

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 2 (f) of the provisional agenda

Explosives and related matters: miscellaneous

Manual of Tests and Criteria

Recommendations for the improvement of multilateral recognition based on mutual trust

Transmitted by the expert from Spain

Introduction

1. Broadly speaking, assigning a risk division and compatibility group to an article or substance is not too controversial when the assigned classification is the most restricted in the framework of the different alternatives allowed by the Model Regulations. Moreover, normally this way of classification does not require tests and / or trials.
2. When an article or substance is assigned to a less restrictive classification it must be supported by tests and / or trials which must be accepted and approved by the Competent Authorities.
3. The problem arises, sometimes, when an Authority of a certain country has to approve or accept tests carried out in another country; this test can come from another Authority but also from testing and certifications bodies around the world, not always clearly identified.
4. Whereas the mutual recognition between testing and certifications bodies was developed around the world years ago, in such a way that currently it is not an issue; however there is nothing about this subject in the Manual of Test and Criteria.
5. Accreditation is the independent evaluation of conformity assessment bodies, against recognized standards, to ensure their impartiality and technical competence. Through the implementation of national and international standards, Government, buyers and consumers can have confidence in the results of calibration, testing and inspection reports and certificates issued.
6. Accreditation bodies are established in many countries with the main purpose to ensure that the conformity assessment bodies are subject to the supervision of a governmental body (National Authority).
7. Accreditation bodies, which have been evaluated by their peers as competent, sign agreements that improve the acceptance of products and services across national borders, thus creating a framework to support international trade through the removal of technical barriers.

8. Accreditation assures businesses and end users that the Conformity Assessment Body issuing certifications under standards has the required competence and impartiality to do so as evidenced by fulfilment of international standards and requirements.
9. These agreements are managed on one hand by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), in the field of systems management products, services, personnel and other similar programmes of conformity assessment and also by the International Laboratories Accreditation Conference (ILAC), in the field of accreditation of testing laboratories and inspection bodies.
10. The second purpose of the IAF is to establish Multilateral Recognition Arrangements (MLA) between its accreditation body members. The object of these arrangements, as the name suggests, is to ensure mutual recognition of accredited certification between signatories to the MLA, and subsequently acceptance of accredited certification in many countries and markets based on one accreditation.
11. The benefits of an MLA to business is that, if standards, specifications and conformity assessment methods are the same, one certificate or certification can be recognized around the world, thus lowering the cost of accredited certification and reducing risk that products or services could be rejected by international trading partners.
12. The MLA contributes to the freedom of world trade by eliminating technical barriers. IAF works to find the most effective way of achieving a single system to reach the objective: Certified once – accepted everywhere. Nearly sixty countries are ILAC official Members.

Proposal

13. With reference to the above-mentioned principles and with the purpose of achieving the objective of the multilateral recognitions by Competent Authorities, it is proposed to add a new paragraph 10.1.4 in the Manual of Test and Criteria, as follow:

10.1.4 In order to facilitate the assignment of the classification by the Authorities in an homogeneous and proportional way for the undertakings and providing at the same time to them and between them the necessary reliability, the Division of Risk and the Group of Compatibility test report, should be accepted by the National Authorities, when they are made by a laboratory credited to the standard ISO/IEC 17025 by an Organization belonging to ILAC net.
