Controlled first batch guide

For repeat machined components, second-source supply and production handover

A first batch is the point where the drawing, material, set-up, inspection method and approval path are proven before repeat supply starts.

Use this guide when a part is likely to repeat, the drawing needs control, the current supplier is a risk, or the component creates a real negative consequence if fit, function or delivery fails.

Item	Detail
Best for	OEMs, machinery builders, maintenance teams and industrial operators moving repeat machined parts into a controlled supply path.
Use before	Sending a first batch RFQ, changing machining supplier, qualifying a second source or restarting supply of a legacy part.
Main output	A controlled first batch plan with clear inputs, inspection points, approval requirements and next steps.
Limit	This guide does not replace customer design authority, compliance approval or safety certification.

Next steps

Start a component supply review

RFQ readiness guide
Drawing health checklist

When to use a controlled first batch

Use a controlled first batch when the part is important enough to require a known method before it becomes normal repeat supply.

Trigger	Use a controlled first batch when
Repeat demand exists	The part is, or will be, ordered more than once, belongs to a part family or is likely to be needed again.
Supplier risk exists	The current supplier is overloaded, slow, inconsistent, exiting the work or acting as a single point of failure.
Fit or function is important	The part carries, locates, seals, drives, slides, rotates, vibrates, pumps or holds an assembly relationship.
Drawing control is important	Revision, material, tolerance, finish or inspection details need to be locked before repeat orders.
Inspection evidence is important	The customer needs dimensional results, certificates, material traceability or documented approval.
Timing is important	The buyer needs a supply path before a planned shutdown, production ramp-up, maintenance pressure or urgent shortage.

When not to use it

Situation	Required action
One-off, low-risk work	Use a normal enquiry if the part has no repeat demand, no special inspection requirement and no supply risk.
Unclear design responsibility	Clarify ownership first. ALE manufactures to agreed information. It does not become the design authority by making a batch.
Unresolved compliance issue	Clarify pressure, safety, regulated, warranty or certification requirements before quoting.
No usable information	A sample or photo may start a review, but critical work needs enough information to control manufacture and inspection.

First batch pathway

Step	Action	Control point
1	Select the candidate part	Choose one part or one small part family. Start where repeat demand, supplier risk and technical fit are clear.
2	Build the information pack	Supply the drawing, STEP file, part number, revision, material, finish, quantity, required date, photos and current supplier notes.
3	Review technical fit	Check machining process, workholding, material, tolerances, finishing, inspection method and post-machining operations.
4	Agree the first batch plan	Confirm quantity, inspection evidence, approval method, packaging, delivery requirement and commercial terms.
5	Manufacture and inspect	Make the batch under the agreed method. Record the agreed inspection evidence before release.
6	Approve or correct	Customer reviews fit, function and documentation. Any correction is captured against the drawing, process or inspection plan.
7	Move suitable parts into repeat control	Approved repeat parts can move into a critical parts register, reorder plan or planned repeat supply arrangement.

First batch status

Status	Meaning
Ready to quote	Drawing pack and first batch requirement are clear enough for commercial review.
Ready with clarifications	A quote can progress after defined questions are answered.
Review first	The part needs technical review before any useful quote can be issued.
Not a fit	The work is outside ALE capability, documentation standard, risk setting or production fit.

Information to send

Send enough information to remove guesswork. The better the input pack, the cleaner the quote, inspection plan and approval path.

Area	Include
Part identity	Part name, part number, drawing number, drawing revision, buyer reference and equipment or assembly location.
Drawing and files	Current PDF drawing, STEP or native CAD files if available, sample photos, assembly photos and any marked-up change notes.
Material and finish	Material grade, specification, hardness, heat treatment, coating, plating, anodising, passivation or other process requirement.
Quantity and timing	First batch quantity, expected annual demand, required delivery date, shutdown date or production build window.
Inspection requirement	Critical dimensions, customer inspection points, certificates, first article requirement and dimensional report format.
Supply history	Current supplier, last order date, previous quantity, known issues, late supply risk and reason for review.
Approval path	Who signs off fit, who signs off documents, whether sample approval is required and what counts as accepted.

