

Contact:  
Shelley Boxer, V.P. Finance  
MSC Industrial Direct Co., Inc.  
(516) 812-1216

Investor Relations: Eric Boyriven/Bob Joyce  
Press: Scot Hoffman  
FD  
(212) 850-5600

**For Immediate Release**

**MSC INDUSTRIAL DIRECT CO., INC. REPORTS BETTER THAN  
EXPECTED SECOND QUARTER FISCAL YEAR 2008 RESULTS**

*- Net sales increase 7.9% to \$436.5 million -  
- Earnings per diluted share increase 19.7% to \$0.73 -*

**Melville, NY, April 8, 2008 - MSC INDUSTRIAL DIRECT CO., INC. (NYSE: MSM),** “MSC” or the “Company,” one of the premier distributors of Metalworking and Maintenance, Repair and Operations (“MRO”) supplies to industrial customers throughout the United States, today reported financial results for its second quarter of fiscal 2008 ended March 1, 2008.

For the fiscal 2008 second quarter, net sales rose 7.9% to \$436.5 million from \$404.6 million in the second quarter of fiscal 2007. Operating income increased 13.0% in the fiscal 2008 second quarter to \$78.6 million, or 18.0% of net sales, from \$69.6 million, or 17.2% of net sales, in the second quarter of fiscal 2007. Net income for the fiscal 2008 second quarter was \$47.5 million, an increase of 17.2% over net income of \$40.5 million in the year ago period. Diluted earnings per share were \$0.73 in the fiscal 2008 second quarter (based on 65.2 million diluted shares outstanding), versus \$0.61 per diluted share (based on 66.8 million diluted shares outstanding) a year ago, an increase of 19.7%. The Company’s results for the second quarter of fiscal 2007 included pre-tax charges totaling \$2.2 million, or \$0.02 per diluted share on an after-tax basis, for costs related to the integration of the J&L acquisition, as previously announced.

Net sales for the first half of fiscal 2008 increased 8.4% to \$874.0 million from \$806.6 million a year ago. Operating income for the first half of fiscal 2008 was \$156.6 million, or 17.9% of net sales, versus \$138.8 million, or 17.2% of net sales, in the first half of fiscal 2007, an increase of 12.8%. For the first half of fiscal 2008, net income rose 16.7% to \$94.3 million from \$80.8 million in the year ago period. Diluted earnings per share for the first half of fiscal 2008 were \$1.43 (based on 66.0 million diluted shares outstanding), versus \$1.20 per diluted share (based on 67.3 million diluted shares outstanding) a year ago, an increase of 19.2%. The Company’s results for the first half of fiscal 2007 include pre-tax charges totaling \$3.3 million, or \$0.03 per diluted share on an after-tax basis, for costs related to the integration of the J&L acquisition, as previously announced.

“The fiscal 2008 second quarter marked another period of strong performance for MSC in the face of a challenging market environment,” said David Sandler, President and Chief Executive Officer. “During the quarter, we continued to execute our business model, providing our customers with the products and services they needed, when they needed them, and at the same

time we worked very hard to maintain our margins. The net result was that MSC continued to grow and take market share during the period.”

“We are very pleased with our financial performance in the fiscal 2008 second quarter, which reflects the effectiveness of our efforts to grow the business,” said Chuck Boehlke, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. “We once again met or exceeded our financial targets, as we effectively executed our business model while continuing to make investments in our future growth. In addition, we generated excellent cash flows during the fiscal 2008 second quarter as we executed on our stated goal of reducing inventories to more normalized levels from those seen in the first quarter of fiscal 2008. We took advantage of the opportunity to buy our stock at attractive prices. We purchased approximately 2.5 million shares for \$96.0 million in the quarter. We increased our maximum borrowing line under our revolving credit agreement to \$150.0 million, a portion of which was used to finance the repurchase of these shares. Going forward we will continue to invest in MSC’s future growth and we expect cash flows to remain strong as we execute on our model.”

