



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Pipeline and Hazardous
Materials Safety Administration**

Office of
Chief Counsel

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***Hazardous Materials Safety Law
Division***

AMENDED NOTICE OF PROBABLE VIOLATION

Date Issued: November 7, 2024

PHMSA Case No.: 24-0092-SH-WE

Respondent: HIS Company, Inc., d/b/a HISCO
6650 Concord Park Dr.
Houston, TX 77040
ATTN: Ruff Sravee, CEO

No. of Alleged Violations: 3

Total Proposed Assessment: \$2,280 (includes a \$520 reduction for corrective action)

The Office of Chief Counsel of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) alleges that you have violated certain provisions of the Federal hazardous materials transportation law, 49 U.S.C. § 5101 et seq., and/or the Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR), 49 CFR Parts 171-180. PHMSA sets forth the specific allegations in Addendum A to this Notice.

What are the maximum and minimum civil penalties that PHMSA can assess? Federal law sets a maximum civil penalty of \$96,624 (or \$225,455 if the violation results in death, serious illness or severe injury, or substantial destruction of property), and a minimum civil penalty of \$582 if the violation concerns training, for each violation of the Federal hazardous materials transportation law or the HMR. Each day of a continuing violation by a shipper or transporter of hazardous materials constitutes a separate violation for which the maximum penalty may be imposed (49 U.S.C. § 5123(a)).

What factors does PHMSA consider when proposing and assessing a civil penalty? Federal law requires PHMSA to consider certain factors when proposing and assessing a civil penalty for a violation of Federal hazardous materials transportation law or the HMR. Please refer to

Addendum B to this Notice for more information concerning these factors, which include corrective actions you take to attain and ensure compliance with the HMR.

How do I respond? You may respond to this Notice in any of three ways:

- (1) By paying the proposed assessment (49 CFR § 107.313(a)(1));
- (2) By sending an informal response, which can include a request for an informal conference (49 CFR § 107.313(a)(2)); or
- (3) By requesting a formal hearing (49 CFR § 107.313(a)(3)).

Details on these three options are provided in Addendum B to this Notice and also online at: (<https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/field-operations/nopvresponses>). PHMSA explains its procedures for assessing civil penalties and imposing compliance orders in 49 CFR §§ 107.307 - 107.331.

When is my response due? You must respond within thirty (30) days from the date that you receive the Notice (49 CFR § 107.313(a)). I may extend the 30-day period for your response if you ask for an extension, and show good cause, within the original 30-day period (49 CFR § 107.313(c)). A response received out of time will not be considered. To assure timely receipt, **PHMSA strongly encourages you to submit your response by e-mail.**

What happens if I fail to respond? You waive your right to contest the allegations made in Addendum A to this Notice if you fail to respond within thirty (30) days of receiving it (or by the end of any extension). In that event, the Chief Counsel may find that you committed the violation(s) alleged in this Notice and assess an appropriate civil penalty.

What happens if PHMSA issues an Order assessing a civil penalty, and I fail to pay? If you fail to pay a civil penalty assessed by an Order, on the 91st day after the date of the Order you will be prohibited from conducting hazardous materials operations, in accordance with 49 CFR Part 109, Subpart E. If PHMSA issues a cease operations order and you continue to conduct hazardous materials operations, you may be subject to additional penalties, including criminal prosecution pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 5124. The prohibition shall continue until payment of the penalty has been made in full, or until PHMSA approves an acceptable payment plan.

The Case Exhibits will be supplied to you in a PDF format using DOT's Secure Large File Transfer System via the link in an email to follow, which will be active for the next 30 days. If receiving the Case Exhibits in electronic format creates an undue hardship for you, please contact me.

