

Minnesota Commercial Truck and Passenger Regulations

Fact Sheet

Hazardous Materials Communication Standards

The Federal Hazardous Materials Transportation Regulations (HMR) requires shippers and carriers of hazardous materials (HM) to communicate the hazards of the materials being transported. The hazard communications standards, found in 49 CFR, Part 172, Subparts C, D, E, F, and G detail the requirements and exceptions for HM shipping papers, marking, labeling, placarding, and emergency information.



The purpose of the hazard communications standards is to allow shippers, carriers, and emergency responders to know the hazards of the materials while in the transportation system. The USDOT hazard communications standards are generally based on international standards, **and are very specific regarding format, order, and presentation of information in order to ensure uniformity.**

Communication Standards

The communication standards address four specific areas:

- Shipping papers and emergency information;
- Package Marking requirements;
- Labeling; and,
- Placarding.

Shipping Papers (49 CFR, Part 172, Subpart C)

Shipping Papers must include the following:

- Proper format;
- The basic description in this sequence: UN/NA ID number, Proper shipping name, Class/division number, subsidiary class (if applicable), and packing group (if applicable);
- The total quantity by mass or volume including the unit of measure (for Class 1 materials the net explosive mass; for Class 7 materials the activity; for bulk packages and cylinders, an indication of total quantity, for example, "1 cargo tank," "2 IBC's" or "10 cylinders");
- The number and type of packages (e.g., 12 drums);
- An emergency response phone number that is monitored at all times the HM is in the transportation system. The phone number must be prominent, readily identifiable, and clearly visible. This must be done by the use of; larger or different fonts, different colored text, or by highlighting;

- The name of the company identified with the emergency telephone number must be entered immediately adjacent to the emergency telephone number unless the name is elsewhere on the shipping paper. If the emergency telephone number is the number of an agent or organization providing emergency response information for the offeror of the hazmat, the name of the offeror or contract number between the offeror and emergency information provider must be entered immediately adjacent to the emergency telephone number; and,
- Comprehensive, product specific, emergency information must be carried with the shipping papers. Written emergency response information may be printed on the shipping paper, or on a separate document such as a Material Safety Data Sheet or another document that includes all information required by 49 CFR Section 172.602.

Package Marking (49 CFR, Part 172, Subpart D)

Non-bulk package marking must display the following:

- Proper shipping name and ID number (UN or NA);
- Technical name for N.O.S. descriptions;
- Name and address of consignee or consignor (unless excepted); and,
- Hazardous substances must be marked “R.Q.”.

There are additional marking requirements for bulk packages, radioactive materials, package orientation arrows, inhalation hazards, poisons, ORM-D consumer commodities, explosives, and elevated temperature materials. Some exceptions are allowed for Limited Quantity packages. Markings also include UN package specification codes and USDOT specification plates.

Labeling (49 CFR, Part 172, Subpart E)

HM labels must be displayed on packages unless excepted by the HMR:

- Column 6 of the HM Table indicates the label or labels required for each HM;
- Labels must display hazard class number (class 5 must display class & division number);
- Explosive labels must display class & division numbers and compatibility group letter;
- Some HM and large packagings must display duplicate labels;
- Some labels no longer authorized (such as the “keep away from food” label);
- Text optional on labels, except class 7; and,
- Labels must conform to USDOT size, color, design and visibility standards.

Note: HM labels may not be displayed on a package unless the package contains HM, and the label represents the hazards of the material in the package. You may not display any marking or label on a package which by its color, design, or shape could be confused with a required DOT HM label. Some packagings and materials are excepted from labeling, including materials noted in 49 CFR 172.400a, and Limited Quantity and ORM-D shipments, unless offered for air transportation.

Placarding: (49 CFR, Part 172, Subpart F)

Placards must be displayed on trucks, trailers, vehicles, freight containers, and bulk packages as required or authorized by Placarding Tables 1 and 2 in Section 172.504:

- Display of placards is required for any quantity of Table 1 materials;
- Vehicles carrying Table 2 materials in **non-bulk** packages must be placarded if the aggregate gross weight being transported is 1,001 lbs. or more;
- Vehicles transporting Table 2 materials in **bulk** packages must display placards and ID numbers;

- HM with subsidiary hazards of Poison Inhalation or Dangerous When Wet requires display of both the primary and subsidiary hazard placards (see 172.505);
- There are placarding exceptions found in 172.504(f), Limited Quantity exceptions from placarding are authorized for some HM; and,
- Placards must meet color, size, durability, and visibility specifications.

Note: You may not display a device, marking, or label on a transport vehicle or container that could be confused with a placard. Companies shipping or transporting placarded loads must be registered with the USDOT pursuant to 49 CFR 107.601. Any vehicle transporting placarded HM is a Commercial Motor Vehicle as defined in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. Drivers of vehicles required to be placarded must possess a Commercial Driver's License with a Hazardous Materials Endorsement.

The HM regulations are frequently revised. All persons should consult a current copy of the Federal Hazardous Materials Regulations for the complete hazard communication requirements.

This Fact Sheet is intended as a resource. It is not intended to explain all the requirements of Minnesota or Federal law or regulations. For additional assistance contact the USDOT Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration at 800-467-4922 or www.phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration at 651-291-6150 or www.fmcsa.dot.gov, or MnDOT's Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations at 651-215-6330.