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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-fourth session, 1-10 December 2003,
agenda item 4 c))

PACKAGINGS (INCLUDING IBCS AND LARGE PACKAGINGS)

Miscellaneous proposals

Packing instruction P800

Transmitted by the expert from Spain

SCOPE

For centuries, UN 2809 (Mercury) has been transported in steel flasks or bottles with threaded closures with a maximum capacity of 3 l. The 11th revised edition of the Model Regulations introduced paragraph (2) in packing instruction P800, which limits the capacity of these flasks to 2.5 l. This document proposes to increase this maximum capacity to 3 l.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

ST/SG/AC.10/1998/16 (Germany and United Kingdom) Report of the informal Working Group on packing instructions (Frankfurt, 7-11 September 1998).

BACKGROUND

1. The capacity for steel flasks for UN 2809 (Mercury) manufactured in Spain is based on one of the historical weight units: *the Arroba Castellana*, equivalent to a weight of 11.5 kg.

Three Arrobas Castellanas (i.e: 34.5 kg) made the flask of mercury metal that was defined and used since the 17th Century.

2. The International prices quotation that is used on the international trade of this metal is defined as USD/flask “in warehouse Rotterdam bases” (being the flask 34.5 kg net). This is used as “commodity” and price is issued by the London Metal Bulletin twice a week.

3. Those 34.5 kg of mercury with a specific density of 13.6 g/ml make a volume of 2.5367 l. The filling ratio permitted is 85%. Therefore, the minimum capacity needed to carry 34.5 kg is 3 l.

4. Packing instruction P800 allows the use of “steel flasks or bottles with threaded closures with a capacity not exceeding 2.5 l”. This limitation to the maximum capacity was introduced in the 11th revised edition of the Model Regulations, as a proposal to have a limit to the contents, but not with a justified reason of why precisely 2.5 l.

PROPOSAL

5. It is proposed to increase the allowed capacity for steel flasks (par.(2) of P800) to 3 l, by deleting “2.5 l” from paragraph (2) of packing instruction P800 and writing instead “3 l”.

JUSTIFICATION

6. According to our use and experience, we do not find any reason that justify the reduction of maximum capacity from 3 l flasks that have been used up to this year.
