



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2007/28*
5 March 2007

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON TRADE
Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business
Thirteenth session,
Geneva, 14 – 16 May 2007
Item 10 of the provisional agenda

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

UN/CEFACT Business Requirement Specification Material Safety
Data Sheet Business Requirements Specification, Version: 1.0, Revision: R.05A

UN/CEFACT Business Requirements Specification prepared
by the International Trade and Business Processes Group

Summary

The objective of this business process specification is to specify efficient collection, storage and distribution of Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) data, and thus to protect the safety and health of employees by making those data readily available. Owing to its large size, the full text of the specification cannot be issued as a UN/CEFACT Plenary document. It can be downloaded from the UN/CEFACT website (www.unece.org/cefact/brs/brs_index.htm).

Business Domain: Materials Management

Business Process: Environmental Safety and Health

Title: Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) Information

Document Identification: CEFACT/Forum/2005/TBG/BS005

This document is **for confirmation** by the 13th UN/CEFACT Plenary 14 - 16 May 2007.

The UN/CEFACT International Trade and Business Processes Group (TBG Group): TBG 1 is working in coordination with TBG 3, TBG 4 and TBG 13. Also, TBG 1 will liaise with the United Nations Subcommittee of Experts on the “Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)” Group to coordinate requirements.

* This document was approved as document TRADE/CEFACT/2005/23/Rev.2 in an intersessional approval process that was concluded on 14 August 2006.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The United States Government directs that information describing hazardous material (HAZMAT) be widely available to employees who may come in contact with it. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Hazard Communication (HAZCOM) Standard promulgates the policy and procedures to distribute that information. HAZMAT manufacturers and vendors develop and communicate data describing their products through Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), known elsewhere in the world as "Safety Data Sheets (SDS)". To help manage MSDS data, the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) developed a centralized data base repository called the Hazardous Material Information Resource System (HMIRS).

2. The MSDS plays a critical role in purchasing of HAZMAT, in particular for the US Government. Before a purchase can be completed for anything identified as HAZMAT in the United States of America, a MSDS must be in the HMIRS system.

3. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) publishes a general MSDS format containing 16 sections and approximately 350 data elements. The MSDS contains information about the known or possible health and safety effects of exposure to hazardous material. They are also the source document of chemical-specific data for compliance with reporting requirements under two United States Government acts. The MSDS may contain the following Hazardous Material information:

- (a) personal protections,
- (b) emergency response,
- (c) proper procedures for shipment and storage,
- (d) pollution prevention,
- (e) release, emission,
- (f) waste generation management,
- (g) regulatory reporting requirements.

4. Currently manufacturers and vendors submit MSDS information via different media and in different formats (i.e. by fax, email, JPEG, PDF, etc.).

5. The objective of this business process is to efficiently collect, store and distribute MSDS data, and thus protect the safety and health of employees by making those data readily available.

6. HMIRS is a repository of MSDS information that plays a critical role in the procurement of hazardous material. MSDS information must be made visible to the end consumer prior to a purchase order being completed. If this information is not available, the procurement cannot be completed. Not only must MSDS information be made available to the end consumer, certain data are considered mandatory for the United States Government. Once a vendor submits an MSDS, the procurement officer checks to make sure all the required data is provided. The quality of the data is not checked at this time but only that mandatory data fields are filled in. For tracking purposes, each procurement is tied back to a MSDS document. MSDS information becomes a vital part of the procurement process for the information, as well as a way to control backlog and hard copy documentation.

7. To begin the hazardous material procurement process, an “apparent successful offer” is selected. Then a reviewer/procurement officer examines the procurement request for hazardous material. The reviewer/procurement officer queries HMIRS to determine if a current MSDS with the mandatory data resides in HMIRS. If the MSDS does exist in HMIRS, the reviewer/procurement officer is done and the purchase request is processed. An important goal of the purchase officer is to identify the possibility of using a less hazardous alternative to the requested HAZMAT material. The MSDS weighs heavily in this search because it provides valuable information regarding the product’s hazards. Activities involved in shipping, handling, using or disposing of hazardous material require query ready, online access to the HMIRS. Often a set of value-added attributes is added to the document to enhance the data.

8. Because the MSDS are received in a variety of different formats, and thus are difficult to input, process, store and distribute to users and other systems, one goal of this project is the standardization of the MSDS collection media.

9. Since the United Nations have recently adopted the “Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)”, which contains, in its annex 4, a recommended format for Safety Data Sheets,¹ it is proposed that the standardization be based on the United Nations format and terminology.

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¹ ST/SG/AC.10/30/Rev.1, United Nations publication sales number E.05.II.E.13 (also available on the UNECE website at http://www.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/ghs/ghs_rev01/01files_e.html).

² The full text of the specification can be downloaded from the UN/CEFACT website at < www.unece.org/cefact/brs/brs_index.htm >.