

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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OTHER BUSINESS

Developing and maintaining experts on the regulations applicable to safe, secure, and efficient transport of dangerous goods

Transmitted by the Council on Safe Transportation of Hazardous Articles (COSTHA)

Introduction

1. At the Twenty-ninth Session of the Sub-Committee conducted July 2006, the expert from the Netherlands introduced ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2006/38 to consider OPTIONS TO FACILITATE GLOBAL HARMONIZATION OF TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS REGULATIONS WITH THE UN MODEL REGULATIONS. Paragraph 2(b), entitled "**Improved efficiency and keeping expertise**" stated "At least in the Netherlands, the situation is that there is a decline in experts on the transport regulations not only on the side of government but also on the side of industry. Furthermore, it is getting more and more difficult to find new persons who are interested in spending many years in becoming an expert...." The sub-committee was in substantial agreement with the need to improve efficiency and to stimulate interest to ensure that a new generation of experts would continue to carry on the work of both government and industry in the future.

Discussion

2. COSTHA and its member companies have in recent years, experienced the same decline as reported by the Netherlands. Statistical as well as anecdotal evidence is reasonably conclusive that a continuously increasing gap in career development of dangerous goods professionals is occurring between the entry level and the retirement eligibility numbers. COSTHA has initiated a project to identify the reasons for the decline in experts and to develop measures to attract qualified candidates to embark on climbing the career ladder to becoming an expert in this field. COSTHA established a working group which has met several times over the past few years even

prior to the introduction of the Netherlands paper, to assess the causal issues and develop mitigating steps to reverse this worldwide trend. The result of their planning sessions has been introduced as the "Blueprint for Success". One of the key elements identified in the blueprint is to create an awareness and greater appreciation for the critical importance of the tasks performed by individuals employed as dangerous goods transportation professionals. Unfortunately, the more success these professionals achieve, the less importance may be perceived for the work they do to avoid those incidents that never occur.

3. In July 2006 COSTHA approached the United States Department of Transportation, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) regarding the need for a joint initiative with governmental regulators and the regulated community with the intention of starting at the national level and progressing to the international level owing to the global need for developing resources for the future. PHMSA and COSTHA agreed that training and outreach would be needed to stimulate interest in the next generation of hazardous materials professionals and agreed to enter a partnership with the intention of developing and delivering such resources. It has been called "Enhancing the Image of the HazMat Professional". Goals of the partnership include establishing academic opportunities with colleges, universities and other academic institutions to provide matriculation to a degree in the field of transportation of hazardous materials or dangerous goods, certification programs for managers and employers actually performing regulatory compliance functions, awards programs that recognize excellence at all levels, public awareness campaigns to attract qualified candidates, and development and distribution of educational materials to attract young students to prepare for employment in a career path in this profession. The provisions within the blueprint are currently in the "roll-out" phase with strategic implementation cooperatively being undertaken by PHMSA and COSTHA.

Proposal

4. COSTHA respectfully requests the Sub-Committee to note the importance of the need for developing and maintaining the expert resources that will be required for carrying on the work of this Sub-Committee as well as providing expert employees capable of performing the functions applicable to preparation, transport, and enforcement that effect the safe transportation of dangerous goods. COSTHA invites all interested experts and NGO representatives to participate in this initiative and to partner with us in identifying opportunities to achieve the goal so critical to the future success of this Sub-Committee.
