

# 49 U.S. CODE § 5121 - ADMINISTRATIVE

## STATUS MESSAGE

There are 6 Updates Pending. Select the tab below to view.

- [US Code](#)
- [Notes](#)
- [Updates](#)
- [Authorities \(CFR\)](#)

[prev](#) | [next](#)

**(a) General Authority.**— To carry out this chapter, the Secretary may investigate, conduct tests, make reports, issue subpoenas, conduct hearings, require the production of records and property, take depositions, and conduct research, development, demonstration, and training activities. Except as provided in subsections (c) and (d), after notice and an opportunity for a hearing, the Secretary may issue an order requiring compliance with this chapter or a regulation prescribed, or an order, special permit, or approval issued, under this chapter.

**(b) Records, Reports, and Information.**— A person subject to this chapter shall—

**(1)** maintain records and property, make reports, and provide information the Secretary by regulation or order requires; and

**(2)** make the records, property, reports, and information available for inspection when the Secretary undertakes an investigation or makes a request.

**(c) Inspections and Investigations.**—

**(1) In general.**— A designated officer, employee, or agent of the Secretary—

**(A)** may inspect and investigate, at a reasonable time and in a reasonable manner, records and property relating to a function described in section [5103 \(b\)\(1\)](#);

**(B)** except in the case of packaging immediately adjacent to its hazardous material contents, may gain access to, open, and examine a package offered for, or in, transportation when the officer, employee, or agent has an objectively reasonable and articulable belief that the package may contain a hazardous material;

**(C)** may remove from transportation a package or related packages in a shipment offered for or in transportation for which—

**(i)** such officer, employee, or agent has an objectively reasonable and articulable belief that the package may pose an imminent hazard; and

**(ii)** such officer, employee, or agent contemporaneously documents such belief in accordance with procedures set forth in guidance or regulations prescribed under subsection (e);

**(D)** may gather information from the offeror, carrier, packaging manufacturer or tester, or other person responsible for the package, to ascertain the nature and hazards of the contents of the package;

**(E)** as necessary, under terms and conditions specified by the Secretary, may order the offeror, carrier, packaging manufacturer or tester, or other person responsible for the package to have the package transported to, opened, and the contents examined and analyzed, at a facility appropriate for the conduct of such examination and analysis;

**(F)** when safety might otherwise be compromised, may authorize properly qualified personnel to assist in the activities conducted under this subsection; and

**(G)** shall provide to the affected offeror, carrier, packaging manufacturer or tester, or other person responsible for the package reasonable notice of—

**(i)** his or her decision to exercise his or her authority under paragraph (1);

**(ii)** any findings made; and

**(iii)** any actions being taken as a result of a finding of noncompliance.

**(2) Display of credentials.**— An officer, employee, or agent acting under this subsection shall display proper credentials, in person or in writing, when requested.

**(3) Safe resumption of transportation.**— In instances when, as a result of an inspection or investigation under this subsection, an imminent hazard is not found to exist, the Secretary, in accordance with procedures set forth in regulations prescribed under subsection (e), shall assist—

(A) in the safe and prompt resumption of transportation of the package concerned; or  
(B) in any case in which the hazardous material being transported is perishable, in the safe and expeditious resumption of transportation of the perishable hazardous material.

**(d) Emergency Orders.—**

**(1) In general.—** If, upon inspection, investigation, testing, or research, the Secretary determines that a violation of a provision of this chapter, or a regulation prescribed under this chapter, or an unsafe condition or practice, constitutes or is causing an imminent hazard, the Secretary may issue or impose emergency restrictions, prohibitions, recalls, or out-of-service orders, without notice or an opportunity for a hearing, but only to the extent necessary to abate the imminent hazard.

**(2) Written orders.—** The action of the Secretary under paragraph (1) shall be in a written emergency order that—

(A) describes the violation, condition, or practice that constitutes or is causing the imminent hazard;

(B) states the restrictions, prohibitions, recalls, or out-of-service orders issued or imposed; and

(C) describes the standards and procedures for obtaining relief from the order.

