



# CLASSIFICATION SCHEME

This bulletin explains the classification requirements of dangerous goods. It does not change, create, amend or suggest deviations to the [Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations](#) (TDG Regulations). For specific details, consult [Part 2](#) of the TDG Regulations.

The [Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act](#) (TDG Act) divides dangerous goods hazards into nine classes according to the type of danger they present. The classes, as well as their divisions as applicable, are described in the "[Dangerous Goods Marks](#)" document.

## Responsibility

### Classification

It is the consignor's responsibility to classify a substance, product or organism, and to determine if it is dangerous goods. A consignor must do all the preparation work (or hire someone to do it) before the carrier takes possession of the dangerous goods. Preparing the dangerous goods for transport includes:

- classifying the dangerous goods
- completing the documentation
- displaying the dangerous goods marks on the means of containment
- selecting the appropriate means of containment

Classification must be done by, or in consultation with, a person capable of understanding the nature and the properties of the dangerous goods. For example, it could be a person who develops, blends or otherwise prepares mixtures or solutions of goods. In the case of infectious substances, it could be a doctor, a scientist, a veterinarian, an epidemiologist, a genetic engineer, a pathologist, a nurse, a coroner, a laboratory technologist, or a technician. Explosives must be classified by Natural Resources Canada.

### Proof of classification

A consignor must, during a five-year period that begins on the date that appears on the shipping document, make a proof of classification available to the Minister on reasonable notice given by the Minister.

This document is in the form of a:

- test report
- lab report
- document that explains how the dangerous goods were classified

The proof of classification must include the following information:

- the date on which the dangerous goods were classified
- if applicable, the technical name of the dangerous goods
- the classification of the dangerous goods
- if applicable, the classification method used under Part 2 of the TDG Regulations or under Chapter 2 of the United Nations (UN) Recommendations

## Classification description

When classifying dangerous goods, the consignor must identify:

- the shipping name (the name of the dangerous goods as it appears in column 2 of [Schedule 1](#) of the TDG Regulations)
- the primary class
- the UN number

and, if applicable:

- the compatibility group letter
- the subsidiary class(es)
- the packing group
- the infectious substance category
- the primary class is the class of dangerous goods that poses the highest hazard, in accordance with the order of precedence of [Section 2.8](#) of the TDG Regulations, and takes precedence over any other class posing a lower hazard. The lower hazard classes will be identified as subsidiary classes
- the UN number is comprised of the letters “UN” followed by a four-digit number that identifies dangerous goods
- the compatibility group identifies further details on the nature of the hazard of Class 1, Explosives substances and articles, and is used to identify those that can be transported together without significantly increasing either the probability of an incident or, for a given quantity, the magnitude of the effects of such an incident. It is represented by a letter immediately following the primary class
- the packing group indicates the level of danger of a product or substance. Packing group I indicates great danger, packing group II indicates medium danger and packing group III indicates minor danger

- infectious substances included in Class 6.2 are divided into two categories, Category A and Category B. They are based on their ability to cause a disease and the severity of that disease. Category A substances indicate a greater level of danger than Category B

## Alternative methods

### Use of classification

The consignor **must** use:

- for substances included in Class 1, Explosives, the classification determined in accordance with the [Explosives Act](#)
- for substances included in Class 7, Radioactive Materials, the classification determined in accordance with the [Packaging and Transport of Nuclear Substances Regulations](#)

The consignor **may** use:

- for substances included in Class 6.2, Infectious Substances, the classification determined by the Public Health Agency of Canada or the Canadian Food Inspection Agency

For transport within Canada by road vehicle, railway vehicle or by vessel, the consignor may use the classification in the:

- International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Technical Instructions
- International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code
- United Nations (UN) Recommendations

### International transport

As per [Part 11](#) of the TDG Regulations, the IMDG Code must be consulted for international transport by vessel.

For transport from the United States into Canada by road vehicle or railway vehicle, the shipping name used must be one that is recognized in Schedule 1 of the TDG Regulations or in the UN Recommendations.

## Transport by aircraft

A person who handles, offers for transport or transports dangerous goods by aircraft between Canada and another country must do so in accordance with the ICAO Technical Instructions as well as [Part 12](#) of the TDG Regulations.

## Compliance with the TDG Act and Regulations

Failure to comply with the [TDG Act](#) and TDG Regulations may lead to fines and/or imprisonment. For more information, you can visit the [TDG website](#) and the [Department of Justice website](#).

## Contact us

For regulatory questions, contact the TDG regional office in your region:

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