

Truckers drive your top and bottom line by hauling HAZMAT

George P. Kongalath – CEO Ideabytes Inc.

June 14 2016

“A rose by any other name is still a rose” wrote Shakespeare, by the same token for a trucker, a load is still a load whether it is HAZMAT or normal goods. Realistically speaking, most companies shipping goods by trucks, do not just ship HAZMAT. In all probability the HAZMAT segment averages about 10% of the goods that are hauled on the highways around the world. Companies prefer to hire trucking services from companies that haul both HAZMAT and Non-HAZMAT loads. If an independent trucker or a trucking company does not haul HAZMAT, it is very unlikely that they will be identified as a preferred trucking operator, eliminating the potential of business.

After talking to many drivers and companies across the United States and Canada, the chorus that was repeated most often was that they were overwhelmed by the intricacies of the regulations that govern the transport of HAZMAT. Many a driver has complained of getting expensive violations that have resulted in a loss of revenue and hours spent in the legal system trying to prove that the violation was incorrectly issued.

When stopped at weigh stations for inspections, HAZMAT loads can cause delays of an hour or more while the officer determines whether the loads are compliant to the regulations. Bottom line, when a driver is rolling with a laden trailer, they are earning money. Violations and inspection delays cut deep into income and profitability.

Now that the problem is clear – **what does a trucker or a trucking company have to do to haul HAZMAT and have a positive experience both financially and operationally?**

The answer to this question is the judicious use of cutting edge tools to assist the company and the driver to ensure 100% compliance to the regulations. Cellular data service and Wi-Fi have been key enablers for application developers to create the tools that are intuitive for the workforce that are used to the traditional tools of the trade. Use of these tools are vital for the trucking organization to validate the loads they are hauling are compliant to the transportation regulations.

At an inspection station, when an inspector sees placarding for HAZMAT, more often than not, they will ask to see the manifests for the load. The driver promptly presents the officer a sheaf of papers – many of which unfortunately are barely legible. Officers are human – so here is the first important rule - **Ensure the paperwork carried is legible.**

If the loads on the truck all belong to the same class, the inspections are painless for both the driver and the inspector. If the paperwork is correct, and the trailer looks normal, the inspection will be short and painless. If the loads belong to multiple classes, now the inspector has to evaluate whether or not the segregation and placarding rules have been applied correctly. The trigger for the officer to inspect the paperwork closely starts with the shipping document. **If it does not have the UN number, Proper Shipping Name, Packing Group, Net Quantity of HAZMAT and packing listed in sequence, it is a red light.** Tools such as DGSMS™, a web based application, when used by a Consolidating facility generates a summary manifest which lists each of the loads correctly and the placarding that is required tells the inspector that the truck being inspected has gone the extra distance to ensure compliance. Companies using DGSMS have seen their average inspection times for HAZMAT drop to less than 5 minutes and have not had a placarding infraction.

The input to any system is the **declaration**, and a very large percentage does not meet the requirements laid out by the regulations. **So how does a trucking company get the shipper to issue correct documentation?** Refusing the load is not the answer as it will just black list them. The answer is to give them a copy of DGDOX™ which is free for the first year. The trucking company's logo is listed as the sponsoring company on the declaration which is great advertising. The system requires no IT support and works on web – so any web browser on a PC, laptop, or ipad works just fine. Declarations generated by the system are accurate and repeatable. When a driver sees a DGDOX™ declaration, they can be confident, that the paper work will pass the inspectors scrutiny.

Given this is in place, **it now become the driver's responsibility to ensure the loads are complaint.** How does a driver who loves the road and has little interest in regulations achieve this? The answer is DGMobi™, an android application into which the driver inputs the UN number listed in the declaration, the driver can verify that the Proper shipping name matches the documenta-

tion, and then enters the number of packages, the net HAZMAT weight. The application then displays the placarding required based on the cumulative load on the truck. If loads are incompatible because of segregation rules, the driver is advised not to accept the load. Based on the cumulative loads, a 1 gallon can of paint can trigger the display of a placard. A low cost application – helps the driver stay compliant when picking up the loads from a facility. At an inspection the electronic summary in many instances satisfies an inspector. In addition the application also carries the ERG – which also complies with the regulation that requires that the ERG be at arm’s length in the cab.

Now that the paper work is compliant, the loads are properly placarded; the driver has two more responsibilities. The first being to check the loads are in good shape, inspect drums to see that they are not corroded, the packages are not split, or leaking and most important have the certification stamp. **Unless the declaration states that the loads are exempt from certified packaging, it is mandatory to have the certification stamp and the primary and secondary class labels (if it applies) on every package and on the four sides of an over-pack.** The last step is to correctly block and brace the loads. Hauling HAZMAT requires the extra attention that the loads are properly blocked and braced. This step can save a driver’s life and the life of others in a collision, or roll-over. As soon as the doors are opened and the inspector sees the loads properly blocked and braced, the over packs are marked correctly, it will give them the confidence that the loads are being transported as per regulations.

As a tribute to the inspectors, who work in rain, shine and snow, the compliance software is available at no charge. Inspectors with a government email address can register and use it for free. The DOT 49 CFR compliant service is available at inspector@dgsmsusa.com, the Canadian TDG compliant service is available at inspector@dgsms.ca

After reading this article, the author hopes to inspire drivers and companies to haul HAZMAT profitably and with the knowledge that it can be done safely and with relative ease. Still not convinced, use our second opinion service to help you figure out what it takes to get your business hauling HAZMAT in compliance with the regulations. For periodic papers on hauling HAZMAT, Visit the web site www.dgsms.ca or subscribe to it by sending and email to contact@dgsms.ca with the subject – Register me for the white papers and your contact details in the body.

Wishing all the drivers who keep our economy on the move, Safe trucking!

About the author:



George has been involved in the automation of regulatory systems since 1995 and has pioneered digital driver's licence and passport systems. His team which includes compliance experts who have been involved in the shipping of HAZMAT for almost two decades, Chemists with Ph.D.'s and a team of highly skilled computer engineers. The focus is to enable the safe transportation of HAZMAT for the security of the population, the environment and those that transport it.

[For more white papers](#)