



INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

FILE NO: N08/02023

Title : Air Cargo - Procedures for the Safe
Handling of Unidentified Liquids

Date : July 2008

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THIS INSTRUCTION AND GUIDELINE REFERS TO:

PRACTICE STATEMENT NO:

PS2008/08 Inspection and Examination of Air Cargo – Imports

PS2008/30 Inspection and Examination of Air Cargo - Exports

PUBLISHED DATE: 10 NOVEMBER 2008

AVAILABILITY: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

SUBJECT: Procedures for the Safe Handling of Unidentified Liquids

PURPOSE: To provide guidance to staff who locate unidentified liquids in the course of their daily duties.

OWNER: NATIONAL MANAGER CARGO OPERATIONS NORTH

CATEGORY: OPERATIONAL

CONTACT: DIRECTOR CARGO BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT (AIR)

SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS

This Instruction and Guideline has been developed to provide guidance to staff who locate unidentified liquids in the course of their daily duties.

It also details general procedures relating to Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) considerations, COMCARE reporting, Customs Incident Reporting Centre (CIRC) and Employee Assistance Providers (EAP).

It is important to read the complete Instruction and Guideline before proceeding.

INTRODUCTION

With the rise in use and detection of designer type drugs (Gamma-Butyrolactone (GBL), Gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB), Ecstasy, Amphetamines, Pseudoephedrine, etc) Customs air cargo officers are more likely to encounter the precursors, solvents and other various chemical compounds that go to make up these drugs.

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Some of these chemicals come in liquid form. These liquids are sometimes unidentified and need testing using technology such as 'StreetLab' for identification. There are potential OH&S problems for both Customs officers and assets due to the corrosive nature of some of these chemicals.

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OH&S Considerations

Workplace safety is the responsibility of every Customs Officer.

Customs Officers are to wear OH&S issue personal protection equipment (e.g. steel cap boots, high visibility vests, etc) at all times.

Prior to commencing ***any*** examination, Customs Officers ***must*** assess the working environment and circumstances of each individual tasking to identify factors which may impact on officer's personal safety.

Officers should not rely solely on Customs and associated documentation/declarations when determining the contents of a consignment.

Physical deconstruction should not proceed until a full visual assessment of the whole consignment has been completed and where necessary safety issues have been mitigated.

Officers are to handle cargo according to safe lifting guidelines (*OH&S Hazard Instruction & Guideline – Manual Handling*) and where applicable, use team lifting or mechanical devices to prevent injury.

Customs Supervisors and Managers are to ensure that sufficient First Aid trained officers are available in the workplace.

Comcare

All injuries or incidents are to be reported in Human Resource Information Service (HRIS), to a supervisor and to Comcare via the '*Notification and Report of an Incident*' form. The Regional OH&S Coordinator should also be informed.

Note that there are legal reporting timeframes when reporting to Comcare about instances of death, serious personal injury, incapacity or a dangerous occurrence.

Notifiable workplace incidents are to be reported to Comcare via facsimile on telephone **1300 305 916**. Timeframes as follows:

Death	-within 2 hours
Serious Personal Injury	-within 24 hours
Incapacity greater than 30 days	-within 24 hours of becoming aware of duration
Dangerous Occurrence	-within 24 hours

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All hazards are to be reported according to the OH&S Hazard Reporting Process. Specifically, hazards are reported to an immediate supervisor and to the Regional OH&S Coordinator on the *Hazard Report Form* where the hazard cannot be immediately eliminated, or further action is required.

N.B. Failure to comply with the above timeframes is a breach of section 68 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991* and regulation 37A of the *Occupational Health and Safety (Safety Arrangements) Regulation 1991*.

Customs Incident Reporting Centre (CIRC)

Any incidents that arise during an examination that have the capacity to interrupt or affect Customs business, including security incidents, must be reported to the Customs Incident Reporting Centre (CIRC) on telephone **1800 303 387**.

Employee Assistance Provider (EAP)

If required, the Customs Employee Assistance Provider (EAP), OSA Group, is available to work with staff involved in a critical incident. Trained counsellors can be deployed to a workplace within 2 hours. The OSA Group's contact number is **1300 361 008**, 24 hours - 7 days.

Technical Information

Gamma-Butyrolactone (GBL)- GBL is a liquid solvent used in the paint and plastics industry. It is also sold as a cleaner and nail enamel, and ink remover. It is also used as the precursor for -

Gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB), also known by the street name "*Fantasy*". This product has been used and gained notoriety as a 'date rape / rave party' drug.

1,4-butanediol (BD) - is closely related to the above.

These chemicals and solvents will attack and corrode metals and soften or dissolve normal plastics.

Other types of unidentified liquids that may be encountered include ;

- ***Methadone***
- ***Ketamine solution***
- ***Alcohol***
- ***Anabolic Steroids***

The correct type of containers to store and transport the above types of chemicals are ;

- Glass containers;

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- Plastic containers **only** made from *Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET)* commonly used in soft drink bottles; and
- HAZMAT sealed containers – (These containers should have a tight fitting screw cap).

