Shipping papers are required, under most circumstances, by 49 CFR, Part 172, Subpart C to be prepared and tendered with the shipment and maintained away from the packages of hazardous materials. The information required in the hazardous materials shipping paper must be legible and in English (for shipments to or from the U.S. territories and possessions), although other languages may be used.

Shipping papers must contain the following information. The basic description must be provided in the order prescribed per 49 CFR §172.202.

- Shipper & Consignee Name & Address
- Quantity, Types, & Kinds of Packages
- Shipping Name
- Hazard Class & Division (including compatibility group)
- Identification Number
- Packing Group, if applicable
- Mass & Volume
- Additional Descriptive Information
- Telephone Number
- Emergency Response Information

In addition, the following information must be provided on the shipping papers:

- Shipper's Certification
- Ocean Container Packing Certificate (if required)
- Signature

The basic description is the core description for the hazardous materials shipment and is obtained from the 49 CFR Hazardous Materials Table (HMT), Columns 4, 2, 3, and 5.

An easy way to remember the basic description is to remember the acronym “I-S-H-I-P,” which represents the following information:

- Identification Number
- Shipping Name
- Hazard Class & Division (including compatibility group)
- Packing Group, if applicable
Additional descriptive information may be necessary to properly communicate the hazards associated with the dangerous goods being shipped. Shipping papers for automotive hazardous materials shipments may require one or more of the following pieces of additional descriptive information:

- Special Permits, Competent Authority Approvals, Explosive Registrations
- Limited Quantity
- Placards required for transport (recommended)
- Quantity, types, & kinds of packages (and inner packagings for LTD QTY)
- Technical or chemical names for N.O.S. entries
- Flashpoint (°C / °F) (recommended)

**DOT Special Permits, Competent Authority Approvals or Explosive Registration Numbers** - Certain substances and articles may be offered for transport under the provisions of a DOT Special Permit or Competent Authority Approval. When such special permits or approvals are granted, a copy must be tendered with the shipping papers and the special permit or approval number should be entered onto the shipping papers following the basic description.

Additionally, air bag modules, seat-belt pretensioners, and some battery disconnects (e.g., cable cutters) must be approved for transport within the U.S. territories or possessions and will be assigned an explosive registration number.

For example:

- DOT-SP 9275
- CAA-9901002
- EX-1998050076

Substances that are offered under the limited quantity provisions of Part 49 CFR 173 must include the words “LIMITED QUANTITY” or the letters “LTD QTY” following the basic description. Limited quantity consignments are required to be declared.

For example:

- UN1263, PAINT, 3, II, LIMITED QUANTITY; or
- UN1263, PAINT, 3, II, LTD QTY
It is good business practice to indicate when and which placards are required for transport. Some shipments for rail or intermodal transport are required to be indicated on the shipping papers. In such cases, a statement such as the following should be entered onto the hazardous materials shipping paper. In the example below, the primary hazard class placard is listed first and the subsidiary is listed afterwards.

For example: **PLACARDED FLAMMABLE, TOXIC**

The quantity, types, and kinds of packages of hazardous materials should be noted on the shipping paper. Packages containing limited quantities should note the quantity, types, and sizes of inner receptacles. For example...

**10 x 1A1 DRUMS x 200 L**
- meaning 10 closed-head drums each containing 200 liters

**10 x FIBERBOARD BOXES x 4 CANS x 355 ml each**
- meaning 10 fiberboard boxes each containing 4 cans having a capacity of 355 milliliters (~12 ounces) each

Substances that are described with the "N.O.S." descriptor will generally require a correct technical or chemical name in parentheses following the 'N.O.S' descriptor if the entry shows the letter "G" shown in Column 1 of the Hazardous Materials Table.

For example...

UN1993, FLAMMABLE LIQUID, N.O.S. (acetone, isopropanol), 3, II
UN1268, PETROLEUM DISTILLATES, N.O.S., 3, III

UN1993 shows the letter G in HMT Column 1. UN1268 does not show the letter "G," therefore a correct technical or chemical name is NOT required.

