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## News

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### **PHMSA Seeks Public Input to Define Hazmat Return Policy**

WASHINGTON – The Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration (PHMSA) announced today it is seeking public comment to assist in forming a reverse logistics policy tailored to the unique requirements of the hazardous materials transportation community.

Reverse logistics is the process initiated when a consumer product goes backwards in the supply chain, such as an item being returned to a store by a customer, or when a local retailer sends unused merchandise back to a regional distributor

“Reverse logistics is already a complex process, and when hazmat items are involved, the potential for error greatly increases,” said PHMSA Administrator Cynthia Quarterman. “We are working with industry trade groups and stakeholders to devise a safety solution that provides a clear definition for reverse logistics in a hazmat context without being unnecessarily burdensome.”

While returns are a fairly straightforward process for most products, the effort is complicated when a consumer needs to return paint, batteries or other regulated hazardous materials. That difficulty is multiplied for retailers trying to manage multiple returns to various suppliers at the same time.

PHMSA is working to develop a cost-effective logistical solution that maintains the agency’s high safety standards. The [advanced notice of public rulemaking](#) seeks comment on whether providing a clear definition of reverse logistics will promote the safe transport of hazardous materials.

Since so many reverse logistics shipments contain regulated hazardous materials, shippers may unknowingly violate the [Hazardous Materials Regulations](#), which apply to consumers as well as those involved with the commercial transportation of goods.

By clarifying the guidelines for hazmat reverse logistics and increasing public awareness, PHMSA hopes to greatly reduce the occurrence of improperly packaged and inappropriately congregated hazmat items being shipped, as well as the risks for danger when this happens.

The Reverse Logistics ANPRM can be found on the *Federal Register* website [here](#). After reviewing the ANPRM, formal comments can be made at the link provided at the top of the notice. All comments on this notice must include the agency name and docket number {PHMSA-2011-0143 (HM-253)} for this notice at the beginning of the comment, and must be submitted by October 3, 2012.

Comments are also being accepted by fax at 202-493-2251, and by hand delivery, at Docket Operations in Room W12-140 on the ground floor of the West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Mailed comments should be addressed to: Docket Operations, U.S. Department of Transportation, West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Routing Symbol M-30, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, DC 20590.

*The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration develops and enforces regulations for the safe, reliable, and environmentally sound operation of the nation's 2.5 million mile pipeline transportation system and the nearly 1 million daily shipments of hazardous materials by land, sea, and air. Please visit <http://phmsa.dot.gov> for more information.*

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