

DANGEROUS GOODS PANEL

Dubai, 31 March to 4 April 2003

Agenda Item 2: Development of recommendations for amendments to the Technical Instructions for incorporation in the 2005/2006 edition

OPENING OF PACKAGES BY CUSTOMS AND OTHER AUTHORITIES

(Presented by P Steele)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 At DGP/17, WP/39 raised the subject of the opening of packages by Customs and others. It was agreed by the Panel that this was a multi-modal problem that should be addressed by the UNCOE. Members were requested to provide the Secretary with evidence of actual occurrences to strengthen the case.

1.2 We have recently had reported to us an incidence of a declared explosives consignment being opened by a Customs officer without the knowledge of the shipper or forwarding agent. On re-packing the consignment the orientation of the goods within the outer packaging was altered. The shipper found this purely by chance when he was later called on to open a different package for inspection.

1.3 With increased screening measures in place all air cargo is now subject to much closer scrutiny than before. Customs officers, screeners, operator's personnel and regulators will have valid reasons for the opening of packages for inspection. If, however, the integrity of the packaging is compromised, the intent of the Technical Instructions has been thwarted, and what started as a compliant consignment may now pose a risk to persons and aircraft.

1.4 In relation to opening of radioactive packages by Customs, Clause 581 of TS-R-1 requires "Any package opened on customs instructions shall, before being forwarded to the consignee, be restored to its original condition."

2. **PROPOSAL**

2.1 Panel members are asked to consider the inclusion in the Technical Instructions of a requirement similar to that in TS-R-1, but to cover inspection of all packages by any agency. If agreed by the Panel, a paper for submission to the UN can also be prepared - it is envisaged this would be done during WG/03.

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