Useful but not mandatory

Item	Use
Sample part	Useful for legacy parts, missing notes and functional features, but it does not replace a controlled drawing where tolerances matter.
Old order or invoice	Useful for material, finish, quantity and timing history.
Inspection report	Useful for critical feature history and repeated issues.
Failure photo	Useful where wear, distortion, cracking or fit issues are part of the reason for review.

First batch plan template

Field	Detail
Customer	
Contact	
Part name and number	
Drawing number and revision	
Material and finish	
First batch quantity	
Expected repeat demand	
Required date	
Critical features	
Inspection evidence required	
Customer approval contact	
Known supplier risk	
Post-machining processes	
Packaging or delivery notes	
Decision after batch	Repeat supply / revise and repeat / hold / not a fit

Batch quantity note

The right first batch quantity is large enough to prove the process and small enough to manage risk. It may not be the cheapest unit price. The purpose is controlled approval.

Inspection and approval

A first batch should define what has to be proved before the part becomes repeat work.

Control	Evidence
Drawing match	Part number, revision, units, material and finish match the approved pack.
Critical dimensions	Bores, shafts, threads, faces, datums, sealing areas, mounting points and functional features are checked where required.
Material and process evidence	Material certificates, heat treatment records, coating certificates or special process evidence are supplied if required.
Dimensional report	Report format, sample size and recorded features are agreed before manufacture.
Customer fit trial	Customer confirms fit, assembly, function or field approval where required.
Change control	Any change after quote is captured against the drawing, STEP file, revision, method or inspection plan.
Release decision	Approved, approved with notes, revise and repeat, hold, or not suitable for repeat supply.

Approval record

Decision	Next action
Approved for repeat supply	Part can move to critical parts register or planned repeat supply review.
Approved with notes	Part can repeat after notes are built into the next drawing, process or inspection pack.
Revise and repeat	A corrected first batch or revised process is required.
Hold	Open technical, commercial or approval issue remains.

After the first batch

The batch is not finished when the parts leave the shop. The record should be closed properly so the next order does not restart from scratch.

Post-batch step	Record
1. Fit and function review	Confirm whether the parts assembled, operated or trialled as expected.
2. Inspection review	Confirm whether the inspection evidence matched the customer requirement.
3. Drawing review	Record any missing tolerances, unclear notes, finish details or customer changes.
4. Supply review	Confirm realistic repeat quantity, reorder interval, lead time and required stock position.
5. Register update	Move approved repeat parts into a customer critical parts register.
6. Next order plan	Agree whether the next step is reorder trigger, quarterly review, planned repeat supply or no further action.

Related ALE resources

Related page	Link
Customer critical parts register	https://alfredlewis.com.au/customer-critical-parts-register/
Planned repeat component supply	Download
Drawing health checklist	Download
RFQ readiness guide	Download
Component supply review form	https://alfredlewis.com.au/component-supply-review/

Controlled first batch checklist

Item	Status	Notes
Part has repeat demand or second-source need	[ ] Ready [ ] Unclear [ ] N/A	
Drawing number and revision are clear	[ ] Ready [ ] Unclear [ ] N/A	
Material, treatment and finish are confirmed	[ ] Ready [ ] Unclear [ ] N/A	
First batch quantity is agreed	[ ] Ready [ ] Unclear [ ] N/A	
Critical features are identified	[ ] Ready [ ] Unclear [ ] N/A	
Inspection evidence is agreed before manufacture	[ ] Ready [ ] Unclear [ ] N/A	
Customer approval contact is nominated	[ ] Ready [ ] Unclear [ ] N/A	
Supplier risk or reason for review is recorded	[ ] Ready [ ] Unclear [ ] N/A	
Post-machining processes are confirmed	[ ] Ready [ ] Unclear [ ] N/A	
Packaging and delivery requirements are known	[ ] Ready [ ] Unclear [ ] N/A	
Decision after batch is recorded	[ ] Ready [ ] Unclear [ ] N/A	
Approved repeat part is added to the register	[ ] Ready [ ] Unclear [ ] N/A	

Start with the right input

For new customer work, the first step is a component supply review. For parts already in discussion, send the drawing pack and mark the first batch requirement clearly.

Start a component supply review