

**Working Party on the Transport
of Dangerous Goods**
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Transmitted by the Government of Germany

Fire-fighting appliances

Doc. TRANS/WP.15/2000/5 (Germany)

Inf. Doc. No. 3 (United Kingdom)

Germany transmitted a paper (TRANS/WP.15/2000/5) aimed at simplifying the requirements for fire-fighting appliances. For lack of time, the German paper was not discussed at the most recent meeting of ECE/WP.15. However, an information paper (Inf. Doc. 3) was transmitted by the United Kingdom commenting on the German proposal.

Germany cannot accept the arguments presented by the United Kingdom and still considers the proposal in the form as transmitted as being the most suitable solution.

Comments on the individual points raised in the UK paper

Type of fire extinguisher

It is still considered appropriate using fire extinguishers of categories A, B and C since most fires can be extinguished using extinguishers in these categories and, in addition, they are very common .

Capacity/number of fire extinguishers

Also here practice has shown that in most cases today, two 6 kg fire extinguishers are used. Two extinguishers with an adequate capacity ensure increased safety (i. e. safety in case of failure of one and safety of access).

Two identical fire extinguishers fitted for example externally on each side of the cab would allow at least one extinguisher to be used in case of one side of the vehicle not being accessible after an accident (e. g. where the vehicle has crashed against a wall with its side).

Moreover, two 6 kg fire extinguishers which are “cartridge-type extinguishers” are considerably more operationally reliable than stored-pressure extinguishers (2 kg extinguishers are manufactured as stored-pressure extinguishers without exception).

In addition, the driver will, as far as fire-fighting is concerned, as a rule be an “amateur” with only little experience. The small amount of extinguishing agent contained in a 2 kg extinguisher would mean asking too much of an amateur to fight a fire effectively. The extinguishing powder is quickly used up and no reserves are left to cope with the higher risk of backfire to be expected.

Periodic inspections

Especially because different inspection periods exist in many countries, harmonization is urgently required in this respect. In addition, owing to the vibration caused by the vehicle, the extinguishing powder may get lumpy and therefore unsuitable. It is therefore absolutely necessary to inspect fire extinguishers once a year and at the same time to remove the extinguishing agent for reconditioning before refilling.

It is also important that these tasks are carried out by a competent person.

It is exactly the above proposal which was made by Germany in the interest of urgently required harmonization.