

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

Forty-fourth session

Geneva, 25 November – 4 December 2013

Item 3 e) of the provisional agenda

Electric storage systems – Miscellaneous

Electronic storage systems – appropriate hazard communication

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Introduction

1. The Twenty-Fourth Meeting of the Dangerous Goods Panel (DGP/24) was held in Montreal from 28 October to 8 November 2013. Panel members were invited to consider the issues that were raised in ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2013/26 on appropriate hazard communication for electric storage systems, which was presented at the Forty-third session of the Sub-Committee along with the report of the Sub-Committee's discussion. This informal document summarizes DGP/24's discussions.

Lithium batteries

2. The subject of lithium batteries dominated discussions at the DGP/24 meeting. These discussions initiated from a proposal to ban lithium metal batteries from transport as cargo on aircraft. It was argued that the knowledge that current fire suppression systems in cargo holds had no effect on lithium metal fires and that currently required packagings could not contain a fire made it difficult to justify allowing their carriage as cargo. Although there was little support for banning the batteries from both cargo and passenger aircraft, there was some support for a ban on passenger aircraft and a virtual consensus that additional measures needed to be taken to ensure the safe transport of lithium batteries by air. The need for additional measures was based partially on a presentation of results from recent full-scale tests conducted in one State in a realistic environment (B-727 aircraft) which highlighted both known and new risks related to bulk shipments of lithium metal batteries by air. A final decision on a revised proposal to forbid lithium metal batteries from transport on passenger aircraft but to allow on cargo aircraft could not be reached at DGP/24. Recognizing that a ban would have a major impact on industry, some members wished for more time to consult with experts within their States. They also wanted to consider other options which would mitigate risks without having to ban the batteries from transport. The panel agreed to continue work on the subject through correspondence and to reconvene at a working group in early 2014 at which time a final decision on the proposal to ban lithium batteries on passenger aircraft would be made.

Appropriate hazard communication

3. The significant time spent on the proposed lithium metal battery ban left little time for the panel to comprehensively review the subject of improved hazard communication for electric storage systems, although the subject was raised several times throughout the lithium metal discussions. Panel members strongly supported the idea of separate divisions under Class 9, recognising that the hazards presented by different class 9 articles and substances were not conveyed to emergency responders. Some believed an additional class would be most appropriate for lithium batteries specifically. The panel believed that improved hazard communication should also be considered for other articles which may contain lithium batteries such as **Life-saving appliances, not self-inflating** (UN 3072) and **Life-saving appliances, self-inflating** (UN 2990).

4. The subject will be revisited at the working group meeting on lithium batteries scheduled for February 2014.
