

Road Transport of Dangerous Goods

There is no globally recognised standard for the proper method for the surface transport of DG items. National and local regulations vary greatly, and the contexts in which humanitarian organisations may respond might have virtually no regulation whatsoever. Humanitarian organisations should endeavour to maintain minimum safety standards for road transport of DG, and remain in compliance with any regulations that may pertain to the geographic areas of response.

Packaging, Labelling and Identification – to whatever extent possible, DG items transported by road should have proper labels on cartons/containers, and be fully disclosed on shipping documents such as packing lists and waybills. As a rule of thumb, DG labelling and packing should be at least equal to the requirements for sea shipping, however local regulations may strictly indicate these requirements as well. Packaging should not be compromised, and transporters – especially third party transporters – should be made well aware of the contents of their vehicles.

Placards and Vehicle Requirements

Many national and local regulations strictly regulate the placement of placards on surface vehicles that transport DG. These regulations relate not only to the placement of markings, but also to the types/volumes/quantities of DG items, times of day and locations of operation, and even may require special training from drivers or special ratings for vehicles. Humanitarian agencies planning to operate in any context should research and understand these regulations where required. Failure to do so can mean required volumes of items not being able to be delivered, transhipped, or not being able to be transported by regular means altogether.

Self-Loaded/Self-Operated Vehicles

Humanitarian agencies may own or operate their own vehicles, or may take a full responsibility in loading, securing and even driving vehicles laden with DG. Even without official regulation, there are several steps agencies should follow:

- Avoid loading multiple types of DG that may react with each other onto a single vehicle.
- Properly secure DG items that may fall over or spill.
- Never transport DG items long side other items that may cause rapid or violent reactions.
- Avoid overloading any one vehicle with DG – spread DG deliveries out over a long period of time.
- Where large loads of DG items are unavoidable (example: fuel trucks), understand the local context – move the vehicle when is safest time of day and along the safest route.
- Instruct staff and drivers on proper transport and handling methods.
- Transport compressed containers empty where possible, and discharge batteries.
- Where required, place signs in local languages indicating:
 - Warnings when a truck may have flammable or hazardous substances.
 - If people should avoid smoking around the vehicle.
 - If special handling requirements for the DG items exist.