

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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MISCELLANEOUS PROPOSALS OF AMENDMENTS TO THE MODEL REGULATIONS ON THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS

Transport of Lithium Batteries

Informal Working Group to Address Lithium Battery Test Methods

Transmitted by the expert from the United States of America

Background

Over the course of the biennium, the Sub-Committee has discussed numerous issues related to the transport of lithium batteries. While excellent progress was made during the previous biennium to improve relevant packaging and hazard communication aspects of the Model Regulations, it is believed that a close review of other aspects of the Regulations, in particular the relevant testing requirements and test methods, is also in order.

As noted in a previous informal document (see UN/SCETDG/31/INF.41), incidents continue to occur in transport; some of which have had serious potential consequences. Root cause analyses have shown that internal short circuit and faulty design are potential causes of some of the incidents which have occurred. Such issues are directly related to a battery's design and testing requirements.

The current lithium battery test methods were last revised in the year 2000. In the eight years following, significant advances in lithium battery technology have been made. Therefore it is suggested that a working group be established to perform a thorough review of the current test requirements and methods to determine whether any amendments are appropriate to enhance transport safety. In addition, it is suggested that a limited amount of time be spent discussing ultracapacitors (supercapacitors). Like batteries, ultracapacitors are energy storage devices, but do not generate electrons. The applications and use in today's marketplace for ultracapacitors continues to grow, and a discussion of how the current Model Regulations address such devices would be well-timed as a number of the working group members may also have knowledge of the topic.

Working Group Meeting – September 15-17, 2008

If a working group is established, the United States would be pleased to host a meeting of the working group on September 15-17, 2008. The purpose of the meeting would be to conduct a thorough review of the test methods and testing requirements of the UN Model Regulations and the UN Manual of Tests and Criteria applicable to lithium batteries to determine whether any amendments are appropriate which could help to improve safety and reduce the potential for an incident to occur. The working group would also consider the issue of ultracapacitors and make appropriate observations and/or recommendations.
