

A unified data system, based on uniform definitions of terms, utilizing a common reporting form to be submitted by carriers, with a flow of reports and supplemental information designed to be channeled to a common data center, and with the processed data (and results of special studies) being made available to all Administrations, would be a logical and necessary prerequisite toward solving many of the problems now confronting all Administrations in the transport of hazardous materials. The increase in traffic, the increase in demand for materials classified as hazardous, and the increasing need for intermodal coordination make this essential not only as an economic necessity, but for the safety of all concerned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Transportation Safety Board recommends:

1. That the term "hazardous materials incident" be defined in regulations governing transport of such materials in all transportation modes, and that the definitions of hazardous materials accidents, now established independently for each mode, be revised for greater standardization across all transportation modes.
2. That a uniform, cross-modal reporting form be developed, appropriate for automatic data processing purposes, for hazardous materials incidents and accidents.
3. That a centralized reporting system be established within the Department of Transportation, coordinating the handling of reports of all hazardous materials incidents and accidents

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by carriers to the Administrations and the Coast Guard (as applicable), to operate through a central "clearinghouse" where such data would be collected and evaluated to determine whether greater emphasis should be directed to shipper and carrier compliance with existing requirements, or to the need for change in containers, in hazardous classifications, or in handling requirements.

4. That the Department's Hazardous Materials Regulations Board expedite its action to amend or to revise existing Federal Regulations. It should develop uniform regulations for all modes of transport relating to the shipment and carriage of hazardous materials, as may be necessary to assure substantial uniformity among all modes as to reporting requirements, and processing of incident and accident reports involving hazardous materials, so that a centralized and unified hazardous materials reporting system and clearinghouse might function effectively. If this cannot be done within the existing statutory framework, consideration should then be given to seeking legislation which would authorize the issuance of one regulation applicable to all modes by the Secretary, following appropriate consultation with the Administrations and the Coast Guard.