Mr. Sandler concluded, “As we enter the third quarter, our customers continue to face a number of issues, including rising raw material and transportation costs, and are seeking to reduce their MRO inventory levels in response, as is typical in a challenging economy. We have seen this cycle many times, and MSC’s financial strength, broad and deep product offerings, 99% fill rate and same day delivery capability allow us to continue to take share and grow in this environment as we effectively meet and support our customers’ needs. In short, we are ideally positioned to further enhance our position as a leader in the marketplace, and will benefit from our efforts even more strongly when the economy begins to recover.”

Based on current market factors, the Company expects net sales for the third quarter of fiscal 2008 to be between \$457 million and \$463 million. The Company expects diluted earnings per share for the fiscal 2008 third quarter to be between \$0.77 and \$0.79. The Company also noted that there will be 64 business days in the third quarter of fiscal 2008 compared to 65 business days in the third quarter of fiscal 2007.

The management of MSC will host a conference call today at 11:00 a.m. Eastern Time to review the Company’s results for the second quarter of fiscal 2008, and to comment on current operations. The call may be accessed via the Internet at: <http://www.mscdirect.com>.

### **About MSC Industrial Direct**

MSC Industrial Direct is one of the premier distributors of Metalworking and Maintenance, Repair and Operation (“MRO”) supplies to industrial customers throughout the United States. MSC distributes in excess of 550,000 industrial products from approximately 3,000 suppliers to approximately 384,000 customers. In-stock availability is approximately 99%, with next day, standard ground delivery to the majority of the industrial United States. MSC reaches its customers through a combination of approximately 30 million direct-mail catalogs and CD-ROMs, 98 branch sales offices, 857 sales people, the Internet and associations with some of the world’s most prominent B2B e-commerce portals. For more information, visit the Company’s Web site at <http://www.mscdirect.com>.

CAUTIONARY STATEMENT UNDER THE PRIVATE SECURITIES LITIGATION REFORM ACT OF 1995. Statements in this Press Release may constitute "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. Any statements contained herein which are not statements of historical facts and that address activities, events or developments that the Company expects, believes or anticipates will or may occur in the future shall be deemed to be forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements are inherently subject to risks and uncertainties, many of which cannot be predicted with accuracy and some of which might not even be anticipated. Future events, actual results and performance, financial and otherwise, could differ materially from those set forth in or contemplated by the forward-looking statements herein. Readers are cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date hereof. The Company undertakes no obligation to release publicly any revisions to these forward-looking statements that may be made to reflect events or circumstances after the date hereof or to reflect the occurrence of unanticipated events. The inclusion of any statement in this release does not constitute an admission by MSC or any other person that the events or circumstances described in such statement are material. Factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those in forward-looking statements include, without limitation, changing customer and product mixes, changing market conditions, industry consolidations, competition, general economic conditions in the markets in which the Company operates, rising commodity and energy prices, risk of cancellation or rescheduling of orders, work stoppages or other business interruptions (including those due to extreme weather conditions) at transportation centers or shipping ports, the risk of war, terrorism and similar hostilities, dependence on the Company's information systems and on key personnel, the outcome of potential government or regulatory proceedings or future litigation relating to pending or future claims, inquiries or audits, and various other risk factors listed from time to time in the Company's SEC reports.

(Tables Follow)

**MSC INDUSTRIAL DIRECT CO., INC.**  
**Condensed Consolidated Balance Sheets**

(In thousands)

