



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 Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

Fortieth session

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Item 2 (i) of the provisional agenda

**Work on the Globally Harmonized System (GHS):
other matters**

Alignment of Chapter 2.17 with Chapter 2.1 – correction to GHS Rev. 9

Transmitted by the expert from Sweden*

Background

1. GHS Rev. 9 includes a completely revised Chapter 2.1 for explosives, as compared to Rev. 8 and previous editions of the GHS. This new explosives' chapter is the result of the work on the review of GHS Chapter 2.1 that was done between the twenty-ninth and the thirty-ninth sessions of the Sub-Committee, and which was brought to conclusion in December 2020.¹
2. This complete makeover of GHS Chapter 2.1 also entailed many consequential amendments to various parts of the GHS (Annex 1-3 in particular) as well as to the Manual of Tests and Criteria (Part I in particular). In the intense work on this towards the end of the previous biennium it was, however, forgotten to amend also Chapter 2.17 of the GHS, which is the related hazard class for desensitized explosives. The practical impact from the current slight misalignment of this chapter with Chapter 2.1 is expected to be very minor though.

Problem

3. Chapter 2.17 currently uses the term “unstable explosives”, which was an explosives classification that has been repealed with the newly introduced revised Chapter 2.1. It also refers to the possibility of these explosives to be “stabilized”, which is an expression that relates to this repealed classification. Furthermore, the decision logics of Chapter 2.17 refer to the explosives classification outcome “Division 1.1”, which is not a GHS classification according to Chapter 2.1 as in GHS Rev. 9. In addition, there is a reference to a no longer existing note of Chapter 2.1.

* A/75/6 (Sect.20), para. 20.51.

¹ See the report of the Sub-Committee on its thirty-ninth session (ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/78).



Proposal

4. It is proposed to amend Chapter 2.17 so that it aligns with Chapter 2.1 as in GHS Rev. 9, as indicated below (text to be deleted in bold strike-through font, text to be added in bold underlined font). To the expert from Sweden these changes appear straightforward and unproblematic as they do not affect the classification and labelling of desensitized explosives.

5. In section 2.17.1 on definitions and general considerations, make the following changes:

“2.17.1.1 Desensitized explosives are solid or liquid explosive substances or mixtures which are phlegmatized to suppress their explosive properties in such a manner that they do not mass explode and do not burn too rapidly and therefore may be exempted from the hazard class “Explosives” (Chapter 2.1; see ~~also Note 2 of paragraph 2.1.2.2~~ paragraph 2.1.1.2.2).¹

¹ ~~Unstable explosives as defined in Chapter 2.1~~ Explosives that are too sensitive to be assigned Category 2 of Chapter 2.1 can also be ~~stabilized by desensitization~~ desensitized and consequently may be classified as desensitized explosives, provided all criteria of Chapter 2.17 are met. In this case the desensitized explosive should be tested according to test series 3 (Part I of the Manual of Tests and Criteria) because information about its sensitiveness to mechanical stimuli is likely to be important for determining conditions for safe handling and use. The results should be communicated in the safety data sheet.”

6. In decision logic 2.17.1 for desensitized explosives, make the following changes:

Change “~~Division 1.1~~” to “Sub-category 2A” in the two rightmost boxes that represent the classification outcome when a mass-explosion is the result of a test.