SAMANTHA
ANN VRSCAK

Digitally signed by
SAMANTHA ANN VRSCAK
Date: 2024.11.07 11:11:54
-05'00'

Samantha Vrscak, Attorney

Enclosures: Addendum A
Addendum B
Addendum C

SERVICE BY CERTIFIED MAIL

ADDENDUM A

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GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

General Factual Allegations/Averments

1. On April 1, 2024, PHMSA's Investigators conducted an inspection at Respondent's facility in Corona, California.
2. Jose Villa, Manager, represented the company and provided necessary information and documentation.
3. Respondent is a distributor of chemicals and tools for the aerospace industry. Respondent ships Class 3, 8, and 9 hazardous materials packaged in UN standard non-bulk packaging and limited quantity packaging. Respondent also is a hazardous waste generator.
4. Respondent has three hazmat employees at its Corona, California location.
5. As an offeror of hazardous materials, Respondent is a regulated entity subject to the HMR and to the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Transportation, PHMSA's Associate Administrator for Hazardous Materials Safety, and PHMSA's Office of the Chief Counsel (49 U.S.C. § 5103(b) and 49 CFR § 107.301).

SPECIFIC ALLEGATIONS

Probable Violation No. 1

Allowing employees to perform functions subject to the requirements of the HMR, while failing to provide initial function-specific training, in violation of 49 CFR §§ 171.2(a) and (b); 172.702(a); and 172.704(a)(2) and (c)(1).

Regulatory Standard

1. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 171.2(a), each person who performs a function covered by the HMR must perform that function in accordance with the HMR.
2. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 171.2(b), each person who offers a hazardous material for transportation in commerce must comply with all applicable requirements of the HMR.
3. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 172.702(a), a hazmat employer shall ensure that each of its hazmat employees is trained in accordance with the requirements prescribed in the HMR.
4. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 172.704(a)(2), each hazmat employee must be provided function-specific training concerning the requirements of the HMR, or exemptions or special permits issued under subchapter A of this chapter, that are specifically applicable to the functions the employee performs. As an alternative to function-specific training on the

requirements of the HMR, training relating to the requirements of the ICAO Technical instructions and the IMDG Code may be provided to the extent such training addresses functions authorized by subpart C of Part 171 of the HMR.

5. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 172.704(c)(1), a new hazmat employee, or a hazmat employee who changes job functions may perform those functions prior to the completion of training provided the employee performs those functions under the direct supervision of a properly trained and knowledgeable hazmat employee, and the training is completed within 90 days after employment or a change in job function.

Factual Allegations/Averments

1. As part of the inspection, PHMSA's Investigators requested hazardous materials training records for Respondent's three hazardous materials employees, Jose Villa, Jose Vega, and Anthony Maldonado, each of whom prepared packages, marked, labeled, and signed shipping papers. (See Report No. 24159009, page 3; Exhibit 4).
2. Respondent provided current training records for Villa, Vega, and Maldonado. However, the certificates for each of Respondent's three employees were missing verification of completed function-specific training, as required by the HMR. (See Report No. 24159009, page 3; Exhibit 3).
3. Respondent provided the following shipping papers in which either Villa, Vega, or Maldonado had prepared, handled, or transported hazardous materials without having received function-specific hazmat training (See Report No. 24159009, pages 3-4; Exhibit 4):
 - a. Bill of Lading #966872, dated 06/28/2023 – shipment of 5 boxes of UN1219, Isopropanol, 3, PGII, weighing a total of 184lbs., from Respondent's facility to King Aerospace in Ardmore, OK. Jose Villa signed the shipper's certification.
 - b. FedEx Air Waybill #983880858794, dated 06/27/2024 – shipment of 2.37L of UN2922, Corrosive liquid, toxic, n.o.s., (2, 2-Dimethyl-4, 4-Methylenebis-Cyclohexylamine), 8 (6.1, PGIII and 14kg of UN1845, Dry Ice, 9; from Respondent's facility to Safran Cabin Inc. in Marysville, WA. Jose Vega signed the shipper's certification.
 - c. Bill of Lading #11939791, dated 07/25/2023 – shipment of 3 drums UN1090, Acetone Solution, 3, PGII, weighing a total of 1,280lbs., from Respondent's facility to Hawker Pacific Aerospace in Sun Valley, CA. Anthony Maldonado signed the shipper's certification.
4. On or about June 27, 28, and July 25, 2023, Respondent allowed employees to perform functions subject to the requirements of the HMR, while failing to provide initial function-specific training, in violation of 49 CFR §§ 171.2(a) and (b); 172.702(a); and 172.704(a)(2) and (c)(1).

- Please see Inspection/Investigation Report Number 24159009 at pages 3-4, and the exhibits that accompany this report, which are incorporated herein.

