

**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

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Item 3 of the provisional agenda

**OPTIONS TO FACILITTE GLOBAL HARMONIZATION OF TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS  
GOODS REGULATIONS WITH THE UN MODEL REGULATIONS**

Relation with the Universal Postal Union (UPU)

Note by the secretariat

1. Reference is made to ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/58, para. 130. At the last session, the secretariat was invited to consult UPU about the existing provisions regarding the consignment of dangerous goods by mail in order to provide a basis for the future work of the Sub-Committee on this issue and to inform the Sub-Committee accordingly.
2. The secretariat reproduces hereafter a summary of the existing UPU articles and the text of these articles. Those articles should be revised by UPU during the next Council session in April 2007, October 2007 and eventually at the UPU Congress in 2008. UPU has informed the secretariat that the current articles are very basic and should be expanded in terms of content and instruction for the posts on acceptance and handling measures, training, etc.



## **Summary of Universal Postal Union Regulations Governing the Carriage of Dangerous Goods in the International Mails**

### **Article 15**

#### **Prohibited Items**

Article 15 provides a general list of categories of items not permitted in the international mails. This article provides for a cross-reference to other Articles for exceptions and further detail.

### **Article 16**

#### **Admissible radioactive materials and biological materials**

Article 16 provides brief commentary of the acceptable dangerous goods permitted in the international mails (i.e. Limited quantities of radioactive materials and biological materials.)

### **Article RL 129**

#### **Conditions of acceptance and marking of items containing perishable biological substances (including diagnostic specimens)**

Article RL129 provides instructions on acceptance and labelling for biological substances and diagnostic specimens.

### **Article RL 130**

#### **Conditions of acceptance and marking of items containing infectious substances**

Article RL130 provides instructions on acceptance and labelling for infectious substances. (This article will be amended in April 2007 to reflect updated packaging instructions, acceptance and handling.)

### **Article RL 131**

#### **Conditions of acceptance and marking of items containing radioactive materials**

Article RL131 provides instructions on acceptance and labelling for radioactive materials.

### **Article RL 144**

#### **Dangerous substances prohibited from insertion in letter-post items**

Defines what items are considered dangerous goods. Provides a cross reference to UNECE Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, ICAO Technical Instructions and IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations.

## **Article 15**

### **Items not admitted. Prohibitions**

#### 1 General

1.1 Items not fulfilling the conditions laid down in the Convention and the Regulations shall not be admitted. Items sent in furtherance of a fraudulent act or with the intention of avoiding full payment of the appropriate charges shall not be admitted.

1.2 Exceptions to the prohibitions contained in this article are set out in the Regulations.

1.3 All postal administrations shall have the option of extending the prohibitions contained in this article, which may be applied immediately upon their inclusion in the relevant compendium.

#### 2 Prohibitions in all categories of items

2.1 The insertion of the articles referred to below shall be prohibited in all categories of items:

2.1.1 narcotics and psychotropic substances;

2.1.2 obscene or immoral articles;

2.1.3 articles the importation or circulation of which is prohibited in the country of destination;

2.1.4 articles which, by their nature or their packing, may expose officials or the general public to danger, or soil or damage other items, postal equipment or third-party property;

2.1.5 documents having the character of current and personal correspondence exchanged between persons other than the sender and the addressee or persons living with them.

#### **3 Explosive, flammable or radioactive materials and other dangerous substances**

**3.1 The insertion of explosive, flammable or other dangerous substances as well as radioactive materials shall be prohibited in all categories of items.**

**3.2 Exceptionally, the following substances and materials shall be admitted:**

**3.2.1 the radioactive materials sent in letter-post items and postal parcels mentioned in article 16.1;**

**3.2.2 the biological substances sent in letter-post items mentioned in article 16.2.**

#### 4 Live animals

4.1 Live animals shall be prohibited in all categories of items.

4.2 Exceptionally, the following shall be admitted in letter-post items other than insured items:

4.2.1 bees, leeches and silk-worms;

4.2.2 parasites and destroyers of noxious insects intended for the control of those insects and exchanged between officially recognized institutions;

4.2.3 flies of the family Drosophilidae for biomedical research exchanged between officially recognized institutions.

4.3 Exceptionally, the following shall be admitted in parcels:

4.3.1 live animals whose conveyance by post is authorized by the postal regulations of the countries concerned.

## 5 Insertion of correspondence in parcels

5.1 the insertion of the articles mentioned below shall be prohibited in postal parcels:

5.1.1 documents having the character of current and personal correspondence;

5.1.2 correspondence of any kind exchanged between persons other than the sender and the addressee or persons living with them.

## 6 Coins, bank notes and other valuable articles

6.1 It shall be prohibited to insert coins, bank notes, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels or other valuable articles:

6.1.1 in uninsured letter-post items;

6.1.1.1 however, if the internal legislation of the countries of origin and destination permits this, such articles may be sent in a closed envelope as registered items;

6.1.2 in uninsured parcels, except where permitted by the internal legislation of the countries of origin and destination;

6.1.3 in uninsured parcels exchanged between two countries which admit insured parcels;

6.1.3.1 in addition, any administration may prohibit the enclosure of gold bullion in insured or uninsured parcels originating from or addressed to its territory or sent in transit à découvert across its territory; it may limit the actual value of these items.

## 7 Printed papers and literature for the blind

7.1 Printed papers and literature for the blind:

7.1.1 shall nor bear any inscription or contain any item of correspondence;

7.1.2 shall not contain any postage stamp or form of prepayment, whether cancelled or not, or any paper representing a monetary value, except in cases where the item contains as an enclosure a card, envelope or wrapper bearing the printed address of the sender of the item or his agent in the country of posting or destination of the original item, which is prepaid for return.

## 8 Treatment of items wrongly admitted

8.1 The treatment of items wrongly admitted is set out in the Regulations. However, items containing articles mentioned in 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 3.1 shall in no circumstances be forwarded to their destination, delivered to the addressees or returned to origin. In the case of articles mentioned in 2.1.1 and 3.1 discovered while in transit, such items shall be handled in accordance with the national legislation of the country of transit.

### **Commentary**

15.2.1.1 The list of narcotics and psychotropic substances placed under international control (abbreviated list) is given in part III of the List of Prohibited Articles. In an inquiry conducted by the IB among adms on smuggling narcotics and psychotropic substances by post, a number of difficulties emerged, particularly as regards the attitude to be adopted by the intermediate country having regard to the freedom of transit when closed mails are suspected of containing such arts.

Congress adopted in this connection formal opinion C 54/Washington 1989, the operative part of which is given below: “Congress invites postal administrations: i – to cooperate in combating the traffic in narcotics and psychotropic substances whenever they are legally required to do so by their national authorities responsible for this matter; – to ensure respect for the fundamental principles of the international Post, in particular, the freedom of transit (art 1 of the Constitution and of the Convention); ii to make all appropriate arrangements with the relevant authorities of their countries to ensure that bags of mail in transit suspected of enclosing items containing narcotics or psychotropic substances are not opened, but to advise: a by the quickest means, at the request of their customs authorities the administration of destination so that the suspected bags can easily be identified on arrival; b by verification note, the administration of origin of the mail; iii to approach the legislative authorities, in consultation with the customs services, to ensure that laws and regulations do not prevent the use of the technique known as ‘controlled delivery’; the Customs of the transit country, if necessary with the agreement of the competent authorities, must take appropriate measures to inform the customs authorities of the country of destination and, possibly, of the country of origin of the suspect mails.”

15.2.1.2 It is at the discretion of each adm to decide what is meant by the term “obscene”.

15.2.1.3 Non-admission for conveyance or transit of correspondence items should be notified to the adms so that the public may be informed of the prohibition in good time. Information about current prohibitions in Union member countries is communicated to the IB, which updates the List of Prohibited Articles on that basis. Each adm must ensure that, wherever possible, the information about current prohibition in its country and sent to the IB is set out in clear, precise and detailed terms and that it is kept up-to-date. 15.3 In addition to explosive or flammable substances, compressed gases, corrosive liquids, oxidizing and toxic substances and any other substances which could endanger human life or cause damage are to be considered dangerous. The “List of definitions of dangerous goods prohibited from conveyance by post”, drawn up by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is given in part IV of the List of Prohibited Articles (pink sheets).

## **Article 16**

### **Admissible radioactive materials and biological materials**

1 Radioactive materials shall be admitted in letter-post items and parcels in relations between postal administrations which have declared their willingness to admit them either reciprocally or in one direction only under the following conditions:

1.1 radioactive materials shall be made up and packed in accordance with the respective provisions of the Regulations; 1.2 when they are sent in letter-post items, they shall be subject to the tariff for priority items or the tariff for letters and registration; 1.3 radioactive materials contained in letter-post items or postal parcels shall be forwarded by the quickest route, normally by air, subject to payment of the corresponding surcharges;

1.4 radioactive materials may be posted only by duly authorized senders.

2 Biological materials shall be admitted in letter-post items under the following conditions:

2.1 Perishable biological substances, infectious substances and solid carbon dioxide (dry ice) when used as refrigerant for infectious substances may be exchanged through mail only between officially recognized qualified laboratories. These dangerous goods may be acceptable in mail for air carriage, subject to national legislation and current Technical Instructions of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and as reflected in the IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations.

2.2 Perishable biological substances and infectious substances made up and packed in accordance with the respective provisions of the Regulations shall be subject to the tariff for priority items or to the tariff for registered letters. An additional charge for the handling of these items is allowed.

2.3 Admission of perishable biological substances and infectious substances shall be restricted to those member countries whose postal administrations have declared their willingness to admit such items, whether reciprocally or in one direction only.

2.4 Such substances or materials shall be forwarded by the quickest route, normally by air, subject to the payment of the corresponding air surcharges and shall be given priority in delivery.

#### **Commentary**

16.1 and 2 Adms participating in the exchange of materials of this type are listed in the Letter Post Compendium.

#### **Article RL 129**

#### **Conditions of acceptance and marking of items containing perishable biological substances (including diagnostic specimens)**

1 Perishable biological substances, including diagnostic specimens which do not fall under the definition of infectious substances, shall be accepted under the following conditions.

1.1 Senders shall ensure that the shipments are prepared in such a manner that they arrive at their destination in good condition. The items shall not present a hazard to persons or animals during transport.

1.2 The package shall include:

1.2.1 inner packaging comprising:

1.2.1.1 watertight primary receptacle(s);

1.2.1.2 a watertight secondary packaging;

1.2.1.3 other than for solid substances, an absorbent material of sufficient quantity to absorb the entire contents, which shall be placed between primary receptacle(s) and the secondary packaging. If multiple primary receptacles are placed in a single secondary packaging they shall be wrapped individually;

1.2.2 an outer packaging of adequate strength for its capacity, mass and intended use. Packages shall be at least 100 mm in the smallest overall external dimension.

1.3 The completed package shall be capable of successfully passing the drop test as laid down in the ICAO Technical Instructions, except that the height of the drop shall not be less than 1.2 m.

1.4 An itemized list of contents shall be enclosed between the secondary packaging and the outer packaging.

1.5 The shipments shall be packed in accordance with the following specifications:

1.5.1 Lyophilized substances.

1.5.1.1 Primary receptacles shall be flame-sealed glass ampoules or rubber-stoppered glass vials fitted with metal seals.

1.5.2 Liquid or solid substances.

1.5.2.1 Substances transported at ambient temperatures or higher temperatures. Primary receptacles may only be of glass, metal or plastic. Positive means of ensuring a leak-proof seal shall be provided, such as heat seals, skirted stoppers or metal crimp seals. If screw caps are used these shall be reinforced with adhesive tape.

1.5.2.2 Substances transported refrigerated or frozen. Ice or other refrigerants, which are not dangerous goods as per ICAO Technical Instructions, shall be placed outside the secondary packaging(s). Interior supports shall be provided to secure the secondary packaging(s) in position after the refrigerant has dissipated. If ice is used, the outer packaging shall be leakproof.

The primary receptacle and the secondary packaging shall maintain their integrity at the temperature of the refrigerant used as well as at the temperatures and pressures of air transport to which the receptacle and the secondary packaging could be subjected if refrigeration were to be lost.

1.6 The primary receptacle or the secondary packaging used for perishable biological substances including diagnostic specimens shall be capable of withstanding temperatures in the range of – 40°C to +55°C and additionally for liquids shall be capable of withstanding, without leakage, an internal pressure which produces a pressure differential of not less than 95 kPa. 1.7 The maximum quantity in a primary receptacle shall not exceed 500 ml and the maximum quantity in the outer packaging shall not exceed 4 litres.

1.8 The outer packaging, as well as the outer wrapping of the item, shall be marked “Diagnostic Specimen” and shall be furnished, on the side which bears the addresses of the laboratories sending and receiving it, with a violet-coloured label with the following text and symbol:

PERISHABLE BIOLOGICAL SUBSTANCES



(Size 62 x 44 mm)

## **Article RL 130**

### **Conditions of acceptance and marking of items containing infectious substances**

1 Perishable biological substances which are infectious or reasonably suspected to be infectious for humans or animals shall be declared “Infectious substances”.

2 Senders of infectious substances shall ensure that shipments are prepared in such a manner that they arrive at their destination in good condition. The items shall not present a hazard to persons or animals during shipment.

3 The packaging shall include:

3.1 inner packaging comprising:

3.1.1 watertight primary receptacle(s);

3.1.2 a watertight secondary packaging;

3.1.3 other than for solid substances, an absorbent material of sufficient quantity to absorb the entire contents, which shall be placed between the primary receptacle(s) and the secondary packaging. If multiple primary receptacles are placed in a single secondary packaging they shall be wrapped individually;



3.2 an outer packaging of adequate strength for its capacity, mass and intended use. Packages shall be at least 100 mm in the smallest overall external dimension.

4 The packaging shall, as demonstrated by tests, be capable of successfully passing the design-type tests defined in the ICAO Technical Instructions. Outer packaging shall be marked in accordance with the UN Specification Marking requirements.

5 An itemized list of contents shall be enclosed between the secondary packaging and the outer packaging.

6 Infectious substances shall be packed in accordance with the following specifications:

6.1 Lyophilized substances.

6.1.1 Primary receptacles shall be flame-sealed glass ampoules or rubber-stoppered glass vials fitted with metal seals.

6.2 Liquid or solid substances.

6.2.1 Substances transported at ambient temperatures or higher temperatures. Primary receptacles may only be of glass, metal or plastic. Positive means of ensuring a leak-proof seal shall be provided, such as heat seals, skirted stoppers or metal crimp seals. If screw caps are used these shall be reinforced with adhesive tape.

6.2.2 Substances transported refrigerated or frozen. Ice, dry ice or other refrigerants shall be placed outside the secondary packaging(s). Interior supports shall be provided to secure the secondary packaging(s) in position after the ice or dry ice has dissipated. If ice is used, the outer packaging shall be leakproof. If dry ice is used, the outer packaging shall permit the release of carbon dioxide gas. The primary receptacle and the secondary packaging shall maintain their integrity at the temperature of the refrigerant used as well as at the temperatures and pressures of air transport to which the receptacle and the secondary packaging could be subjected if refrigeration were to be lost.

7 The primary receptacle or the secondary packaging used for infectious substances shall be capable of withstanding, without leakage, an internal pressure which produces a pressure differential of not less than 95 kPa and temperatures in the range of  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $+55^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

8 The maximum net quantity per outer packaging shall be 50 millilitres or 50 grammes.

9 The outer packagings must be marked with:

9.1 the proper shipping name supplemented with the technical (biological) name of the substance(s) and with the corresponding UN-number preceded by the letters "UN";

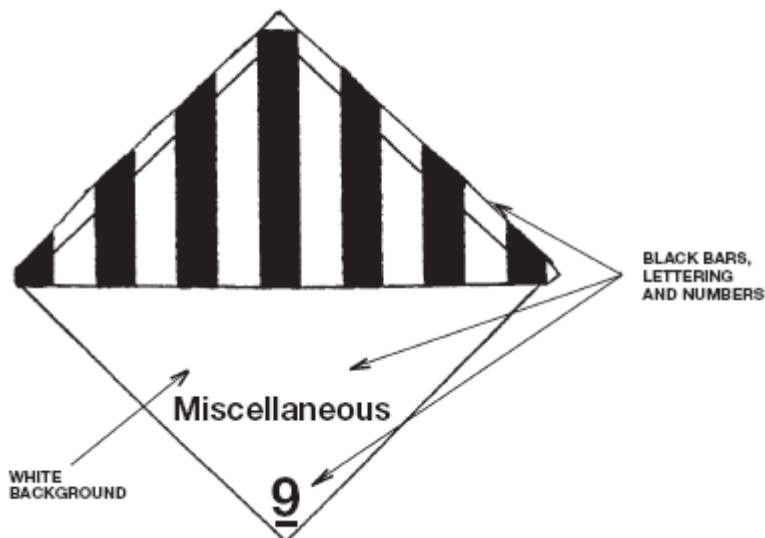
9.2 the name and address of the person (organization) offering the infectious substance for transport and of the consignee (addressee);

9.3 the name and telephone number of a person responsible for the shipment.

10 The outer packaging shall be furnished on the side which bears the addresses of the duly authorized laboratories sending and receiving it with the "Infectious substance" label. This label shall be diamond-shaped, 10 x 10 centimetres or 5 x 5 centimetres, with black letters on a white background. The top half shall bear the approved symbol for infectious substances and the bottom half the words: "Infectious substance. In case of damage or leakage immediately notify public health authority." This label is as follows:



10.1 If dry ice is used to refrigerate the shipment, the “Miscellaneous” hazard label shall be affixed. This label shall be diamond-shaped, with minimum dimensions of 10 x 10 centimetres as shown below.



10.2 For air transport, a transport document shall be provided in accordance with ICAO Technical Instructions or the IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations. In addition, the CN 38 delivery bill covering this shipment shall contain the following statement: “Dangerous Goods as per attached shipper’s declaration”.

10.3 Bags containing infectious substances only and identified by special “Infectious substances” labels shall be handed over by postal authorities to airlines in unsealed mailbags.

**Commentary**

130.1 In recommendation C 68/Rio de Janeiro 1979, Congress urged administrations concerned to conform to certain conditions recommended by the WHO and required by IATA for safety reasons; among other things, they are requested to hand to airlines unsealed mailbags containing only infectious substances and identified by special labels marked “Infectious substances”. Such items must be accompanied by a shipper’s certification in duplicate. The WHO informed the IB in July 1982 that the transmission of diagnostic specimens by post was being hindered by the fact

that certain administrations did not take part in the exchange of infectious substances. In Hamburg 1984 formal opinion C 16 Congress called on administrations to reconsider their position in this respect.

130.10 With regard to the information to be written on the outside wrapping of items containing infectious substances (name, address and telephone number of the competent authority to be notified in case of damage or leakage), the WHO in May 1981 sent the public health authorities of its member countries a circ recommending them to let the adms of their countries have this information. For its part, the IB asked adms which admit these items to contact the national public health and veterinary authorities of their countries with a view to coordinating the action to be taken in the event of an accident.

## **Article RL 131**

### **Conditions of acceptance and marking of items containing radioactive materials**

1 Items containing radioactive materials, whose contents and make-up comply with the regulations of the International Atomic Energy Agency providing special exemptions for certain categories of items, shall be admitted for conveyance by post subject to prior consent from the competent authorities of the country of origin.

2 The outside packaging of items containing radioactive materials shall be plainly and durably marked by the sender with the words “Matières radioactives. Quantités admises au transport par la poste” (Radioactive materials. Quantities permitted for movement by post); and the applicable UN-number. It shall also bear, in addition to the name and address of the sender, a request in bold letters for the return of the items in the event of non-delivery.

3 The sender shall give his name and address and the contents of the item on the inner wrapping.

4 The words “Matières radioactives. Quantités admises au transport par la poste” (Radioactive materials. Quantities permitted for movement by post) shall be officially crossed out, should the empty package be returned to the place of origin.

5 Administrations may designate special post offices for the posting of items containing radioactive materials.

### **Commentary**

131.1 As understood here, the conveyance by post of radioactive materials is restricted to consignments exempted from special conveyance prescriptions, within the meaning of the Regulations for the safe trans-port of radioactive materials of the IAEA, because of the very low activity of their contents. The relevant portions of the said Regulations are reproduced in the Letter Post Compendium. Before such consent is granted, the administrations of origin, or the responsible body appointed to this end, as the case may be, ensures that these dispatches conform to IAEA prescriptions, by requesting, for example, that a prototype packing for each category of item be submitted to it for approval.

## **Article RL 144**

### **Dangerous substances prohibited from insertion in letter-post items**

1 The articles covered by the “Recommendations on Transport of Dangerous Goods” drawn up by the United Nations, with the exception of certain dangerous goods, radioactive materials and infectious substances provided for in the existing Regulations, and by the Technical Instructions of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and International Air Transport Association (IATA) Dangerous Goods Regulations shall be considered as dangerous substances in accordance with the provisions of article 15.3.1 of the Convention and prohibited from insertion in letter-post items.

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