U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Research and
Special Programs
Administration**

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

OCT 1 1 2001

Ref. No. 01-0208

Mr. William J. Schuchman
Executive Director
MMA
10733 Big Bend Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63122-6027

Dear Mr. Schuchman:

This is in response to your July 30, 2001 letter and subsequent conversations with Michael Johnsen of my staff concerning the determination of the packing group for a flammable liquid under the Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR; 49 CFR Parts 171-180). Specifically, you asked for clarification of the criteria for inclusion of viscous Class 3 materials in Packing Group III provided in the table in § 173.121(b)(1)(iv) for viscous materials with a flash point under 23 degrees C (73 degrees F).

Your example involves a viscous material that has a flow time of about 90 seconds through a 4 mm diameter jet and has a flash point of 70 degrees F. To determine if a material could be considered a Packing Group III material, the conditions in § 173.121(b)(1)(i) - (iv) must be met. Your question concerns interpreting the table in § 173.121(b)(1)(iv). You would first identify your flow time in column one through a jet diameter indicated in column two. Column three indicates the minimum flashpoint for your material to be considered a Packing Group III material. A material, with a flow time of 90 seconds through a 4 mm diameter jet, falls between the range in the second entry and requires a flash point above 10 degrees C (50 degrees F) to qualify for a Packing Group III material. Since the material in this example has a flash point of 70 degrees F, then it is considered a Packing Group III material if, in addition, the material also meets all other requirements of § 173.121(b)(1).

I hope this satisfies your request.

Sincerely,

Delmer F. Billings
Chief, Standards Development
Office of Hazardous Materials Standards

010208

Johnsen
§173.121 (b)
Classification
01-0208

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July 30, 2001

Mr. Ed Mazzullo
Room 8422
Office of Hazardous Materials Standards
U.S. Department of Transportation
RSPA
400 7th St. SW
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Sir:

Several of the DOT associates that we spoke with recently suggested we write you and request a letter of interpretation.

We would appreciate clarification of 173.121(b) which allows for grouping viscous class 3 packaging group II materials in class 3 packaging group III. A solvent separation criteria and flash point/viscosity table must be met for this inclusion. The question we have concerns the table.

The table provides ranges of viscosities, as measured by a flow cup, for various flash points with the viscosity specification increasing as the flash point decreases. The question we have is may the viscosity exceed the range listed for a particular flash point range? It seems logical to us that a material with a flash point of 70 degrees F and a flow of 90 seconds in the ISO cup with a 4 mm jet would meet the viscosity criteria even though the table shows a flow time range of 20 to 60 seconds for flash points above 62.6 degrees F.

It is believed that the viscosity ranges are inclusive for materials with flash points at or above those listed in the table. Thus in the example above all of the viscosity ranges apply since a 70 degree F flash point is above all of the flash point ranges indicated. Otherwise lower flash point materials with the same viscosity as the example above could meet the criteria, e. g. 90 seconds with a 4 mm jet a flash point of 60 degrees F, and would be eligible for PGII. It would not seem logical that a lower flash point material would be eligible over a higher flash point material with the same viscosity.

We would greatly appreciate your comments.

Sincerely,

William J. Schuchman
Executive Director

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