Probable Violation No. 2

Offering for transportation in commerce, a hazardous material, with a shipping paper that listed a shipping description that did not include the DOT-SP number when shipped in accordance with a special permit, in violation of 49 CFR §§ 171.2(a), (b), and (e); 172.200(a); and 172.203(a).

Regulatory Standard

1. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 171.2(a), each person who performs a function covered by the HMR must perform that function in accordance with the HMR.
2. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 171.2(b), each person who offers a hazardous material for transportation in commerce must comply with all applicable requirements of the HMR.
3. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 171.2(e), no person may offer or accept a hazardous material for transportation in commerce unless the hazardous material is properly classed, described, packaged, marked, labeled, and in condition for shipment as required or authorized by the applicable requirements of the HMR or an exemption or special permit, approval, or registration issued under the HMR or subchapter A of this chapter.
4. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 172.200(a), except as otherwise provided in this subpart, each person who offers a hazardous material for transportation shall describe the hazardous material on the shipping paper in the manner required by this subpart.
5. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 172.203(a), except as provided in § 173.23 of this subchapter, each shipping paper issued in connection with a shipment made under a special permit must bear the notation “DOT-SP” followed by the special permit number assigned and located so that the notation is clearly associated with the description to which the special permit applies.

Factual Allegations/Averments

1. During the inspection, PHMSA’s Investigators observed and photographed UN standard 55-gallon steel drums, marked and labeled as containing UN1307, Xylenes, 3, PGIII, RQ. The drums bore the packaging markings, “UN 1A1/Y1.4/150/USA/M4377/24RL/ DOT-SP 21231.” (See Report No. 24159009, page 5; Exhibit 2).¹

¹ DOT-SP 21231 authorizes the use of reconditioned UN standard metal drums that had a minimum thickness below those authorized by regulation. See Exhibit 8, pages 1-5 to Report No. 24159009.

2. PHMSA's Investigator asked Respondent for shipping papers for this hazardous material packaged in the packaging marked with DOT special permit number DOT-SP 21231, as observed by the investigator. (See Report No. 24159009, page 5, Exhibit 2).
3. Respondent provided the following shipping paper showing the shipment of UN1307, Xylenes, 3, PGIII, packaged in the same manner as that observed by the investigators in Respondent's facility (See Report No. 24159009, page 5; Exhibit 4):
 - a. Bill of lading #11879147, dated 5/9/2023 – shipment of two drums of "UN1307, Xylenes, 3, III," weighing a total of 905lbs. from Respondent's facility to TE Connectivity Corp. in San Diego, CA.
4. The special permit number associated with the shipment of this hazardous material, DOT-SP 21231, was not in the shipping description or anywhere else on the shipping paper, as required by 49 CFR § 172.203(a). When asked by PHMSA's Investigator why the DOT-SP number was not included on the shipping paper, Respondent's representative indicated he was unaware of such a requirement. (See Report No. 24159009, pages 5-6; Exhibit 4).
5. The safety data sheet (SDS) provided by Respondent confirmed the material was hazardous and regulated as UN1307, Xylenes, 3, PGIII. (See Report No. 24159009, page 6; Exhibit 6).
6. On or about May 9, 2023, Respondent offered for transportation in commerce, a hazardous material, with a shipping paper that listed a shipping description that did not include the DOT-SP number when shipped in accordance with a special permit, in violation of 49 CFR §§ 171.2(a), (b), and (e); 172.200(a); and 172.203(a).

- Please see Inspection/Investigation Report Number 24159009 at pages 5-6, and the exhibits that accompany this report, which are incorporated herein.

Probable Violation No. 3

Offering for transportation in commerce, a hazardous material, with a hazardous waste manifest that listed unauthorized information interspersed in the basic shipping description and failing to include the required technical name in parentheses following the basic description, in violation of 49 CFR §§ 171.2(a), (b), and (e); 171.8; 172.200(a); 172.202(a) and (b); and 172.203(k).

Regulatory Standard

1. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 171.2(a), each person who performs a function covered by the HMR must perform that function in accordance with the HMR.
2. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 171.2(b), each person who offers a hazardous material for transportation in commerce must comply with all applicable requirements of the HMR.

3. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 171.2(e), no person may offer or accept a hazardous material for transportation in commerce unless the hazardous material is properly classed, described, packaged, marked, labeled, and in condition for shipment as required or authorized by the applicable requirements of the HMR or an exemption or special permit, approval, or registration issued under the HMR or subchapter A of this chapter.
4. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 171.8, “technical name” means a recognized chemical name or microbiological name currently used in scientific and technical handbooks, journals, and texts. Generic descriptions are authorized for use as technical names provided they readily identify the general chemical group, or microbiological group.
5. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 172.200(a), except as otherwise provided in this subpart, each person who offers a hazardous material for transportation shall describe the hazardous material on the shipping paper in the manner required by this subpart.
6. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 172.202(a), the shipping description of a hazardous material on the shipping paper must include, in relevant part:
 - a. (1) The identification number prescribed for the material as shown in Column (4) of the HMT at 49 CFR § 172.101;
 - b. (2) The proper shipping name prescribed for the material in Column (2) of the HMT;
 - c. (3) The hazard class or division number prescribed for the material, as shown in Column (3) of the HMT; and
 - d. (4) The packing group in Roman numerals, as designated for the hazardous material in Column (5) of the HMT, if applicable.
7. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 172.202(b), except as provided in this subpart, the basic description specified in paragraphs (a)(1), (2), (3), and (4) of this section must be shown in sequence with no additional information interspersed. For example, “UN2744, Cyclobutyl chloroformate, 6.1, (8, 3), PG II.”
8. Pursuant to 49 CFR § 172.203(k), unless otherwise excepted, if a material is described on a shipping paper by one of the proper shipping names identified by the letter “G” in column (1) of the HMT, the technical name of the hazardous material must be entered in parentheses in association with the basic description. For example, “UN 1760, Corrosive liquid, n.o.s., (Octanoyl chloride), 8, II,” or “UN 1760, Corrosive liquid, n.o.s., 8, II (contains Octanoyl chloride).” The word “contains” may be used in association with the technical name, if appropriate.

Factual Allegations/Averments

1. During the inspection, Respondent provided PHMSA’s Investigators with shipping papers showing the shipment of various hazardous materials from Respondent’s facility. (See Report No. 24159009, page 7; Exhibits 5, 8).

2. One of Respondent's shipping papers, a hazardous waste manifest with the tracking number 016198695FLE, dated January 27, 2023, showing Respondent shipped "UN1993, Waste Flammable Liquids, n.o.s., PKG II, ERG 120 3 PGII." (See Report No. 24159009, page 7; Exhibit 5).
3. The Hazardous Materials Table (HMT) at 49 CFR § 172.101 states that the proper shipping name for UN1993 is "Flammable liquids, n.o.s." Column (1) of the HMT for this entry indicates that a technical name is required in addition to the proper shipping name in the shipping description.
4. "Technical name," as defined by § 171.8, means a recognized chemical name or microbiological name. Here, Respondent did not include a chemical or microbiological name within the shipping description. (See Exhibit 5 of Report No. 24159009).
5. According to the SDS provided by Respondent, the technical names to be included in the shipping description of this hazardous material are isopropanol and ethanol. (See Report No. 24159009, page 8; Exhibit 6).
6. Additionally, the shipping paper entry contained the descriptors, "PKG II, ERG 120," interspersed in the shipping description. According to 49 CFR §§ 172.202(a) and (b) and 172.203(k), the proper shipping name for this hazardous material is "UN1993, Flammable liquids, n.o.s. (isopropanol, ethanol), 3, PGII." (See Report No. 24159009, pages 7-8; Exhibit 5).
7. Accordingly, Respondent's shipping paper contained additional unauthorized interspersed information in the shipping description than that prescribed by 49 CFR §§ 172.202(a) and (b), and failed to include the technical name as required by § 172.203(k).
8. On or about January 27, 2023, Respondent offered for transportation in commerce, a hazardous material, with a hazardous waste manifest that listed unauthorized information interspersed in the basic shipping description and failing to include the required technical name in parentheses following the basic description, in violation of 49 CFR §§ 171.2(a), (b), and (e); 171.8; 172.200(a); 172.202(a) and (b); and 172.203(k).