**(3) Opportunity for review.—** After taking action under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall provide for review of the action under section 554 of title 5 if a petition for review is filed within 20 calendar days of the date of issuance of the order for the action.

**(4) Expiration of effectiveness of order.—** If a petition for review of an action is filed under paragraph (3) and the review under that paragraph is not completed by the end of the 30-day period beginning on the date the petition is filed, the action shall cease to be effective at the end of such period unless the Secretary determines, in writing, that the imminent hazard providing a basis for the action continues to exist.

**(5) Out-of-service order defined.—** In this subsection, the term “out-of-service order” means a requirement that an aircraft, vessel, motor vehicle, train, railcar, locomotive, other vehicle, transport unit, transport vehicle, freight container, potable tank, or other package not be moved until specified conditions have been met.

**(e) Regulations.—**

**(1) Temporary regulations.—** Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of the Hazardous Materials Transportation Safety and Security Reauthorization Act of 2005, the Secretary shall issue temporary regulations to carry out subsections (c) and (d). The temporary regulations shall expire on the date of issuance of the regulations under paragraph (2).

**(2) Final regulations.—** Not later than 1 year after such date of enactment, the Secretary shall issue regulations to carry out subsections (c) and (d) in accordance with subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 5.

**(3) Matters to be addressed.—** The regulations issued under this subsection shall address—

(A) the safe and expeditious resumption of transportation of perishable hazardous material, including radiopharmaceuticals and other medical products, that may require timely delivery due to life-threatening situations;

(B) the means by which—

(i) noncompliant packages that present an imminent hazard are placed out-of-service until the condition is corrected; and

(ii) noncompliant packages that do not present a hazard are moved to their final destination;

(C) appropriate training and equipment for inspectors; and

(D) the proper closure of packaging in accordance with the hazardous material regulations.

**(f) Facility, Staff, and Reporting System on Risks, Emergencies, and Actions.—**

**(1)** The Secretary shall—

(A) maintain a facility and technical staff sufficient to provide, within the United States Government, the capability of evaluating a risk related to the transportation of hazardous material and material alleged to be hazardous;

(B) maintain a central reporting system and information center capable of providing information and advice to law enforcement and firefighting personnel, other interested individuals, and officers and employees of the Government and State and local governments on meeting an emergency related to the transportation of hazardous material; and

(C) conduct a continuous review on all aspects of transporting hazardous material to decide on and take appropriate actions to ensure safe transportation of hazardous material.

(2) Paragraph (1) of this subsection does not prevent the Secretary from making a contract with a private entity for use of a supplemental reporting system and information center operated and maintained by the contractor.

**(g) Grants and Cooperative Agreements.**— The Secretary may enter into grants and cooperative agreements with a person, agency, or instrumentality of the United States, a unit of State or local government, an Indian tribe, a foreign government (in coordination with the Department of State), an educational institution, or other appropriate entity—

(1) to expand risk assessment and emergency response capabilities with respect to the safety and security of transportation of hazardous material;

(2) to enhance emergency communications capacity as determined necessary by the Secretary, including the use of integrated, interoperable emergency communications technologies where appropriate;

(3) to conduct research, development, demonstration, risk assessment, and emergency response planning and training activities; or

(4) to otherwise carry out this chapter.

**(h) Report.**— The Secretary shall, once every 2 years, prepare and transmit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a comprehensive report on the transportation of hazardous materials during the preceding 2 calendar years. The report shall include—

(1) a statistical compilation of accidents and casualties related to the transportation of hazardous material;

(2) a list and summary of applicable Government regulations, criteria, orders, and special permits;

(3) a summary of the basis for each special permit;

(4) an evaluation of the effectiveness of enforcement activities relating to a function regulated by the Secretary under section [5103 \(b\)\(1\)](#) and the degree of voluntary compliance with regulations;

(5) a summary of outstanding problems in carrying out this chapter in order of priority; and

(6) recommendations for appropriate legislation.