DANGEROUS GOODS PANEL

Dubai, 31 March to 4 April 2003

NOTES OF THE INFECTIOUS SUBSTANCES WORKING GROUP, MONTREAL, 7 MAY 2003

Notes of the Infectious substances working group, Montreal, 7 May 2003

A working group was established to consider the changes to the provisions for diagnostic/ clinical specimens proposed by the UN for inclusion in the 2005-2006 edition of the Technical Instructions. The discussion progressed under a number of headings:

1. Quantity limits

It was queried why the UN had removed the quantity limitations under Packing Instruction 650. It was stated that this had been done because no apparent rationale for restricting quantities was known. Furthermore, the requirement to transport urine samples and very large tumours meant that the current quantity limits were inadequate. However, it was pointed out that substances known to contain risk group 2 or 3 pathogens were now permitted to be transported as UN3373 and that industry appeared not to have difficulty with the current quantity limits. The representative from WHO undertook to establish whether the risk had increased with the removal of a quantity limitation and until this advice was received, it was agreed to retain the existing quantity limits (the first and second sentence of special provision A81) in square brackets.

2. Marking

The text proposed for the 2005-2006 edition of the Technical Instructions contained a requirement for "UN3373" to appear in a diamond. However, no dimensions were specified. It was agreed a minimum dimension should be specified; the subject would be given further consideration for discussion at DGP/19 at which time a recommendation would be put forward to the UN.

It was agreed to require the marking of the shipping name "diagnostic (or clinical) specimens" adjacent to the diamond.

3. Acceptance

The subject of whether diagnostic/ clinical specimens should be subject to an acceptance check was discussed. On the one hand it was suggested operators should check the package is in compliance with Packing Instruction 650, whilst others expressed concern at the impact this would have on the industry, particularly in the area of medical screening programmes. It was also pointed out that this would increase costs to industry. There was no decision taken with regard to requiring an acceptance check list.

4. Documentation from the shipper

The group agreed a Dangerous Goods Transport Document was not necessary but that an alternative documentation was required e.g. air waybill. It was agreed to investigate the linkage of this document to incident reporting requirements.

5. Training

It was agreed not to add a requirement for training in Packing Instruction 650.

6. Incident reporting

It was agreed to retain the current wording in Packing Instruction 650 in respect of incident reporting.

7. Overpack

The group agreed that it was necessary to include a requirement to address overpack markings due to the fact that Packing Instruction 650 excepts all other requirements of the Technical Instructions.

8. Air eligibility marking

It was agreed that packages of diagnostic/ clinical specimens should bear the air eligibility marking.

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