

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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Item 13 of the provisional agenda

Dangerous Goods Training and Capacity Building

Dangerous Goods Public Awareness Campaign “Check the Box” launched by U.S. Department of Transportation


Transmitted by the expert from the United States of America

Introduction

1. Each year, in the United States of America there are approximately 1,500 reports of undeclared shipments of dangerous goods. This figure accounts for only those shipments found in transport and the United States believes that the actual number of undeclared shipments is likely significantly greater than reported. When dangerous goods are not properly declared, or identified, they can pose significant threats to transportation workers, emergency responders, the public, and the environment. Note, dangerous goods are also known in the United States as “hazardous materials” or “hazmat”.
2. The “Check the Box” initiative aims to raise public awareness of undeclared hazardous materials and increase compliance with safety rules by:
 - (a) Identifying commonly shipped items (e.g., aerosols, paint, lithium batteries) that are hazardous materials;
 - (b) Providing access to resources on how to safely ship hazardous materials.
3. To promote this effort, the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) launched the “Check the Box” initiative, an educational campaign promoting public awareness of the need for safer shipping of hazardous materials. The champion of this campaign is a trademarked, easily identifiable character, “Hazardous Matt”. The U.S. DOT developed a variety of videos, posters, news articles, and social media content featuring “Hazardous Matt”. Plain language guidance on commonly shipped substances and articles including paints, lithium batteries, and aerosols provide information for non-professional and infrequent shippers to properly prepare these products for transport. A fact sheet included in this information document identifies the number of undeclared dangerous goods shipments and examples of actual transport incidents that involved undeclared dangerous goods/hazardous materials. Further information and promotional material can be found at: <https://checkthebox.dot.gov/>.


Proposal

- Review the information available through the link and contact the U.S. delegation to discuss efforts to collaborate on public awareness campaigns and efforts to reduce incidents of undeclared dangerous goods in transport.



CHECK THE BOX

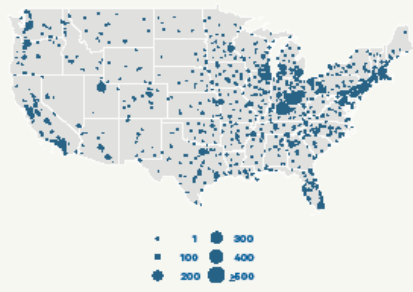
Is **Hazardous Matt** hiding
in your package?



Each year, approximately 1,500 transportation incidents occur when undeclared hazardous materials are shipped.

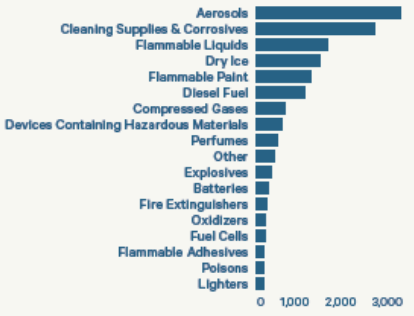
These incidents involve diverse types of hazardous materials and cause serious safety consequences for transportation workers, emergency responders, and the general public. To reduce the number of new incidents, we are introducing Hazardous Matt as the brand ambassador for the "Check the Box" initiative, an educational campaign promoting public awareness of the need for safer shipping of hazardous materials.

Incidents with Undeclared Hazmat by Location










Source: <https://hazmatonline.phmsa.dot.gov/IncidentReportsSearch/Welcome.aspx>

Incidents with Undeclared Hazmat by Commodity



Notable Incidents

 <p>HOUSTON, TX: 2017 - An undeclared intermodal container being transported by rail caught fire when 55 gallon drums of lithium batteries entered thermal runaway and exploded.</p>	 <p>MIAMI, FL: 2013 - TSA screeners found an unknown spilled substance, later identified as the toxic pesticide Malathion. Six airline, TSA, and EMS personnel were injured during the response.</p>
 <p>DALLAS, TX: 2014 - Unmarked boxes containing smaller inner packages of sulfuric acid leaked and injured four UPS employees.</p>	 <p>LINWOOD, PA: 2012 - A package of unmarked formaldehyde was dropped and then leaked, injuring eight airline employees.</p>
 <p>JACKSON, MS: 2013 - An unmarked package containing oxidizing liquids was punctured during handling. Three FedEx employees were injured while examining the inner container.</p>	 <p>ANDERSON CA: 2008 - A box of undeclared fire extinguishers leaked at a UPS sorting facility, injuring three employees.</p>



U.S. Department of Transportation
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

CheckTheBox.dot.gov