

Thursday, 16 January 2025

Debra Kirk
Manager Legislative Maintenance
National Transport Commission
Level 3/600 Bourke Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

By email: adgcode@ntc.gov.au

Dear Debra

**FIRE RESCUE VICTORIA'S SUBMISSION TO THE DRAFT CODE FOR THE LAND
TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS REGULATORY IMPACT STATEMENT**

I am writing to you on behalf of Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV), in reference to the recently published Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement (C-RIS), which considers the implementation of new and enhanced reforms to the Australian Dangerous Goods Code (ADG Code).

FRV has prepared a written submission in response to the C-RIS, and I enclose a copy of this submission for the National Transport Commission's consideration. In making this submission, subject to procedural enhancements, FRV broadly supports the proposed safety initiatives that are proposed within Option 4 of the C-RIS.

Should you or members of the National Transport Commission wish to discuss aspects of FRV's submission, please contact Mr Tass Georgas via telephone (0408 887 153) or via email (Tass.Georgas@frv.vic.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



JAMIE HANSEN
Assistant Chief Officer
Director Fire Safety
P: 0429 109 210
E: Jamie.Hansen@frv.vic.gov.au



MARK CARTER AFSM
Acting Assistant Chief Officer
Director Built Environment
P: 0417 222 386
E: Mark.Carter@frv.vic.gov.au

Enc.

1 Introduction

Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) provides fire and emergency prevention and response services in the greater Melbourne area and in regional cities and large towns throughout Victoria.

FRVs Dangerous Goods Department, Technical Operations – Hazmat and Major Community Infrastructure Unit conducts extensive fire and emergency prevention activities to promote and improve fire safety for all Victorians.

FRV welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) as part of the review of the Code for the transportation of dangerous goods (the code).

For context, FRV submission is structured in the following manner:

- **Section 2:** FRV and the specific activities it undertakes in association with the transportation of Dangerous Goods;
- **Section 3:** FRV highlights particular challenges that it faces in the Dangerous Goods environment;
- **Section 4** it responds to the RIS questions posed by the National Transport Commission (NTC).

By way of summary, FRV makes the following recommendations:

1. Transition period of 12 to 18 months for the introduction of reflective placarding.
2. Retention of Emergency Information Panels (EIP) to Intermediate Bulk Containers (IBCs).

2 Fire Rescue Victoria

2.1 Fire Rescue Victoria

FRV was established on 1 July 2020 and operates 85 fire stations staffed by professional firefighters. There are located throughout the Fire Rescue Victoria fire district, which includes the Greater Melbourne area and several large regional centres throughout Victoria including, for example, Bendigo, Ballarat, Warrnambool and Shepparton.

FRV members must respond to any call for assistance at a fire, accident, explosion or other emergency within the FRV fire district. On receipt of such a call FRV members must proceed with all practical speed to the scene and endeavour by all practical means to have any fire suppressed and any person or property in jeopardy saved.

FRV must also assist in the response of any major emergency occurring within Victoria. A major emergency includes a large or complex fire (however caused) which will burn for more than one day if not suppressed, or which has the potential to cause or is causing loss of life and extensive damage to property, infrastructure, or the environment.

2.2 Fire Rescue Victoria – role / function in the transportation of Dangerous Goods

FRV plays a critical role in ensuring the safety of the community in the event of incidents involving dangerous goods. FRV is integral to responding to and managing incidents involving dangerous goods, ensuring safety, and preventing harm to people and the environment during transportation-related emergencies.

3 Challenges

Among the incidents FRV must respond to are those that involve the transportation of Dangerous Goods (DG). Data collected by FRV from sources around the world, has shown that heavy road transport vehicles represent a minority of vehicles within tunnels, yet are overrepresented in road accidents within tunnels.

FRV is of the opinion that any code addressing the transportation of DGs should not be confined to the dangerous goods load but also needs to involve the vehicles, timing of transportation and conditions under which the dangerous goods will be transported, especially through tunnels.

It is imperative that when responding to a road or rail incident involving DGs, FRV firefighters and other emergency service responders can identify the type of DG accurately and in a timely manner. Emergency Information Panels (EIP) on Intermediate Bulk Containers (IBC) is critical and FRV does not support the removal or reduction in placarding.

The draft code is based on European conditions. Australian conditions are very different to Europe and requires specific rules and regulations for this reason. In Australia, loads are bigger, travel distances are significantly greater and safety infrastructure due to the distances travelled can be minimal or in some cases not available.

FRV understand that there needs to be a balance between cost effectiveness and safety of the community and first responders.

4 Consultation Questions

The following responses are to questions asked by NTC that FRV have deemed relevant to the functions undertaken.

Consignment Procedures

Q21 If the requirement for placards to be reflective is retained, what do you believe would be an appropriate transition time for compliance?

FRV recommend a maximum transition period of 12 to 18 months from the date of implementation of the new requirement.

Q22 Are there any additional impacts/benefits from the removal of EIPs from IBCs that have not been considered?

FRV does not support the removal of EIPs from IBCs. The reliance on EIPs on the vehicles transporting IBCs is considered ineffective and has the potential to increase the risk to emergency responders in incidents where IBCs become separated from the transportation vehicle.

Q23 What are the additional costs associated with the requirements to carry 'Instructions in Writing'?

FRV supports the introduction of the new requirements for transportation documentation – instructions in writing. The additional costs associated with producing critical information would be offset by the benefits of having this information available to the driver and first responders. The improvement to safety outcomes in this instance would outweigh the cost associated.

Q24 Do you have any comments or concerns with any of the change to part 5 of the Code?

FRV does not support the changes to Part 5, in that the content in comparison to Australian Dangerous Goods Code (ADG) (edition 7.9) has reduced detail, which appears to increase the potential safety hazards to first responders. FRV recommends that chapter 5 from the ADG (edition 7.9) replaces Part 5 of the code. FRV recommends the re-instatement of the requirement for EIPs to IBCs.