



Feedback and Guidance for Candidates

This guidance provides general feedback received from the Dangerous Goods Safety Adviser (DGSA) markers appointed to mark the examination papers.

It aims to highlight areas where weak performance has been identified in recent examinations.

The comments will not apply to all candidates, but it is hoped that the observations will help those who have been unsuccessful to prepare for re-sitting the examination.

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General Comments

Please ensure that you have studied and prepared yourself appropriately before attempting to sit any of the DGSA examinations.

Failure to take account of this feedback and guidance may lead to poor performance.

1. Remember that you can lose marks through illegible handwriting and poor presentation of answers.
2. Many candidates fail to read questions with sufficient care and/or ignore key words within the question such as 'explain' or 'give reasons' or 'show in full'.

The requirement to 'explain' or 'give reasons' for your answer means you must identify the key steps taken to reach your answer whilst 'show in full' requires a more detailed response. This allows an examiner to give suitable credit for the methods used.

3. Similarly, you can lose marks if no explanation is given if this has been requested in the question.

Examples of the approach to answering questions can be found within the Guidance Notes which can be accessed via the DGSA Sample Exam Papers webpage.

4. References must be accurate and complete to gain marks. When using ADR, RID or ADN the regulatory part, chapter, section, sub-section e.g. 5.4.1.2.3.2, and where applicable, packing instruction number e.g. 4.1.4.1 P001, must be provided. Candidates who provide incomplete reference(s) will lose marks.

Some candidates use page numbers which is not acceptable.

It should be noted that 'Annex A' and 'Annex B' are not suitable references.

5. You must demonstrate that you understand the subject matter of the examination. Marks will not be awarded if additional irrelevant, inaccurate, or potentially misleading information is provided in an answer.
6. Please note in particular:
 - a. dangerous goods meeting the rules of classification are never exempt from RID/ADR/ADN unless there is a specific statement to that effect e.g. under a special provision; in some cases, there are relaxations from all requirements;
 - b. special provisions and special packing provisions must be addressed when answering questions;
 - c. the list of substances in the alphabetical index to RID/ADR/ADN is not comprehensive; there are other lists in Part 2;
 - d. substances may have more than one entry in the Dangerous Goods List relating to different packing groups etc;

- e. when identifying the classification of a substance or article, the details must be complete e.g. '6.1' not '6' for a toxic substance, 5.1 not '5' for an oxidizing substance; for an explosive, the division must be stated e.g. '1.1' not '1'
- f. when a Proper Shipping Name (PSN) is required in an answer it must be provided in full (as per the entry in the Dangerous Goods List) and be spelt correctly
- g. when a packing group is required in an answer it must be presented in Roman numerals i.e. I or PG I, II or PG II, III or PG III
- h. dangerous goods rules are multimodal; whilst a detailed knowledge of the air and sea rules is not required, you must know how RID/ADR/ADN address the relationship with other modal regulations;
- i. United Nations (UN) packaging codes apply to packagings, IBCs, large packagings, tanks, packagings for infectious substances and pressure receptacles (cylinders). Some types of packaging require additional markings;
- j. there is a difference between 'mixed packing' and 'mixed loading';
- k. there are many packaging types in addition to drums and IBCs. You must be able to use the relevant parts of the regulations to identify the packaging codes and any additional markings and be prepared to answer questions relating to any of the packaging chapters;
- l. there are different design, construction, inspection and testing requirements, respectively, for United Nations (UN) portable tanks (Chapter 6.7) and RID/ADR/ADN tanks (Chapter 6.8) (RID/ADR tanks); there are also class- specific sub-sections within these chapters;
- m. there is a tank 'hierarchy' which provides for the use of alternative tanks;
- n. there is a difference between 'limited quantities' and 'limited loads';
- o. 'limited quantities' and 'excepted quantities' are not exemptions from RID/ADR/ADN;
- p. 'security' (Chapter 1.10) is not the same as 'vehicle supervision' (Chapters 8.5 and 8.4 in ADR);
- q. the distinction between 'overpacks' and 'packaging';
- r. when 'CDG2009' is pre-entered in the reference box on the answer paper, you must quote the applicable reference(s) from these regulations; where this is the case RID/ADR/ADN references are not required;
- s. numerous UK national derogations relating to the transport of dangerous goods by road and rail are provided under CDG2009 (as amended); these are identified in the Carriage of Dangerous Goods: Approved Derogations and Transitional Provisions (ADTP) published by the UK government.

