

Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

12 December 2019

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

Thirty-eight session

Geneva, 11-13 December 2019

Item 2 (g) of the provisional agenda

Classification criteria and related hazard communication: Simultaneous classification in physical hazard classes and precedence of hazards

Informal Working Group on combinations of physical hazards: Report back of the working group meeting on 11 December 2019

Transmitted by the expert from Germany on behalf of the informal working group

1. The informal working group on combinations of physical hazards met for a short meeting on 11 December 2019 in the margins of the 38th session of the SCE GHS. The chair invited experts not yet on the distribution list of the group, to inform her should they wish to be added to the distribution list.
2. The group started discussions on the thought starter as presented in informal document UN/SCETDG/56/INF.36-UN/SCEGHS/38/INF.17. The thought starter contains possible criteria according to task 1.3 which reads “Work out further criteria/principles that can be used to analyse the remaining combinations regarding simultaneous assignment, taking into account e.g. safety of testing personnel, limitations with regard to conduct and interpretation of test results, redundancy of hazard communication etc.”

Safety of testing personnel

3. The 1st criterion is safety of testing personnel. In some cases, the properties of a chemical of a certain physical hazard class might cause additional or even unacceptable hazards in a test that is to be carried out for another physical hazard class.
4. Experts pointed out that also workarounds such as testing with smaller amounts than prescribed by the test procedure or other adaptations of the test procedure might be considered in such cases.
5. It was remarked that the UN Test Manual already gives advice at several places to that regard. Two experts agreed to identify such information in the Manual and to compile it for consideration in this working group.
6. Two experts agreed to review physical hazard class combinations and to assess them with regard to possible problems for the safety of testing personnel so that the group could consider it. Conclusions whether this would preclude a certain combination will not be drawn at this point.

Classification tests cannot be carried out

7. The 2nd criterion is the impossibility to carry out a test for a certain physical hazard class due to properties associated with another hazard class.
8. It was pointed out, that the reasons for this might be different in nature. Should such reasons lie in the test method itself, this information might be useful for future work, however, the experts agreed that it was not in the scope of this working group to work on adaptations of the test methods themselves.
9. Two experts agreed to start compiling information with regard to combinations of physical hazards for which testing is physically not possible.

Concluding remarks

10. The further items of the thought starter could not be discussed at this point. Therefore, the chair encouraged all experts to provide their thoughts and findings at any time, be it evaluations on task 1.1 or findings on any of the combinations with regard to criteria of task 1.3. The chair would compile such information and distribute it from time to time within the group for its consideration.
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