**Understanding SuDoc Classification**

The Superintendent of Documents uses an alpha/numeric (letters before numbers) classification system which assigns a “SuDoc” number to each publication. This system classifies each document by the issuing government agency, not by subject.

A SuDoc number is composed of two major parts divided by the colon: (1) the stem, which identifies the government department or agency that published/issued the document and after the colon, (2) a book number which is specific to that document.

SuDoc numbers beginning with the letters A-T identify the executive department or government agency that published the document. Therefore, A is for the Department of Agriculture, S is for the State Department, etc. The letters X and Y, however, identify documents pertaining to Congress, such as hearings and reports. (See next page for a complete list of what each Letter stands for).

The majority of our Government Documents begin with a letter or letters followed by a number or numbers, then a period (.) followed by letter(s) and numbers then a colon (:). After the colon there will be more letters and numbers which may contain slashes (/) and dashes (-). A SuDoc number flows from left to right in a straight line. An example is Y 4.J 89/2:F 31/6. The number after the period is a whole number. For example, when filing/shelving a document, .9 would come before .12.

When filing/shelving government documents:

File by the letter or letters at the beginning of the classification number.

File next by the whole number up to the period.

File next by the whole number up to the separation mark (colon or slash)

Using our previous example:

Start by finding the Ys, then the Y4s, then locate the Y4.Js, then follow along until you find the Y 4.J 89/2s, then in that section locate the Y 4.J 89/2:Fs, then locate the spot where F 31/6 should go.

**Years, Letters, and Numbers after the Colon:**

If the call number is the same up until the colon and then varies, the correct order after the colon is Years, Letters, then Numbers. For example:

EP 1.23: 998 (“998” represents the year 1998; after the year 2000, years include the full four digits)

EP 1.23: A-63 (The letter “A” comes after the year 1998)

EP 1.23: 91-44 (“91” is a number so it is filed last)

**Slashes and Dashes:**

If call numbers are the same up until the colon except for a slash, the correct order is un-slashed then slashed. In other words, numbers without slashes come before numbers with slashes. For example:

C 51.11: EN 8/995 (After the colon, “Letters before Numbers”…always remember this phrase!)

C 51.11: 23 (Numbers after Letters)

C 51.11/8: 995-96 (“Slashes” after “No Slashes”)

The same rule applies to numbers dashed onto other numbers or letters.

For example, C 3.186/7 would come before C 3.186/7-3.

**More examples of correct call number order are on the back... 🡺**

**Correct Call Number Order:**

**Example 1**

HE 20.6520: P92 (After the colon, “Letters before Numbers”)   
HE 20.6520: 3 (After the colon, Numbers after Letters)  
HE 20.6520/2: AC9/2 (“Slashed numbers” after “Unslashed”)  
HE 20.6520/2: 17 (Numbers after Letters)

**Example 2**

C 3.186:

C 3.186/2:

C 3.186/8:

C 3.186/8-4

C 3.186/9:

**Example 3**

EP 1.23:998

EP 1.23/A:

EP 1.23/A-2:

EP 1.23/2:

EP 1.23/2-2: