



Secretariat

Distr.
GENERAL

ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2008/37
11 April 2008

Original: ENGLISH

**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

Thirty-third session
Geneva, 30 June-9 July (a.m.) 2008
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

LISTING, CLASSIFICATION AND PACKING

Transport of Nickel-Metal Hydride Batteries

Transmitted by the expert from Germany*

Introduction

1. During the last session, document ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2007/45 submitted by the expert from Germany was discussed. The document proposed a new entry for Batteries, dry, containing Potassium Hydroxide (Nickel-Hydride Portable Accumulators) and the assignment of a new special provision, stating that these batteries are subject to the Regulations only when transported by sea. Consequential amendments for special provision 304 were included, too. The aim of that submission was to enable the inclusion of stowage provisions for nickel-metal hydride batteries in the IMDG-Code. Nickel-metal hydride batteries require specific precautions during sea transport because stowage near sources of heat may initiate the hazardous decomposition of the batteries. A fire around containers loaded with nickel metal hydride storage batteries which had been stowed inside a container vessel's hold facing heated tanks was subject to an investigation of the Federal Bureau of Marine Casualty and led to the recommendation to reconsider the classification of these types of batteries and establish appropriate protection from sources of heat (see document UN/SCETDG/32/INF.31).

* In accordance with the programme of work of the Sub-Committee for 2007-2008 approved by the Committee at its third session (refer to ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/60 para. 100 and ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/34, para. 14).

2. Though there was support to address the hazards associated with stowage of Cargo Transport Units (CTUs) of portable nickel-metal hydride batteries near sources of heat on cargo vessels, several delegates were not in favour of a new entry in Class 9 for nickel-metal hydride batteries, but preferred to keep the existing special provision 304 for UN 3028 which refers to these small, consumer-type batteries and further types as alkali-manganese, zinc-carbon- and nickel-cadmium batteries.

3. As a result of the discussion document ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2007/45 was not put to a vote and the expert from Germany asked for further comments to draft a new proposal.

4. After further consideration and discussion, this document proposes to keep the existing exemption of small, consumer-type batteries in special provision 304 and to add further conditions for the transport of nickel-metal hydride batteries if transported on sea-going vessels. These conditions shall ensure that the responsible persons for the stowage on the ship get appropriate information on the contained cargo and the potential risks.

Proposal

5. Add at the end of SP 304 in chapter 3.3 the following new paragraph:

“Nevertheless, in the case of application of this exemption to sea transport of nickel-metal hydride batteries, other than button cells, the following requirements apply:

- (1) The consignment shall be accompanied by a transport document describing the batteries as “Nickel-Metal Hydride batteries” including a declaration signed by the consignor that the batteries are securely packed and protected against short-circuits and that stowage away from sources of heat is required;
 - (2) Unit loads and cargo transport units shall be marked “Stow away from sources of heat” in capital letters not less than 65mm high. ”
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