- Please see Inspection/Investigation Report Number 24159009 at pages 7-9, and the exhibits that accompany this report, which are incorporated herein.

FACTS ALREADY CONSIDERED (UNDER 49 CFR § 107.331) IN SETTING PROPOSED PENALTIES

Prior Violations:

When setting a civil penalty, PHMSA will review the respondent's compliance history and determine if there are any finally-adjudicated violations of the HMR initiated within the previous

six years. Only cases or tickets that have been finally-adjudicated will be considered (i.e., the ticket has been paid, a final order has been issued, or all appeal remedies have been exhausted or expired). PHMSA will include prior violations that were initiated within six years of the present case; a case or ticket will be considered to have been initiated on the date of the exit briefing for both the prior case and the present case. If multiple cases are combined into a single Notice of Probable Violation or ticket, the oldest exit briefing will be used to determine the six-year period. If a situation arises where no exit briefing is issued, the date of the Notice of Probable Violation or Ticket will be used to determine the six-year period. PHMSA may consider prior violations of the Hazardous Materials Regulations from other DOT Operating Administrations.

The general standards for increasing a baseline proposed penalty on the basis of prior violations are as follows (49 CFR Part 107, Subpart D, Appendix A):

1. For each prior civil or criminal enforcement case—25 percent increase over the pre-mitigation recommended baseline penalty.
2. For each prior ticket—10 percent increase over the pre-mitigation recommended baseline penalty.
3. If a respondent is cited for operating under an expired special permit and previously operated under an expired special permit (as determined in a finally-adjudicated civil, criminal, or administrative enforcement case or a ticket), PHMSA will increase the civil penalty 100 percent.
4. If a respondent is cited for the exact same violation that it has been previously cited for within the six-year period (in a finally-adjudicated civil, criminal, or administrative enforcement case or a ticket), PHMSA will increase the baseline for that violation by 100 percent. This increase will apply only when the present violation is identical to the previous violation and applies only to the specific violation that has recurred.
5. A baseline proposed penalty (both for each individual violation and the combined total) will not be increased more than 100 percent on the basis of prior violations.

PHMSA's records do not contain any prior violations by Respondent and PHMSA did not consider any prior violations in determining the proposed assessment for the violation in this Notice.

Penalty Increases for Multiple Counts:

PHMSA generally will treat multiple occurrences that violate a single regulatory provision as separate violations and assess the applicable baseline penalty for each distinct occurrence of the violation. PHMSA will generally consider multiple shipments or, in the case of package testers,

multiple package designs, to be multiple occurrences; and each shipment or package design may constitute a separate violation.

PHMSA, however, will exercise its discretion in each case to determine the appropriateness of combining into a single violation what could otherwise be alleged as separate violations and applying a single penalty for multiple counts or days of a violation, increased by 25 percent for each additional instance, as directed by 49 U.S.C. 5123(c). For example, PHMSA may treat a single shipment containing three items or packages that violate the same regulatory provision as a single violation and apply a single baseline penalty with a 50 percent increase for the two additional items or packages; and PHMSA may treat minor variations in a package design for a package tester as a single violation and apply a single baseline penalty with a 25 percent increase for each additional variation in design.

When aggravating circumstances exist for a particular violation, PHMSA may handle multiple instances of a single regulatory violation separately, each meriting a separate baseline or increase the civil penalty by 25 percent for each additional instance. Aggravating factors may include increased safety risks, continued violation after receiving notice, or separate and distinct acts. For example, if the multiple occurrences each require their own distinct action, then PHMSA may count each violation separately (e.g., failure to obtain approvals for separate fireworks devices) (49 CFR Part 107, Subpart D, Appendix A).

Corrective Action:

An important purpose of PHMSA's enforcement program is to bring the regulated community into compliance with the HMR, and to promote ongoing efforts by that community to maintain compliance. In determining the final penalty assessment, PHMSA considers documented evidence of actions taken by a Respondent to correct violations and ensure that they do not recur (49 CFR § 107.331(g)).

