

COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS AND ON THE GLOBALLY HARMONIZED SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION AND LABELLING OF CHEMICALS

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

Fourteenth session

Geneva, 12-14 December 2007

Items 1, 2, 3 and 7 of the provisional agenda

Work of the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

Note by the Secretariat

This document contains the relevant conclusions and excerpts of the draft report of the Sub-Committee of Experts on the transport of dangerous (TDG Sub-Committee) on its thirty-second session, on matters of concern to the GHS Sub-Committee.

Agenda item 2: Physical, health and environmental hazards

(a) Substances having explosive properties

Document: UN/SCETDG/32/INF.35 (ICCA) - UN/SCEGHS/14/INF.13 (CEFIC)

The TDG Sub-Committee agreed that the decisions taken at the last session and forwarded to the GHS Sub-Committee in document ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/2007/6 needed further consideration, preferably by the working group on explosives which would meet at the July session. The issue would be discussed intersessionally either at a session of an informal working group that ICCA offered to host, or during a session of the informal working group on desensitized explosives which would also be likely to be organized in early 2008 and where relevant experts would be present.

(Refer to para. 61 of the draft report of the TDG Sub-Committee on its thirty-second session ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2007/CRP.3/Add.6).

(b) Classification of gas mixtures as oxidizing

Documents:

ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2007/53 (EIGA) - ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/2007/7 (EIGA)

UN/SCETDG/32/INF.57: revised proposal

The TDG Sub-Committee agreed to add a Note to 2.2.2.1 (b) (Chapter 2.2 of the UN Model Regulations) concerning the definition of oxidizing mixtures, as amended, as follows:

[Note: "Gases which cause or contribute to the combustion of other material more than air" means pure gases or gas mixtures with an oxidizing power greater than 23.5% as determined by a method specified in ISO 10156:1996 or 10156-2:2005]

It was agreed that this decision should be brought to the attention of the GHS Sub-Committee.

(Refer to para. 58 of the draft report of the TDG Sub-Committee on its thirty-second session ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2007/CRP.3/Add.6 and ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2007/CRP.4).

Following the proposal in document ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2007/53 as amended in INF.57, which was provisionally adopted by the TDG Sub-Committee, the original proposal of amendment in document ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/2007/7 (EIGA) would be replaced by the following:

“Replace current Note under table 2.4.1 in chapter 2.4 of the GHS with the following:

“NOTE: *“Gases which cause or contribute to the combustion of other material more than air” means pure gases or gas mixtures with an oxidizing power greater than 23.5% as determined by a method specified in ISO 10156:1996 or 10156-2:2005”*

Consequential amendment (Note by the secretariat):

The Sub-Committee is invited to consider whether the same note should be added after the definition of “Oxidizing gas” in Chapter 1.2 of the GHS.

(c) Skin corrosion tests

Document: UN/SCETDG/32/INF.4, INF.5 and INF.6 (ICCA), UN/SCETDG/32/INF.49 (USA)

The TDG Sub-Committee provisionally adopted the proposal contained in document INF.49 to amend paragraph 2.8.2.4 of the UN Model Regulations, with an amendment indicating that corrosiveness on metals should also be taken into account.

During the discussion, the point was made that while the classification criteria for class 8 (corrosive substances) were compatible with the GHS criteria relating to skin corrosion, they do not include the GHS criteria in their entirety, since in vitro tests methods are not listed in the Model Regulations as being methods that are acceptable in place of in vivo methods.

It was suggested that the provisionally adopted text could perhaps be checked by the GHS Sub-Committee. The expert from the Netherlands said that the criteria and the classification procedures of the Model Regulations should be checked more thoroughly, in view of the GHS criteria, and that he would prepare a document for the next session with respect to corrosiveness.

The text provisionally adopted by the TDG Sub-Committee reads as follows (changes to current text in the 15th revised edition of the Model Regulations are indicated):

“2.8.2.4 In assigning the packing group to a substance in accordance with 2.8.2.2, account shall be taken of human experience in instances of accidental exposure. In the absence of human experience the grouping shall be based on data obtained from experiments in accordance with OECD Guideline 404¹ or 435². A substance which is determined not to be corrosive in accordance with OECD Test Guideline 430³ or OECD Test Guideline 431⁴ may be considered not to be corrosive to skin for the purposes of these Regulations without further testing.”.

(Refer to para. 20-22 of the draft report of the TDG Sub-Committee on its thirty-second session, ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2007/CRP.3/Add.1, and CRP.4)

¹ OECD Guidelines for testing of chemicals No.404 “Acute Dermal Irritation/Corrosion” 1992.

