International Civil Aviation Organization

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WORKING PAPER

DANGEROUS GOODS PANEL (DGP) WORKING GROUP MEETING (DGP-WG/26)

Centurion, South Africa, 26 to 30 October 2026

Agenda Item 3: Facilitating safe transport of dangerous goods by air (Ref: REC-A-DGS-2029)

REMOVAL OF REQUIREMENT FOR TECHNICAL NAME FOR CATEGORY A INFECTIOUS SUBSTANCES

(Presented by B. Firkins)

SUMMARY

Category A infectious substances assigned to UN 2814 and UN 2900 carry a "*" against the proper shipping name in the Dangerous Goods List, which requires a technical name (the specific pathogen) to be added to the proper shipping name on the transport document. Special Provision A140 already exempts the package itself from showing the technical name and provides that, where a Category A substance is suspected but unknown, the words "suspected category A infectious substance" are shown on the transport document instead. Naming the specific pathogen on the transport document provides no safety or informational value, and from a safety and security perspective it is not preferable to disclose the specific pathogen on the paperwork. Emergency response for these entries is largely consistent regardless of the specific pathogen, and detailed pathogen information remains available at any time through the mandatory 24-hour emergency contact.

Action by the DGP-WG is in paragraph 2.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 UN 2814 — **Infectious substances, affecting humans** and UN 2900 — **Infectious substances, affecting animals** only are marked with a "*" in the Dangerous Goods List. The "*" indicated a need for the technical name – the specific micro-organism – to be added, in parentheses, to the proper shipping name on the transport document.

1.2 The requirement appears to add no value in the safe transport of these products, based on the following:

a) **No safety benefit**. The handling, packaging (Packing Instruction 620) and emergency response for a Category A infectious substance are largely consistent regardless of the specific pathogen. The technical name does not change how the package is handled or how responders act. Packing Instruction 620 requires an itemized list inside the packaging; presumably for the benefit of laboratory staff;

b) **No informational benefit at the point of use**. Special Provision A140 already provides that the technical name need not be shown on the package. The name therefore is only required to appear on the transport document, where it is not needed for safe handling;

c) **Emergency response is pathogen-independent.** The emergency response drill code and the responder actions for a Category A release do not turn on the pathogen name printed on the declaration. Where the specific organism genuinely matters (for example for medical treatment of an exposed person), that information can be obtained from the designated 24-hour emergency contact, which every consignment must provide;

d) **An internal inconsistency**. Where the substance is unknown but suspected to be a Category A infectious substance, then Special Provision A140 requires only the words "suspected category A infectious substance" on the transport document – with no pathogen named. If shipment is acceptable without a specific pathogen name in that case, naming it in other cases adds no proportionate value.

e) **A security and confidentiality concern.** From a safety and security perspective it is not preferable to list the specific pathogen on widely handled transport paperwork. Disclosure on the document creates sensitivity without a transport-safety justification.; and

f) **A source of rejections**. The technical name is a frequent point of error and inconsistency at the acceptance counter, contributing to non-value-added rejections of otherwise compliant Category A shipments.

1.3 A proposal was brought, by a strategic partner, to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Dangerous Goods Board (DGB), to remove the requirement for the shipping name to be supplemented by a technical name on the transport document for UN 2814 and UN 2900. The principle was supported by a strong majority of the Board. Consideration did turn primarily to harmonization with other modes of transport.

1.4 Provision 318 of the UN Model Regulations appears against UN 2814 and UN 2900, and requires, with the documentation, that the proper shipping name is supplemented with the technical name. It is largely consistent with Special Provision A140 in the Technical Instructions. Feedback from the DGP will help IATA in progressing the issue.

2. ACTION BY THE DGP-WG

2.1 The DGP-WG is invited to provide their views, both for and against the concept of removing the technical name requirement from the documentation for UN 2814 and UN 2900.

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