In correspondence received on May 6, 2024, Respondent addressed the actions it has taken to correct the violations alleged in this Notice and to prevent future violations of the HMR. Respondent described and documented its corrective action as follows:

- Violation No.1: Respondent provided hazmat training certificates covering function-specific training for Villa, Vega, and Maldonado.
 - Based on this information and documentation, the proposed penalty has been reduced by 25% (as indicated below).
- Violation No.2: Respondent provided a shipping paper for UN1307, Xylenes, 3, PGIII that included the special permit number, DOT-SP 21231 following the basic shipping description.
 - Based on this information and documentation, the proposed penalty has been reduced by 25% (as indicated below).

- Violation No.3: Respondent provided a hazardous waste manifest with the shipping description in the correct sequence and without additional unauthorized interspersed information. However, it did not include the technical name in parentheses as required by the HMR.
 - Based on this information and documentation, the proposed penalty has been reduced by 10%. In order to justify further reduction of the proposed penalty, Respondent must submit additional information and documentation that shows the hazardous waste manifests have been updated to include the required technical name.

Financial Status

Under 49 CFR §107.331 (e) and (f), the proposed penalty may be reduced if Respondent demonstrates that it is unable to pay that penalty, or if payment of the proposed penalty would affect Respondent's ability to continue in business. Respondent's poor financial condition may be a basis for reducing the proposed penalty; a healthy financial condition is *not* a basis for increasing the penalty.

PHMSA has no information that indicates that Respondent is unable to pay the proposed penalty or that payment of the proposed penalty will affect Respondent's ability to continue in business. If Respondent wishes its financial condition to be considered in assessing a penalty for the violation(s) alleged in this Notice, it must provide current financial information (i.e., copies of Respondent's three most current Federal tax returns, an income statement, and a current balance sheet [preferably certified]).

TOTAL CIVIL PENALTY PROPOSED

Probable Violation	Baseline Penalty	Increase for Priors	Corrective Action	Proposed Penalty
1	\$1,000	\$0	-\$250	\$750
2	\$600	\$0	-\$150	\$450
3	\$1,200	\$0	-\$120	\$1,080
TOTAL	\$2,800	\$0	-\$520	\$2,280

ADDENDUM B

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**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
PIPELINE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SAFETY ADMINISTRATION**

How do I respond to this Notice of Probable Violation (Notice)?

You may respond to this Notice in any of three ways:

- (1) Pay the proposed assessment (49 C.F.R. § 107.315);
- (2) Send an informal response, which can include a request for an informal conference (§ 107.317); or
- (3) Request a formal hearing (§107.319)

How do I pay the proposed assessment?

You pay the proposed assessment by:

- (1) Sending a wire transfer, through the Federal Reserve Communications System (Fedwire), to the U.S. Treasury account (49 C.F.R. § 89.21(b)(3)). Addendum C contains the instructions for sending wire transfers. Questions concerning wire transfers should be directed to: DOT/PHMSA/MMAC, AMK-325/HQ-RM 181 6500 S MacArthur Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73169 (Telephone No. (405) 954-9309).

Or

- (2) Sending a certified check or money order if the penalty amount is \$10,000 or less. The certified check or money order must be payable to the "U.S. Department of Transportation" and must be mailed to: DOT/PHMSA/MMAC, AMK-325/HQ-RM 181 6500 S MacArthur Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73169 (Telephone No. (405) 954-9309).

Or

- (3) Using a credit card via the Internet. To pay electronically with a credit card, visit the following website address and follow the instructions:

<https://www.pay.gov/public/form/start/1078346>

Where do I send my response?

You must address your informal response or formal hearing request to the attorney who issued the Notice at the following address:

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
Office of the Chief Counsel (PHC-10)
Room E26-105
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

When is my response due? (§ 107.313)

You must respond to the Notice within thirty (30) days of the date you receive it. The attorney who issued the Notice may extend the 30-day period for your response if you ask for an extension, and show good cause, within the original 30-day period.

What happens if I do not respond? (§ 107.313)

If you fail to respond to the Notice within thirty (30) days of receiving it (or by the end of any extension), you will waive your right to contest the allegations made in Addendum A to the Notice. In addition, the Chief Counsel will issue a default Order finding the facts as alleged in the Notice and assessing the civil penalty as outlined within that notice.