² OECD Guideline for the testing of chemicals No.435 “In Vitro Membrane Barrier Test Method for Skin Corrosion” 2006.

³ OECD Guideline for the testing of chemicals No. 430 “In Vitro Skin Corrosion: Transcutaneous Electrical Resistance Test (TER)” 2004.

⁴ OECD Guideline for the testing of chemicals No. 431 “In Vitro Skin Corrosion: Human Skin Model Test” 2004.

Agenda item 3: Hazard communication issues

Document: ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2007/55 (CTIF) - ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/2007/13 (CTIF)

The TDG Sub-Committee considered the document submitted by CTIF and concluded that there was no support for the proposal that only white symbols and numbers should appear on black, green, red and blue background.

(See para. 59 of the draft report of the TDG Sub-Committee on its thirty-second session ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2007/CRP.3/Add.6).

Agenda item 7: Other business

(a) Request for consultative status

Document: UN/SCETDG/32/INF.5 - UN/SCEGHS/14/INF.3

The TDG Sub-Committee agreed to grant consultative status to the Institute of Makers of Explosives (IME).

(Refer to para. 88 of the draft report of the TDG Sub-Committee on its thirty-second session ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2007/CRP.3/Add.8).

(b) Schedule of meetings

Documents: UN/SCETDG/32/INF.16 (Canada) and UN/SCETDG/32/INF.43 (Secretariat)

The TDG Sub-Committee discussed the proposal by Canada to replace the current schedule of meetings (twice a year, back-to-back with sessions of the GHS Sub-Committee) by a new schedule including only 3 sessions per biennium, as well as the comments made by the secretariat on elements to take into account before taking any decision (reporting to ECOSOC, implications for the secretariat, implications on the schedule of meetings of modal intergovernmental bodies, effects on implementation tools).

Certain experts supported the proposal, since this would reduce the travel costs related to their participation in the sessions of sub-committees, and would give them more time for preparing proposals and consulting at national level.

Other experts feared that such a rearrangement would result in an overall reduction of meeting time for the TDG Sub-Committee, which they considered not desirable since experience showed that it was already making nearly full use of the meeting time currently allocated, except in the second session of a biennium. It was also recalled that the programme of work had increased since the TDG Sub-Committee had to carry out the part of the programme of work of the GHS Sub-Committee concerning physical hazards.

Several experts insisted on the need to stick to the principle of back-to-back sessions of both sub-committees in order to ensure multisectoral cooperation and participation of transport experts in GHS activities.

Some experts felt that the current periodicity of sessions every six months permitted regular consultations which allowed experts to receive feedback on their proposals and make quick progress. A periodicity of eight months for three sessions per biennium might not be appropriate to maintain the current momentum.

It was also suggested that the second session of a biennium be reduced to five days in future, or that the dates of the sessions be changed since holding sessions in July and December seemed to cause problems to some experts.

The Chairman concluded that changing the existing arrangements would require careful consideration by both sub-committees, of written documents showing the different options with the pros and cons, and consultation with other relevant organizations.

(Refer to paras. 89 to 95 of the draft report of the TDG Sub-Committee on its thirty-second session ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2007/CRP.3/Add.8).

(c) Biennial evaluations

Documents: UN/SCETDG/32/INF.44 - UN/SCEGHS/14/INF.21 (Secretariat)
UN/SCETDG/32/INF.54 (Secretariat)

The TDG Sub-Committee noted that the UNECE had requested all its sectoral committees to implement biennial performance evaluations. As the Sub-Committee is a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council, it does not have to comply with this request. Nevertheless, since its activities are included in the programme budget of the UNECE, it was agreed to develop a text for the accomplishments expected in 2008-2009 and related performance indicators, for information of the UNECE, which is reproduced below.

EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENT

Development and review of recommendations, drafted in the form of Model Regulations, on the transport of dangerous goods in the light of technical progress, the advent of new substances and materials, the exigencies of modern transport systems and, above all, the requirement to ensure the safety and security of people, property and the environment. These recommendations shall represent a basic scheme of provisions to allow uniform development of national and international regulations governing the various modes of transport.

Performance indicators

1. Number of international legal instruments amended to reflect the 2007 UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, Model Regulations (15th revised edition);
2. Number of governments having adopted the requirements of 2007 UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, Model Regulations (15th revised edition) for regulating inland domestic traffic;
3. Amendments to 15th revised edition of the Model Regulations and 4th revised edition of the Manual of Tests and Criteria adopted in 2008 and reflected in the 16th revised edition of the Model Regulations and 5th revised edition of the Manual of Tests and Criteria before end 2009.
