

Dangerous Goods, Hazardous Substances and Major Hazard Facility Regulation Update What You Need to Know...

The 2007 HAZMAT Conference held in Sydney in May 2007 highlighted many important issues concerning hazardous substances and dangerous goods (DG).

Hazardous Substances:

- Australia is moving towards full adoption of the Globally Harmonised System for Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) as part of a new draft National Standard for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Chemicals.
- Draft National Standard and National Code documents have been on display for some time.
- The aim of the National Standard is to merge the regulatory requirements for the control of dangerous goods and hazardous substances under one new regulatory framework.
- Adoption of the GHS is expected to increase the number of chemicals classified as “hazardous” by up to 40% because of lower threshold levels of harm.
- The GHS labelling system and MSDS classification system will require considerable revision to labels and MSDS. For example all labels are required to have new pictograms, new “signal words” and a hazard statement.
- The GHS is expected to be phased in gradually over the next five years.

Dangerous Goods:

- Since the introduction of the new OHS Regulation 2005 in NSW, 4,000 premises have notified that they are holding manifest quantities of DG. WorkCover were expecting around 6,000 premises to notify.
- Of the 4,000 premises who have notified, only 10% (400) have lodged electronic copies of their emergency plans with the NSW Fire Brigade (NSWFB).
- WorkCover will be searching their database for organisations who may have “forgotten” to notify.
- WorkCover will be database matching with the NSWFB to identify premises that have not submitted emergency plans.
- WorkCover will be randomly auditing premises to ensure compliance with Australian Standards with respect to:
 - Correct bunding
 - Adequate separation and segregation distances from work areas and boundaries
 - Exclusion of ignition sources from flammable areas
 - Correct placarding and signage
 - Manifest, site plan and emergency plan kept at front gate
 - Risk assessments conducted
- A survey of businesses holding manifest quantities of DG conducted by the AIDGC showed a very low level of compliance with many of the items above, especially lack of adequate emergency plans and written hazard identification and risk assessment procedures.

Australian Dangerous Goods Code (ADG 7)

The revised edition of the ADG Code is expected to be published in Sep 2007 and will be enforceable from 1 Jan 09 (depending on state legislation). The new Code represents a major upgrade from the old Code:

- The number of classified substances will increase from around 3,000 to 3,500

- The definition of “bulk containers” has changed to any container in direct contact with a solid substance but excludes IBC’s, portable tanks and tank vehicles
- “Packaged containers” no longer restricted to less than 450 L – hence IBC now a package
- However the requirement to placard IBCs will not change
- Chlorine now has subsidiary risk of Class 5.1 (Oxidising Agent) in addition to Class 8 (Corrosive)
- New pictograms required for Class 9 environmentally hazardous materials
- Class 1 (Explosives) and Class 7 (Radioactive materials) will be included for information purposes only

Major Hazard Facility (MHF) Legislation

- MHF legislation expected to be gazetted in NSW later this year.
- Premises holding more than 10% of the trigger levels must notify within 90 days of gazettal that they are a potential MHF e.g. 20 tonnes of LPG or ammonia, 2.5 tonnes of chlorine, 200 tonnes of oxygen or 5 tonnes of explosives Class 1.1.
- Within 6 months, MHF premises must have submitted a safety report plan.
- The safety report must demonstrate the adequacy of the site’s:
 - Hazard risk controls
 - Emergency plan
 - Security plan
 - Integrated and comprehensive safety management system

How Can Advitech Help?

Advitech have developed templates for the preparation of emergency plans, security plans and preliminary hazard analyses for a number of organisations thus ensuring compliance and minimising preparation costs.

In addition, Advitech has competent persons who can conduct audits, reviews and risk assessments related to the storage and handling of explosives, dangerous goods and hazardous substances. Advitech are risk management specialists and have developed a simple risk management software package called Criteria Enterprise in conjunction with Novecom Pty Ltd.

If you require more information on any of these issues above or are unsure if you are complying with the relevant regulations please contact us for an assessment and a proposal.

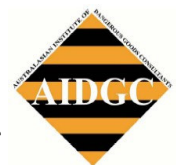
Reference Material

For further information on the MHF regulations click on this link to the WorkCover website:

<http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/OHS/DangerousGoods/MajorHazardFacilities/default.htm>

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Advitech has consultants who are members of the *Australasian Institute of Dangerous Goods Consultants*

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