Shipping Papers for Hazardous Materials

**Overview**

Hazardous materials shipments must be accompanied by properly prepared shipping papers. It's the shipper's responsibility to prepare the appropriate shipping paper documentation for each shipment of a hazardous material. Shipping papers might include bills of lading, hazardous waste manifests, etc. The shipping paper for a hazardous material must properly describe per DOT requirements, the hazardous materials being transported.

**Shipping Description**

The proper shipping description of a hazardous material consists of:

1. A basic description;
2. Additional information (depending on materials and mode of transport);
3. Quantity of hazardous material; and
4. Type of packaging used.

The basic description of a hazardous material includes the Identification Number, the Proper Shipping Name, Hazard Class and Packing Group (when applicable). This information is required to be placed on the shipping paper in a specific order. If a technical name is required, it must be placed in parentheses and listed after the Proper Shipping Name or Basic Description. If applicable, a subsidiary hazard class must be placed in parentheses immediately following the primary hazard class.

The total amount of hazardous materials covered by each description must be indicated by mass or volume with the applicable unit of measure. For example: "200 kgs" or "50 L." The number and type of packages also must be indicated and may include the packaging specification, for example:
"12 drums," "12 1H1 drums" or "12 drums (UN 1A1)." The total quantity and types of packaging may be entered before, after or both before and after the Basic Description.

Hazardous materials must be listed first on a shipping paper that also lists non-hazardous materials, or be written or highlighted in a clearly contrasting color. Alternatively, when a shipping paper has a column captioned "HM" for "hazardous materials," the letter "X" may be placed in that column indicating the hazardous material’s description will follow.

**Shipper’s Certification**

Persons offering hazardous materials for transportation must certify their shipment is offered in accordance with the hazardous material regulations. There are several options for certification statements. The following is an example of one certification statement: "This is to certify that the above-named materials are properly classified, described, packaged, marked and labeled, and are in proper condition for transportation according to the applicable regulations of the Department of Transportation."

These certifications must be signed by a principal, officer, partner or employee of the shipper or his agent. They may be signed manually, by typewriter or by other mechanical means.

**Emergency Response Telephone Number**

A shipping paper must contain an emergency response telephone number and, if utilizing an emergency response information telephone number service provider, identify the person (by name or contract number) who has a contractual agreement with the service provider. When the emergency response telephone number is entered only once on the shipping paper, it must be prominent, clearly visible and easily found. It may be highlighted with larger font or contrasting color.

**Emergency Response Information**

A shipment of hazardous materials is required to include emergency response information on the shipping paper itself or attached to it. This emergency response information would be used in the event of an incident involving hazardous materials to assist emergency responders at the scene.
At a minimum, this information must include:

1. A basic description (including technical name, if applicable);
2. Immediate hazards to health;
3. Risks of fire or explosion;
4. Immediate precautions to be taken in the event of an accident or incident;
5. Immediate methods for handling fires;
6. Initial methods for handling spills or leaks in the absence of fire; and
7. Preliminary first aid measures.

Retention

The person providing the shipping paper must record the date the hazardous material is accepted by the carrier and maintain a copy or electronic image of this shipping paper for two years. The copies must be accessible at or through the principal place of business, and must be made available if requested by an authorized official of a Federal, State or local government agency at reasonable times and locations.

FAQ & Interpretations

Follow these links:

https://cms7.phmsa.dot.gov/regulations/title49/section/172.201