May I propose a compromise offer? (§ 107.327)

Yes. At any time before an order is issued and referred to the Attorney General for collection, you may propose to compromise a civil penalty case by submitting a specific compromise offer amount to the attorney handling the case (§ 107.327). The Chief Counsel may also propose a compromise.

If a compromise is agreeable to all parties, the attorney handling the case will forward a compromise agreement to you for signature. This document will outline the terms of the joint agreement and you must return a signed original to the attorney handling the case within 30 days. After this agreement has been returned it will be signed by the assigned attorney and presented to the Chief Counsel with a request that the Chief Counsel adopt the terms of that agreement by issuing a Compromise Order (49 C.F.R. § 107.327(a)(1)). The terms of the agreement constitute an offer of compromise until accepted by the Chief Counsel. When you agree to a compromise, you give up your right to appeal the order issued by the Chief Counsel.

What should I include in my informal response? (§107.317)

Your informal response must contain written explanations, information or arguments that respond to the allegation(s), the amount of the proposed civil penalty, or the terms of a proposed compliance order. Provide complete documentation of your explanations and arguments. No specific format is required for an informal response.

May I request an informal conference? (§ 107.317)

Yes. You may request an informal conference as part of your informal response. Please describe the issues you want to discuss during the conference. After receiving your request, the attorney handling the case will contact you to arrange the conference. Normally the conference will be held by telephone, and the attorney handling the case and the inspector who conducted the compliance inspection will participate in the conference.

What happens after I submit an informal response to the Notice?

We will hold an informal conference if you have asked for one. Based on the Notice, the evidence supporting the Notice, any written explanations, information and documentation that you provide, and matters presented at a conference, the Chief Counsel decides the case. The Chief Counsel may issue an order finding all or some of the violation(s) alleged in the Notice or may withdraw all or some of the alleged violation(s). If the Chief Counsel finds violation(s), the order will assess a civil penalty.

How do I appeal an order? (§ 107.325)

You may appeal an order to PHMSA's Administrator.

How do I request a formal hearing? (§ 107.319)

You must request a formal hearing within 30 days of the date that you receive the Notice. If you are granted an extension of time to respond to the Notice, you must submit a formal hearing request by the end of the extended time period. If you do not request a formal hearing within the specified time, you will waive your right to a formal hearing.

Your request for a formal administrative hearing must include the following:

- (1) The name and address of the respondent and any other person submitting the request;
- (2) A statement of which allegations of violations are not in dispute; and
- (3) A description of the issues that you will raise at the hearing. (The Administrative Law Judge will decide whether issues not raised in the request may be raised at the hearing.)

After receiving a request for a hearing that complies with these requirements, the Chief Counsel will request an Administrative Law Judge from the DOT Office of Hearings to preside over the hearing. Once an Administrative Law Judge is assigned, all further matters in the proceeding will be conducted by the Administrative Law Judge. Either you or PHMSA may appeal the decision of the Administrative Law Judge to PHMSA's Administrator.

How does PHMSA determine if I have committed a violation?

This is a civil penalty case and PHMSA uses the "knowingly" standard, which is defined in the Federal hazardous materials transportation law (See 49 U.S.C. 5123(a)(1)), in all civil penalty cases. The standard for a violation is similar to "negligence". After considering all the available information (including the additional information you provide in your response to the Notice), PHMSA must find either that (1) you had actual knowledge of the facts giving rise to the violation, or (2) you had imputed knowledge, of the facts giving rise to the violation, in that a reasonable person acting in the circumstances and exercising reasonable care would have that knowledge. PHMSA does not need to find that you actually knew about, or intended to violate, requirements in the Federal hazardous material transportation law or the HMR.

What factors does PHMSA consider when proposing and assessing a civil penalty? (§ 107.331)

PHMSA considers the following factors when proposing and assessing a civil penalty for a violation of the regulations:

- (1) The nature and circumstances of the violation(s);
- (2) The extent and gravity of the violation(s);
- (3) The degree of your culpability;
- (4) Your history, if any, of prior offenses;
- (5) Your ability to pay the penalty;
- (6) The effect of the penalty on your ability to continue in business;
- (7) The size of your business, and
- (8) Other matters as justice may require.