Please Note:

- Metal containers and normal plastic containers / bags **are not** to be used.
- All chemical liquids should have a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) with them, indicating safe handling requirements. Any unidentified liquids (which may be an attempt to illegally move precursors over the border for illicit drug production) should be handled, moved and stored with the above mentioned type containers via the following procedures.

If an unidentified liquid is detected, the following general safety procedures will apply:

- Immediately consider what OH&S protection is needed – gloves, clothing, masks, etc.
- Do not break any seals that are intact.
- Keep the container upright.
- Retain the product in the original container in which it was found, except if that container is damaged or does not have a lid. If damaged or leaking, transfer to appropriate containers.
- DO NOT SMELL AS A MEANS OF IDENTIFICATION. Toxic fumes can form from liquid being sealed/confined.
- DO NOT MIX with another liquid for whatever reason. Volatile reactions can occur. This applies to use of field test kits used to detect narcotic substances. (NIK tubes and pouch).

Procedures

- If a liquid can be identified as legitimate consignment through commercial documentation, check for permits if required, and ensure it is properly secured at the depot. Notify depot staff so that arrangements can be made to move the product to a designated dangerous goods area..
- If an unidentified liquid, or GBL, GHB or BD is detected during daily operations ;
 - Cease the examination and take action to immediately ensure all team members involved have adequate information and protection – (gloves, protective clothing, masks if necessary). If anybody has touched or come in contact with the product, immediately direct them to thoroughly wash any exposed areas in hot soapy water.
 - If a liquid is suspicious, and sealed, do not attempt to open it until adequate protection or a suitable location is available. Fumes may be toxic, especially if the

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liquid is a form of Phencyclidine (PCP) or Methylamphetamine, that create phosphene gas when sealed. **REMEMBER THAT GASES AS WELL AS LIQUIDS CAN CREATE AN OH&S HAZARD.**

- Try to determine from documentation (air waybill, invoices, dangerous goods certificates, etc) or depot operator what the liquid is. Check if any Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is with the goods. If so, follow those specific safety guidelines.
- If no MSDS,
 - Notify a Customs Supervisor - If the liquid is unidentifiable / or has no MSDS, the Supervisor should conduct further research to attempt to identify the liquid and determine appropriate course of action. For example ;
 - Poisons Information 131126 (24 hour / 7 days a week service)
 - State/Regional Hazmat Units (Fire Brigade) – Phone 000.
 - Internet
- Follow the procedures to seize and transfer the goods as outlined in the Detained Goods Management NPS and I&G's. This includes issuing a B390 to the depot supervisor
- Remove the goods to Customs House once safely secured and packaged.
- At Customs House ensure the goods are securely stored so no leaking can occur. The goods should be secured out of contact of the general work area.
- For detections of Gamma-Butyrolactone (GBL) or Gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB), notify the Australian Federal Police (AFP). Follow the procedures to transfer the goods as outlined in Detection of Narcotic I & G's.
- If the goods are determined to be a prohibited import, proceed with normal detection processes i.e.;
 - Check ICS,, change to HELD status, if required.
 - Complete an EXAMS record.
 - Complete a NIS report.
 - Complete the transfer of goods to the relevant workgroup in ICS. Compliance Branch may contact importer/agent to provide Illustrative and Descriptive Material (IDM).
 - Photograph items.

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RELATED POLICIES AND REFERENCES

PRACTICE STATEMENTS

Customs OHS Policy – OHS Risk Management – HSMA 2
OHS Policy Guideline – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
OHS Policy Guideline – First Aid;

OTHER INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

- *Customs OHS Hazard Instructions and Guidelines*
 - Hazardous substances*
 - Chemical hazards*
 - Manual Handling*

Chief Executive Instruction

- Number 4.12 refers to the use of Mobile Telephones
- Number 5.5 refers to the use of Commonwealth Vehicles

Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991

- Section 68 states the reporting timeframes for notifiable workplace incidents

Occupational Health and Safety (Safety Standards) Regulations 1994

- Regulation 37A relates to notifiable workplace incidents

Customs Act 1901

- Section 30 refers to Customs control of goods
- Section 33 refers to persons not to move goods subject to the control of Customs
- Section 50, 51 and 51A relate to prohibited imports including certain controlled substances
- Section 112 and 112A relate to prohibited exports including certain controlled substances
- Section 186 relates to the general powers of examination of goods subject to Customs control
- Section 186A relates to the power of officers to take copies of documents examined under s.186
- Section 229 relates to forfeited goods
- Section 233BAA refers to Tier 1 goods
- Section 233BAB refers to Tier 2 goods

Customs Regulations 1926

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- Regulation 179AA and Schedule 1AA relate to Tier 1 and Tier 2 goods

Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956

Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations 1958

CONSULTATION

INTERNAL

The following internal stakeholders have been consulted in the development of these Instructions and Guidelines.

CARGO BRANCH
PEOPLE AND PLACE BRANCH
COMPLIANCE BRANCH

EXTERNAL

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE
STATE FIRE BRIGADE/SERVICES

Approval

Approved on 6 November 2008 by:

Approving Officer

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