



Dangerous Goods Advisory Circular DGAC 1/2004

Laboratory Certificate for Classification of Cargo

Nearly 2 tons of **Phenyl Isocyanate UN2487** (an extremely toxic and flammable chemical forbidden for air transport) was carried by a flight from Ningbo, Mainland China into Hong Kong as general cargo on 19 May 2004. The chemical started leaking at an unknown stage and subsequently during unloading, 6 personnel at the Hong Kong International Airport were hurt by toxic fumes and hospitalized as a result. The consignors of the cargo were trading and freight forwarding companies in the China eastern region. The claimed-to-be general cargo consignment was accompanied by a forged laboratory certificate specifying incorrectly that the chemical was non-hazardous and complied with all provisions of IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations. Cargo acceptance staff were thereby misled.

Though an incident investigation is still underway, this Dangerous Goods Office is concerned with the mis-carriage of dangerous goods (DG) as general cargo and the aviation safety implication of forged laboratory certificates. In fact, if the above incident happens onboard a freighter with air circulation between the cockpit and the main cargo deck, the crew will be intoxicated during flight and the consequence will be disastrous. As a result, operators are hereby reminded to take note of the following: -

- a) extreme vigilance should be exercised in accepting any chemical consignments which are claimed to be general cargo; and

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- b) true copy of the laboratory certificate concerned was issued by a very popular, reputable and well established laboratory in the China eastern region. Banning the acceptance of certificate from this laboratory or other laboratories in this region will do NO good to the safe transport of DG by air. In fact, effort should be made to know how true and forged copy of laboratory certificate could be distinguished by cargo acceptance staff. Some true laboratory certificates bear metal seal, ultra-violet watermark and unique identification number. A telephone hotline number is sometimes available for cross checking [Remarks: please check with this office for more information].

Should you have any query about this circular, please contact Safety Officers (Dangerous Goods) Ms Cecilia PANG at 2182 1214 or Mr. Eric CHIM at 2182 1221.

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