Subject Specific Guidance

Core

1. Please refer to the general comments above, particularly those relating to answer presentation and the requirements for an explanation.
2. You must have an understanding of the 'limited quantities' and 'excepted quantities' provisions and their application.
3. DGSA-related questions do not always relate to 'the duties of the DGSA'; some may relate to reporting or qualification requirements etc.
4. A question relating to the determination of a class or packing group, particularly when using the 'table of hazard precedence' may not require the allocation of a proper shipping name; if this is required, it will be asked for in the question.

Road

1. Please refer to the general comments above, particularly those relating to answer presentation and the requirements for an explanation.
2. Before attempting this paper, please ensure you are able to identify and understand:
 - a. security provisions and the reporting requirements concerning accidents; these are a vital part of the DGSA's duties;
 - b. the placarding and marking requirements for all transport units and how to reference them; there is a difference between 5.3.11.1 and 5.3.1.1.1;
 - c. the structure of the UK Regulations (CDG2009 as amended) and how to quote references from them rather than from ADR;
 - d. how to identify the minimum legal requirements relating to the carriage of fire extinguishers (number and capacities) and the provisions for miscellaneous safety and personal protective equipment);
 - e. the difference between 'security' (1.10) and vehicle supervision requirements (8.5/8.4); these are separate issues.
3. Some candidates demonstrate they are looking for a question to which they know the answer, rather than ensuring they answer the question being asked.
4. A few candidates are still attempting more than one case study. Only one of the three options is required to be completed.

Rail

1. Please refer to the general comments above, particularly those relating to answer presentation and the requirements for an explanation.
2. Some candidates have problems interpreting the scope and application of the security provisions (1.10) and cannot identify and/or explain when a security plan is required.
3. Candidates often seem to be unaware of the tank marking requirements for UK national rail journeys under CDG2009 (as amended) and the mandatory variations from RID's provisions that apply to such operations.
4. A few candidates are still attempting more than one case study. Only one of the three options is required to be completed.
5. Candidates often fail to distinguish between the DGSA accident (1.8.3) and dangerous goods incident (1.8.5) reporting requirements.
6. Questions relating to bulk transport are frequently misinterpreted with candidates referring to incorrect chapters.

All Classes

1. Please refer to the general comments above, particularly those relating to answer presentation and the requirements for an explanation.
2. 'All Classes' means that a question can relate to any danger class. You must not assume that all questions are limited to specific classes, for example classes 3, 6.1 and 8.
3. Before attempting this paper, please ensure you are able to identify and understand:
 - a. the requirements for 'limited quantities' and 'excepted quantities' consignments (packing and marking);
 - b. the differences between the requirements for 'limited quantities', 'excepted quantities' and 'fully regulated consignments';
 - c. that the general packing requirements located before the packing instructions in Chapter 4.1 i.e. in 4.1.1, 4.1.2 and 4.1.3, are integral to decisions on packaging selection for a particular substance or article and questions may relate to these requirements;
 - d. the rules relating to the use of orientation arrows;
 - e. the difference between requirements relating to the design and testing of a packaging and the conditions applicable to its use;
 - f. that it is not mandatory for all undertakings involved in the carriage of dangerous goods or related activities to appoint a DGSA(s) – there are some exemptions;
 - g. that certain packaging types have a finite life;
 - h. the distinction between a 'package' and an 'overpack'.