

Dangerous Goods

“ Articles or substances which are capable of posing a hazard to health, safety, property or the environment. (ICAO)

Dangerous Goods, frequently referred to as "DG" for short, are commonly handled by humanitarian organisations in field settings. Unfortunately, proper handling and storage of DG items is less commonly known, and many areas of humanitarian response lack regulatory oversight or enforcement of DG rules. Humanitarian actors should attempt to learn as much about DG items under their care for the safety of their own personnel, local communities, and the environment, and should seek to enforce proper handling and storage procedures wherever DG may be present.

Common Terms in Dangerous Goods

DG	Short for "Dangerous Goods" – the term "DG" is used frequently in international transportation and storage.
Flash point	The lowest temperature at which flammable liquid ignited in the atmosphere when exposed to a source of ignition.
Explosive article	Any article containing one or more explosive substances.
Overpack	An enclosure used by a single shipper to contain one or more packages and to form one handling unit.
Outer Packaging	The outer protection of a composite or combination packaging together with any absorbent materials, cushioning and any other components necessary to contain and protect inner receptacles or inner packaging.
Pressurized Containers	Any container or vestibule that contains pressurised liquids or gasses of any kind. Pressurised containers can be considered dangerous goods even when evacuated and empty.

UN Dangerous Goods Identification Number	Four-digit ID number that quickly identifies the specific dangerous good and any associated handling or special transportation needs.
ICAO	Short for the United Nations "International Civil Aviation Organisation".
IATA	Short for "International Air Transport Association."
HazDec	Short for "Shipper's Declaration of Dangerous Goods." HazDecs are predefined declaration forms shippers must include when transporting DG items via air/sea.
IMO	Short for "International Maritime Organisation"
DGD	Short for "Shipper's Dangerous Goods Declaration." DGDs are predefined declaration forms shippers must include when transporting DG by air/sea.
HazMat	Short for "Hazardous Material," used in reference to DG, most commonly in North America.
Reactive Substance	Any substance that may react to other specific substances nearby, especially when exposed to air, when improperly stored, or when the required storage container is compromised. Reactive substances may cause rapid energetic reactions, or slow reactions. Many reactive substances react strongly to other specific substances, such as water or other chemicals, and must be handled accordingly.