|   | March 1,<br><u>2008</u><br>(Unaudited) | September 1,<br><u>2007</u> |
|---|--|-----------------------------|
| <u>ASSETS</u>   |  |                             |
| Current Assets:   |  |                             |
| Cash and cash equivalents                                   | \$ 7,351                               | \$ 7,797                    |
| Accounts receivable, net of allowance for doubtful accounts | 223,508                                | 204,186                     |
| Inventories   | 343,473                                | 338,366                     |
| Prepaid expenses and other current assets                   | 18,382                                 | 20,748                      |
| Deferred income taxes                                       | 21,000                                 | 18,705                      |
| Total current assets  | 613,714                                | 589,802                     |
| Property, plant and equipment, net                          | 123,947                                | 127,608                     |
| Goodwill  | 272,806                                | 272,806                     |
| Identifiable intangibles, net                               | 66,988                                 | 70,832                      |
| Other assets  | 10,361                                 | 14,279                      |
| Total Assets  | \$ 1,087,816                           | \$ 1,075,327                |
| <u>LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY</u>                 |  |                             |
| Current Liabilities:  |  |                             |
| Revolving credit notes                                      | \$ 94,000                              | \$ --                       |
| Current maturities of long-term notes payable               | 38,599                                 | 33,471                      |
| Accounts payable  | 59,068                                 | 69,579                      |
| Accrued liabilities   | 53,186                                 | 70,237                      |
| Total current liabilities                                   | 244,853                                | 173,287                     |
| Long-term notes payable                                     | 121,619                                | 142,200                     |
| Deferred income tax liabilities                             | 34,048                                 | 31,963                      |
| Total liabilities   | 400,520                                | 347,450                     |
| Shareholders' Equity:                                       |  |                             |
| Preferred Stock   | --                                     | --                          |
| Class A common stock  | 59                                     | 59                          |
| Class B common stock  | 18                                     | 18                          |
| Additional paid-in capital                                  | 417,551                                | 408,996                     |
| Retained earnings   | 680,406                                | 609,713                     |
| Accumulated other comprehensive income                      | 509                                    | 694                         |
| Class A treasury stock, at cost                             | (411,247)                              | (291,603)                   |
| Total shareholders' equity                                  | 687,296                                | 727,877                     |
| Total Liabilities and Shareholders' Equity                  | \$ 1,087,816                           | \$ 1,075,327                |

**MSC INDUSTRIAL DIRECT CO., INC.**  
**Condensed Consolidated Statements of Income**

*(In thousands, except per share data)*  
(Unaudited)

|   | Thirteen Weeks Ended |                      | Twenty-Six Weeks Ended |                      |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
|   | March 1,<br>2008     | February 24,<br>2007 | March 1,<br>2008       | February 24,<br>2007 |
| Net sales   | \$ 436,486           | \$ 404,618           | \$ 874,040             | \$ 806,630           |
| Cost of goods sold  | <u>233,428</u>       | <u>217,017</u>       | <u>468,412</u>         | <u>433,338</u>       |
| Gross profit  | 203,058              | 187,601              | 405,628                | 373,292              |
| Operating expenses  | <u>124,443</u>       | <u>118,032</u>       | <u>249,043</u>         | <u>234,517</u>       |
| Income from operations  | <u>78,615</u>        | <u>69,569</u>        | <u>156,585</u>         | <u>138,775</u>       |
| Other Income (Expense):   |                      |                      |                        |                      |
| Interest expense  | (2,459)              | (3,336)              | (4,923)                | (6,542)              |
| Interest income   | 136                  | 161                  | 375                    | 437                  |
| Other income (expense), net   | <u>35</u>            | <u>(12)</u>          | <u>76</u>              | <u>(33)</u>          |
| Total other expense   | <u>(2,288)</u>       | <u>(3,187)</u>       | <u>(4,472)</u>         | <u>(6,138)</u>       |
| Income before provision<br>for income taxes                               | 76,327               | 66,382               | 152,113                | 132,637              |
| Provision for income taxes  | <u>28,867</u>        | <u>25,875</u>        | <u>57,787</u>          | <u>51,834</u>        |
| Net income  | <u>\$ 47,460</u>     | <u>\$ 40,507</u>     | <u>\$ 94,326</u>       | <u>\$ 80,803</u>     |
| Per Share Information:  |                      |                      |                        |                      |
| Net income per common share:  |                      |                      |                        |                      |
| Basic   | <u>\$ 0.74</u>       | <u>\$ 0.62</u>       | <u>\$ 1.45</u>         | <u>\$ 1.22</u>       |
| Diluted   | <u>\$ 0.73</u>       | <u>\$ 0.61</u>       | <u>\$ 1.43</u>         | <u>\$ 1.20</u>       |
| Weighted average shares used in computing<br>net income per common share: |                      |                      |                        |                      |
| Basic   | <u>64,489</u>        | <u>65,599</u>        | <u>65,067</u>          | <u>66,050</u>        |
| Diluted   | <u>65,198</u>        | <u>66,781</u>        | <u>65,965</u>          | <u>67,258</u>        |
| Cash dividends declared per common share                                  | <u>\$ 0.18</u>       | <u>\$ 0.14</u>       | <u>\$ 0.36</u>         | <u>\$ 0.28</u>       |

