

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 Transport of Dangerous Goods

Twenty-fifth session
Geneva, 5-14 July 2004
Item 7 of the provisional agenda

MISCELLANEOUS PROPOSALS OF AMENDMENTS TO THE MODEL REGULATIONS ON THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS

Information required on the dangerous goods transport document

5.4.1.5.1 Total quantity of dangerous goods – comments on INF.7 (from United States of America)

Transmitted by the expert from the Norway

Introduction

In document UN/SCETDG/25/INF.7 to the twenty- fifth session, the United States of America comments on the proposal from the expert from Austria in document ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2004/3.

The US claims that they recently have been made aware of a problem concerning the information on the total quantity of dangerous goods carried as regards articles for Class 1. They propose, based on arguments regarding small arms ammunition that it is not appropriate to state the net explosive mass, but that this should be changed to net mass of the articles for all Class I articles.

Norway will remind the sub-committee that the reference to net explosive mass was carefully chosen to enable the emergency responders and others to correctly calculate the safety-/evacuation distances for accidents involving explosives. This reference is also used in other parts of transport of dangerous goods legislation, i.e. for limitations on maximum loads of explosives in one transport unit. Class 1 is special in the respect that there is a direct correlation on the net mass of explosives and the overpressure/shrapnel distances that will cause harm to the surroundings. This was the reasoning behind the present text.

Using the net mass of the article will lead to vastly greater evacuation distances than necessary for very many of the articles containing explosives, something that will have a negative effect both on the rescue operation itself, and on the general public that will have to be evacuated from much wider areas than strictly necessary.

If the background for the US proposal is to assure that the captain/pilot/driver knows the weight of his total load, that is hardly an issue for the dangerous goods regulations. In the UNRTDG one should require information on the mass of the dangerous goods, not on the weight of the metal and paper etc. that covers the dangerous goods. As an example, the “rule of thumb” for fireworks, is that only 15 – 20 % of the net mass of the article consists of explosives, the rest is cardboard and paper, while it for a shaped charge may be the other way around. Another example is that for a “standard” 500 lbs aircraft bomb, the net weight of the explosive is approximately 65 kgs.

Proposal

The expert from Norway proposes that no change is made to 5.4.1.5.1 as far as the net mass for explosives is concerned.
