



IMO classification of goods

The International Maritime Organization, better known as IMO, classifies dangerous goods into 9 groups. By definition, these goods consist of goods and materials that pose a threat to the well-being of both people and the environment due to their characteristics.

Depending on their degree of harmfulness and specific characteristics, these goods are divided into 9 classes. The product safety data sheet provided by the manufacturer, also known as MSDS, indicates the class to which the product belongs.

It should be noted that the numbering imposed on the different classes has no direct relation to the magnitude of the risk or hazard potential they pose.

A CLASS 1 cargo according to IMO regulations is likely to be just as dangerous as radioactive materials belonging to CLASS 7.

To comply with the regulations, the container of dangerous goods must have an orange panel on its sides with the UN number and the distinctive mark of its class.

The materials included in each class are detailed below:

Class 1. Explosives

This class is made up of different types of articles based on their risk of detonation. Among this merchandise we can find pyrotechnics, flares, rockets, bombs, etc.

In addition to being identified by the orange background label with the UN number, the maritime container must have a square panel with an orange

background, rotated 45 degrees with the silhouette of an exploding bomb and a number 1 must be located at the bottom.



Class 2. Gases

This class covers all types of gases, whether they are transported in liquefied, compressed or dissolved under pressure.

Depending on their properties they are classified as toxic, flammable or asphyxiating.

Depending on their main property, the square panel rotated 45° can have a red background with a flame, a white background with a skull or a green background with a bottle.



Class 3. Flammable liquids

This class includes all liquids which have the peculiarity of burning easily on contact with a heat source, such as paint, petrol, varnish or turpentine.

The diamond-shaped placard which must be clearly visible on the tank-container in which it is transported must have a red background, the symbol of a flame, black or white, and the number 3 at the bottom.



Class 4. Flammable solids

This is the turn for class 4, which covers solids which are easily ignited or which release gases when they come into contact with water. This class also covers self-reactive products and explosive goods.

The markings accompanying the goods travelling by sea must have a black flame and, depending on their reactive nature, a white and red background or a blue background.



Class 5. Organic oxidisers and peroxides

Liquids or solids which promote combustion or promote the development of fires through the combustion of other substances.

Organic peroxides are unstable substances which burn easily. They burn quickly and intensely.

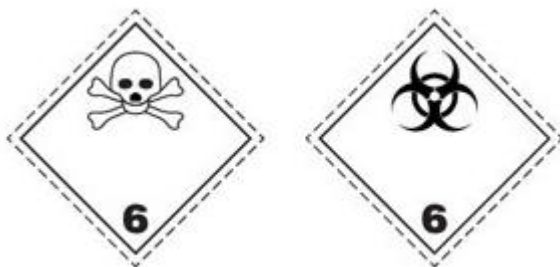
Their IMO marking labels have a yellow background, or yellow and red, and have a flame at the top, either on a line or in a circle.



Class 6. Toxics

This class covers a variety of infectious and toxic substances. The former contain micro-organisms that cause all kinds of diseases, such as laboratory samples and cultures. The latter, toxic substances, are those that can cause death by inhalation, topical absorption or ingestion.

The panels identifying this class of dangerous goods have a white background, the number 6 at the bottom and either a skull or three crescent moons joined at their widest part in the centre.



Class 7. Radioactive material

Class 7 is reserved for chemically unstable materials with activity. This group includes uranium, plutonium and thorium, elements used in the nuclear industry.

In this case, the identification signs themselves include the word “radioactive” and the number 7 at the bottom. The background is soft and in some cases the upper half is yellow.



Class 8. Corrosives

Substances classified as number 8 according to IMO are goods that react on contact with other materials. These products can destroy skin, tissue and even disintegrate solids.

Examples of this type of goods are sodium hypochlorite or sulphuric acid.

The mandatory label for this IMO class has a black and white background, and has the image of two test tubes spilling fluids on a solid and a silhouette of a hand.



Class 9. Miscellaneous dangerous articles

This class covers all other articles and substances not covered by any of the previous 8 classes.

In this category can be found batteries and lithium batteries, dry ice and waste goods which are pollutants to the sea.

The identification for this class has a white background with black vertical stripes in its upper half and the 9 in its lower corner.