**MSC INDUSTRIAL DIRECT CO., INC.**  
**Condensed Consolidated Statements of Cash Flows**

(In thousands)  
(Unaudited)

|   | Twenty-Six Weeks Ended |                      |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|
|   | March 1,<br>2008       | February 24,<br>2007 |
| Cash Flows from Operating Activities:   |                        |                      |
| Net income  | \$ 94,326              | \$ 80,803            |
| Adjustments to reconcile net income to net cash provided by operating activities:           |                        |                      |
| Depreciation and amortization   | 13,372                 | 12,558               |
| Stock-based compensation  | 5,220                  | 4,296                |
| Loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment   | 3                      | 152                  |
| Provision for doubtful accounts   | 839                    | 2,112                |
| Deferred income taxes   | (210)                  | (1,034)              |
| Reclassification of excess tax benefits from stock-based compensation                       | (657)                  | (1,654)              |
| Changes in operating assets and liabilities:  |                        |                      |
| Accounts receivable   | (20,299)               | (14,272)             |
| Inventories   | (5,273)                | (11,363)             |
| Prepaid expenses and other current assets   | 2,354                  | 1,530                |
| Other assets  | 3,969                  | 5,212                |
| Accounts payable and accrued liabilities  | (26,657)               | (4,623)              |
| Total adjustments   | (27,339)               | (7,086)              |
| Net cash provided by operating activities   | 66,987                 | 73,717               |
| Cash Flows from Investing Activities:   |                        |                      |
| Business acquisition  | --                     | (12,798)             |
| Expenditures for property, plant and equipment  | (5,940)                | (14,729)             |
| Net cash used in investing activities   | (5,940)                | (27,527)             |
| Cash Flows from Financing Activities:   |                        |                      |
| Purchase of treasury stock  | (120,429)              | (67,096)             |
| Payment of cash dividends   | (23,633)               | (18,569)             |
| Reclassification of excess tax benefits from stock-based compensation                       | 657                    | 1,654                |
| Proceeds from sale of Class A common stock in connection with associate stock purchase plan | 1,510                  | 1,547                |
| Proceeds from exercise of Class A common stock options                                      | 1,877                  | 3,688                |
| Net proceeds under revolving loans from credit facility                                     | 94,000                 | 30,000               |
| Repayments of notes payable under the credit facility and other notes                       | (15,454)               | (78)                 |
| Net cash used in financing activities   | (61,472)               | (48,854)             |
| Effect of exchange rate changes on cash and cash equivalents                                | (21)                   | --                   |
| Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents   | (446)                  | (2,664)              |
| Cash and cash equivalents – beginning of period   | 7,797                  | 7,718                |
| Cash and cash equivalents – end of period   | \$ 7,351               | \$ 5,054             |
| Supplemental Disclosure of Cash Flow Information:   |                        |                      |
| Cash paid for income taxes  | \$ 55,726              | \$ 55,917            |
| Cash paid for interest  | \$ 5,047               | \$ 6,174             |

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