against the top of the table. The name tag should not be able to move or slide.

## **5. Changing and preparing engraving**

### **5.1 Changing the name**

When the desired file opens, double click the line of text that needs to be changed. This will open the text editor. Delete and change any text to match the information for the order. All text should be in all uppercase unless specified otherwise. Surnames with a prefix (i.e. Mc, Mac, etc.) should have the appropriate letters in lowercase. When done changing text, press “OK” in the text editor toolbar.

### **5.2 Previewing name**

When the text editor is closed, press F9 to preview the engraving. Check the name tag size, spelling and style. Check to see that the point of origin (a small circle with crosshairs) is in the upper left hand corner of the engraving preview.

### **5.3 Changing device**

During the preview stage, it is also important to see that the engraving is going to the proper machine. The Device box should say “810.” If this is not true, selected “810” from the Device drop-down menu. Click close on the toolbar.

## 6. Engraving

### 6.1 Sending and starting

When ready to engrave, press F9 to open the preview screen again and F10 to send to the machine. Do this **twice** for every name tag. When a file has successfully been sent to the engraver, the “Start” button light will flash green. When ready to engrave, press the “Start” button on the engraver. When the engraving is running, the spindle should start spinning. When the engraving completes, the light should blink again, signifying the file was successfully sent a second time. Press “Start” again to run the second engraving of the name.

### 6.2 Removing name tag

When the spindle returns home after the second engraving, dust off the name tag using the paint brush next to the engraver. Once the metal dust has been thoroughly cleaned off the surface of the name tag, loosen the vice and remove the name tag. Set on the counter to prepare for blackening.

### 6.3 Changing name, sizes, and styles

If continuing to use the same file for other name tags, simply change the name following the steps from **section 5.1**. If changing the style, save the current file and follow the steps from **section 3** for opening name tags. This is also applicable for changing sizes of name tags. Refer to **section 4.2** for adjusting the vise for other size name tags.

## 7. Blackening name tags

Blackening is done using an oxidation solution. This can be found on the counter next to the engraver. It is a blue liquid in a clear bottle with a white cap. Along with this, you will also need cotton swabs, a piece of semi-soft fabric (often a scrap of a pillowcase or t-shirt) and an orange Tiger cloth. All of these supplies can be found on the same countertop.

### 7.1 Blackening

To start blackening, swirl the tip of a cotton swab in the oxidation solution. This will best soak the cotton swab. Wipe the wet end of the cotton swab over the engraved text, making sure to follow the grain of the name tag to prevent any scratching. Coat the engraving thoroughly.

### 7.2 Cleaning and polishing

After applying the solution to the name tag, wait 3-5 seconds. Using the semi-soft cloth, wipe away the solution, moving longways across the name tag and following the grain of the metal. Remove all surface wetness. Do not use a heavy hand during this, as it could possibly cause flaws in the blackening which will be more difficult to fix later. **Do not use the orange Tiger cloth to wipe away excess solution.**

After wiping away the excess solution, wrap the orange Tiger cloth around the tip of a finger. Gently buff out the haze left from the oxidation solution. Do this across the entire name tag until free of streaks or haze.

### 7.3 Fixing flawed blackening

If at any point during the cleaning the blackening inside the letters chips or specks of the metal show through, **dab** the damp cotton swab on the needed area. Wait a few moments before **very** gently wiping away the liquid. Wait 5-8 seconds before gently cleaning with a Tiger cloth.

## **8. Finishing touches**

### **8.1 State seals**

State seals can be found individually wrapped in a box on the right hand side of the counter. Unwrap a state seal and remove the paper backing from the adhesive backing.

When applying a state seal, there are a few methods to doing it, but, ultimately, the application method is personal preference. The easiest method is to place the state seal between one's fingers, holding it in the orientation in which it will be applied. The seal, when placed, should leave equal margins between the left edge of the name tag and the left edge of the engraved text. It should also be centered between the top and bottom edges of the name tag.

When placed onto the name tag, the state seal may have a little bit of room to turn if the orientation looks off. Firmly press the seal when it is in the desired location.

### **8.2 Magnets**

Magnets are located in a small white box on the left hand of the counter.

To apply a magnet back, start by removing the paper from the adhesive backing. Flip the name tag over so the up/down orientation stays the same but viewing the name tag from the backside. Apply the magnet approximately 1/16" from the top edge and centered between the left and right edges of the name tag. When placed, press down firmly. The magnetic plate can now slide on and off the name tag.

### **8.3 Pin-backs**

Using the golden butterfly clasps, located in a small bag in the center of the countertop, place clasps on the pin-backs of name tags.

### **8.4 Multiple name tags in an order**

If an order has multiple name tags, use a scrap piece of folder to hold all of the name tags. Folders can be found in a box under the counter. Cut a piece large enough to hold all of the name tags. For magnets, place the name tag on one side of the folder,

and apply the magnet from the opposite side. For pin-back name tags, punch the pins through the folder and place the butterfly clasps on. Trim any excess folder.

### **8.5 Sorting and shelving**

When name tags are complete, fold all orders in half horizontally (hamburger style). Place name tags in the fold of the corresponding order. Double check that all name tags are with the correct orders.

When this task is complete, take the name tags to the front of the shop. Name tags are placed on the file organizer on the center shelf behind the counter.

## 9. Additional tips and notes

-Change cotton swabs after every 5 or so name tags. This will help apply blackening better.

-Change the semi-soft fabric rag when there is no longer any clean space. Cut another piece from a patterned pillowcase or ask the silk screening department for a scrap shirt. Refold the rag to get the most use out of it.

-Always throw away cotton swabs after using or if left out.

-Never leave blackening open.

- More blackening is on the shelf above the white counter. When the last bottle is opened, order more from JDS Industries using the product code "OX-13."

-If there is one bag of state seals left, order more **ASAP**. They will take much longer to get in than most products. During and around Chinese New Year, the manufacturer will be closed and this will significantly delay any orders for the state seals; plan accordingly for this.