The nature and the timeliness of any corrective action you take to prevent future violations of a similar nature will be considered under item No. 8. However, you must submit documented evidence of that corrective action to the PHMSA attorney. If you have submitted documented evidence regarding any of these factors during PHMSA's investigation of the alleged violation(s), and that documentation is referenced in the Notice or accompanying Inspection/Investigation Report, you do not need to resubmit it.

Under the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA), PHMSA must consider the rights of small entities in enforcement actions. PHMSA's hazardous materials enforcement program has been designed to consider small businesses and the penalties that PHMSA proposes and assesses are generally considered appropriate for small businesses. PHMSA takes into consideration the size of the company when proposing and assessing a civil penalty.

However, special consideration may not be given to a small business if:

- (1) The small business has not corrected its violation(s) within a reasonable time;
- (2) The small business has committed one or more prior violations of the HMR;
- (3) The violations involve willful conduct;
- (4) The violations pose serious threats to health, safety or the environment; or
- (5) The small business has not made a good faith effort to comply with the law.

The Small Business and Agriculture Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman and 10 Regional Fairness Boards were established to receive comments from small businesses about Federal agency enforcement actions. Our objective is to ensure a fair regulatory enforcement environment.

You have a right to contact the Small Business Administration's national Ombudsman at 1-888- REG-FAIR (1-888-734-3247) or <https://www.sba.gov/ombudsman> regarding the fairness of the compliance and enforcement activities by this agency.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration strictly forbids retaliatory acts by its employees. As such, you should feel confident that you will not be penalized for expressing your concerns about compliance and enforcement activities.

Where can I find more information on how PHMSA handles hazardous materials enforcement cases?

A more detailed discussion of these procedures is in 49 C.F.R. §§ 107.301 through 107.333. These procedures are also on the Office of the Chief Counsel's home page at <http://www.phmsa.dot.gov/org/office-of-chief-counsel>.

ADDENDUM C

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**INSTRUCTIONS FOR ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER TO
PIPELINE AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SAFETY ADMINISTRATION,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

1. <u>RECEIVER'S ABA NO.</u> 021030004	2. <u>TYPE SUBTYPE</u> (provided by sending bank)
3. <u>SENDING BANK ARB NO.</u> (provided by sending bank)	4. <u>SENDING BANK REF NO.</u> (provided by sending bank)
5. <u>AMOUNT</u>	6. <u>SENDING BANK NAME</u> (provided by sending bank)
7. <u>RECEIVER NAME:</u> TREAS NYC	8. <u>PRODUCT CODE</u> (Normally CTR, or sending bank)
9. <u>BENEFICIAL (BNF)- AGENCY LOCATION CODE</u> BNF=/AC-69140001	10. <u>REASONS FOR PAYMENT</u> <i>Example:</i> PHMSA Payment for Case #/Ticket

INSTRUCTIONS: You, as sender of the wire transfer, must provide the sending bank with the information for Block (1), (5), (7), (9), and (10). The information provided in blocks (1), (7), and (9) are constant and remain the same for all wire transfers to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation

Block #1 - RECEIVER ABA NO. - "021030004". Ensure the sending bank enters this nine-digit identification number; it represents the routing symbol for the U.S. Treasury at the Federal Reserve Bank in New York.

Block #5 - AMOUNT - You as the sender provide the amount of the transfer. Please be sure the transfer amount is punctuated with commas and a decimal point. **EXAMPLE: \$10,000.00**

Block #7 - RECEIVER NAME- "TREAS NYC." Ensure the sending bank enters this abbreviation, which must be used for all wire transfer to the Treasury Department.

Block #9 - BENEFICIAL - AGENCY LOCATION CODE - "BNF=/AC-69140001" Ensure the sending bank enters this information. This is the Agency Location Code for Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation

Block #10 - REASON FOR PAYMENT – "AC-Payment for PHMSA Case#" To ensure your wire transfer is credited properly, enter the case number/ticket number or Pipeline Assessment number."

Note: - A wire transfer must comply with the format and instructions or the Department cannot accept the wire transfer. You, as the sender, can assist this process by notifying, at the time you send the wire transfer, the General Accounting Division at (405) 954-9309.