



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Research and  
Special Programs  
Administration**

400 Seventh Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

MAY 4 1998

Mr. Paul Rankin, President  
The Association of Container Reconditioners  
8401 Corporate Drive, Suite 140  
Landover, MD 20785-2224

Dear Mr. Rankin:

This is in response to your letter of May 28, 1997, and your telephone conversation with Mr. Charles Betts of my staff, requesting clarification on the Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR; 49 CFR Parts 171-180) concerning the modification of markings displayed on a durable preprinted label and affixed to the side of a reconditioned steel drum. You state that drum reconditioners stock the more commonly used markings (i.e., preprinted labels). Sometimes slightly different markings are needed for a reconditioned drum. You ask whether a reconditioner can use an indelible marker to change the preprinted markings to show a higher performance capability provided that the altered markings never exceed the manufacturer's permanent mark, for example, changing the preprinted marking "UN 1A1/Y1.2/100" to read "UN 1A1/Y1.4/100."

The answer is yes. Using a permanent ink to alter the markings on the label is acceptable if the requirements specified in § 178.3 (a)(3) for permanency, contrast, and legibility are met. However, you should be aware that a manual change to a printed label may be viewed with suspicion by persons using, handling or inspecting the drums. Also, as you stated and as prescribed by § 173.24 (c)(4), in no case may the markings applied by the reconditioner identify a greater performance capability than that marked on the drum by the manufacturer.

I hope this information is helpful. Should you have further questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Edward T. Mazzullo  
Director, Office of Hazardous  
Materials Standards





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*"Responsible Container Management"*



Edward T. Mazzullo, Director  
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