The flashpoint (associated with flammable liquids such as solvents, paint, and gasoline) is the lowest temperature at which the vapor-air mixture can ignite. The flashpoint is generally shown on the Safety Data Sheet for the substance and should be listed on the shipping paper so that, in the event of an emergency involving the flammable liquid, emergency responders can compare the flashpoint of the substance to the ambient temperature. If the ambient temperature is at or above the flashpoint for the product, fire personnel must don specially designed firefighting gear to protect themselves in the event of an ignition.
Dangerous goods that are offered for transport must be accompanied by a 24-hour emergency response telephone number. This number, which must include the correct international and national dialing access codes, must be for a person who:

- Has information regarding the emergency response procedures; or
- Has immediate access to a person that possesses that knowledge; and
- Is available 24 hours per day during transportation including storage incident to transportation (e.g., demurrage).

The emergency response telephone number must be accessible at all times.

Therefore, the following are specifically prohibited:

- Cellular or mobile phones
- Pagers & two-way communication devices (e.g., Blackberry™)
- Answering machines or services
- Facsimile machines

There are a number of companies available that can provide this service to the shipper, including the following:

- ChemTrec
- ChemTel
- InfoTrac
- 3E

In addition to an emergency response telephone number, emergency response information must be provided that addresses the following emergency situations:

- Hazards to health
- Risks of fire or explosion
- Immediate precautions to be taken in the event of an accident or incident
- Immediate methods for handling fires
- Initial methods for handling spills or leaks in the absence of fire
- Preliminary first aid measures
The emergency response information provided must be:

- Printed legibly in English;
- Available for use away from the package; and
- Presented either...

- Written on a shipping paper; or
- Attached as a separate document (e.g., Safety Data Sheet); or
- X-referenced to a separate but available emergency response guidance document (e.g., Emergency Response Guidebook)

Some carriers impose additional restrictions above and beyond what is prescribed for in the Hazardous Materials Regulations. Many carriers (e.g., FedEx) require that shipping papers be prepared in triplicate and that the documentation is either typewritten or computer-generated. Hand-written documents are no longer acceptable by this and many other carriers.

Other carriers (e.g., UPS, FedEx Ground) require the use of proprietary software programs and printers to generate shipping papers and multi-copy adhesive labels that are applied to HM packages. Before offering hazardous materials shipments to a carrier, you should discuss their rules regarding hazardous materials.

Often the carrier will require you to enter into a written contract or agreement, or receive specialized training on their system of hazardous materials transportation. Also, advise the carrier of the types and kinds of hazardous materials that you will be shipping related information. Many carriers will require copies of Safety Data Sheets, Approvals, or Explosive Registration Numbers before hazardous materials are accepted for carriage.

Hazardous materials shipping papers are important legal documents that are required to be maintained on file at the principal place of business for a period of not less than two years.

Shipping papers may be used to document both hazardous and non-hazardous goods for ground transport, however, the hazardous materials must be highlighted or marked in such a way that it is easy to recognize them in the event of an emergency. The hazardous materials descriptions may be noted in one of three different ways:

- Listed first on the shipping papers; or
- Highlighted in a contrasting color; or
- Highlighted with an "X" in the "HM" (Hazardous Materials) column
Hazardous materials shipping papers must be tendered to the carrier with the packages. The carrier must then keep the shipping papers away from the packages and within an arm's reach of the driver. Because a driver often carries a lot of documentation (e.g., routing instructions, invoices, pick-up and delivery orders, Safety Data Sheets, manifests), the shipping papers must be segregated from non-hazardous documentation to ensure availability in the event of an emergency involving the dangerous freight. Hazardous materials shipping papers may either be distinctively tabbed or placed on top of all other documentation.

Hazardous materials transported in company or private vehicles on a will-call order pick-up are also regulated for transportation in commerce and, therefore, subject to the same requirements for hazardous materials shipments carried by commercial carriers. Packages containing hazardous materials must be marked, labeled, and documented in the same manner as those transported by common carrier or dedicated delivery services.

Shipping papers must be tendered with these shipments at the will-call counter and carried by the driver within an arm's reach while in transit.