

Catalogue Numbers on the ABC System

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In studying LM Ericsson's current catalogues it will be found that most of the catalogue numbers are made up of three letters and four figures, e. g., RBM 1404. These designations are based on a classification system introduced in conjunction with the standardisation of LM Ericsson's products, known as the ABC system, the make-up and application of which will be briefly described here.

The classification, which constitutes an important feature of the standardisation of the products, is based on sorting and bringing together products that are closely related in construction and function into main groups and groups, classes and types subordinate to them, in such a manner that the relationship becomes the more intimate the further the dividing up is taken.

The first division is done into *main groups*, as they are called in the language of classification, one of which comprises telephone switchboards, another telephone instruments, a third line and fuse material and so on. Each main group is designated by a letter.

Thus the whole of the current production is divided into the following main groups:

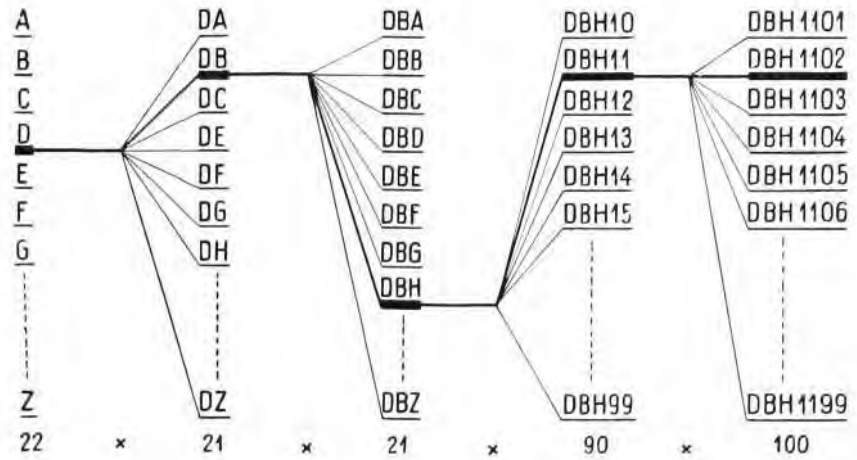
- A* Telephone switchboards. Party-line and selective calling equipments.
- B* Racks. Relay sets. Material for current feed etc.
- D* Telephone instruments. Telegraph instruments.
- J* Traffic signalling material.
- K* Tele-signalling material.
- L* Tools.
- M* Material and moulded products.
- N* Line and fuse material. Erecting material.
- R* Assembled construction components such as relays, dials, switches, selectors etc.
- S* Standard parts such as screws, pins, washers, nuts, cable-shoes etc.
- T* Cable. Cords. Conductor wire.
- V* Electricity meters. Electricity test instruments.
- Z* Transmission technical material.

The letters *C, E, F, G, H, O, P, U* and *Y* are available for the designation of fresh main groups, the total number of which when the system is fully utilised may then go up to 22. The letters *I, Q* and *W* may not be used as they can lead to confusion. The Swedish letters *Å, Ä* and *Ö* have not been included as they do not occur in the international alphabet.

Each main group is then divided into *groups*, which are designated by two letters. The following examples of group division in a main group may be given:

- NA* Network systems.
- NB* Main distribution frames. Cable cabinets. Cable racks etc.
- NC* Distribution boxes. Fuse boxes.
- ND* Jointing sleeves. Jointing pipes. Terminal sleeves etc.

Fig. 2
 Presentation in diagram of LM Ericsson's classification system



The next stage in the classification is called *class* and this is designated by three letters, e. g., *ABC*. It is from this that the name ABC system has been derived.

The class and group divisions in the main group *D* are shown in Fig. 1. In the division into groups the main stress has been laid on the function, which in this case, however, also has its influence on the constructive execution. The division into classes has been based on the different shaping of the instrument's frame and outer casing, that is a purely constructive division.

A class is divided up into *types*, and the type is designated by a two-figure (sometimes a three-figure) number from 10 to 99 being added to the class, e. g., *ABC 12*.

Figuratively speaking the classification can be compared to the division of humanity into races, peoples, relatives and families. The type represents the family in the ABC system and it may comprise a greater or smaller number of individuals. Each such individual or *article* is designated by the type number with the addition of two (sometimes three) figures, e. g., *DBH 1102*. The whole chain of classification for this number will appear as follows and it is also illustrated by Fig. 2:

Main group <i>D</i>		Telephone instrument.
Group	<i>DB</i>	Telephone instrument, C. B.
Class	<i>DBH</i>	Telephone instrument C.B. Table instrument in standard bakelite case.
Type	<i>DBH 11</i>	Telephone instrument C.B. Table instrument in standard bakelite case. Ordinary subscriber instrument with dial.
Article	<i>DBH 1102</i>	Telephone instrument C.B. Table instrument in standard bakelite case. Ordinary subscriber instrument with dial. In mahogany colour and connected for LME's system.

The article numbers made up on the ABC system, which are now also used as catalogue numbers, are quite distinctive and are employed also internally at LME's on drawings, orders and specifications.

The classification on the ABC system, as may be seen from the main groups listed above, covers the whole chain of development from material and moulded products (*M*), standard components (*S*) and assembled elements of design (*R*) to the complete independent designs. The question whether all products are to be classified on the ABC system can, at least at the present stage, be

answered in the negative. Only those designs which from the standpoints of systematisation and standardisation are useful to classify will be incorporated in the ABC system. Other products receive six-figure numbers, taken out in running order. Consequently there may be found in our catalogues, side by side with the ABC designations, actual drawing numbers which have been raised to the rank of catalogue numbers, such as 209195 = gong support.

With four-figure numbers there are in the ABC system $22 \times 21 \times 21 \times 90 \times 100 = 87318000$ possibilities for individual articles. Naturally in practice only a very small fraction of these numbers will be utilised, but the system must be of such a nature that it is possible to build on any branch whatever with fresh numbers. For example, it may be stated that in the class RCA »wound rolls», on account of the great number of variants that can arise, it has been necessary to adopt 6-figure numbers, *e. g.*, RCA 203226.

The decision to introduce the ABC designations as catalogue numbers was taken as far back as 1937. On account of the enlargement of the manufacturing programme to comprise ever more domains of technology, the capacity of the catalogue system then existing with two letters followed by figures was found to be too small. As the ABC system with its large capacity was already in considerable employment at that time for internal designations of the standardised productions, there was available almost as a gift a new system for catalogue designations.

The ABC system can also be utilised by other undertakings belonging to the LM Ericsson group. By adding to the three letters designating the class a fourth letter representing the undertaking's code letter the possibilities of the system are increased, so that each undertaking on the basis of the framework drawn up by LME can classify and designate products in the main groups or, in other words, the kinds of goods for which the system is designed. For LM Ericsson, Helsingfors, which has the code letter H, the class designation for DBK will then be DBKH and the individual article will, for example receive the number DBKH 1367. These designations, however, are only used for products manufactured in Finland, while the instruments normally imported from Sweden are designated by the normal three-letter designations.