

Training Module: Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) Placarding

Objective: To know the importance of DOT Placarding and to follow the guidelines for placarding.

Trainer's Note: If an accident should occur involving a vehicle carrying a hazardous material, there is an imminent danger to the operator, emergency response teams and the surrounding community if these materials spill or catch fire. Rapid identification of these materials by emergency response teams is important.

Background

Ohio farmers use a variety of chemicals to aid in the production of various commodities. When used correctly with adequate personal protection, these chemicals pose little if any threat to the farmer. Similarly, under normal circumstances, agricultural chemicals pose virtually no threat to the surrounding community or the consumers of treated farm products. One potential concern occurs when some of these chemicals are transported on public highways.

To aid emergency response teams, the Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) developed a system for rapid identification of hazardous materials. The system includes: DOT Placarding and proper placement of hazardous material shipping papers. Emergency responders are trained to look for these warning signals. Loads of hazardous materials either not placarded or improperly placarded could put the lives of these individuals and the vehicle operator in jeopardy.

Placarding

Certain specified hazardous materials require that placards, which readily identify the hazard, be placed on four sides of the vehicle transporting materials in quantities that are in excess of one thousand pounds. There are some exceptions that require placarding regardless of the amount. For example: The placarding requirement for Lasso®II in quantities greater than 370 pounds per package is: placards on four sides of the transporting vehicle reading combustible.

Shipping Papers

Shipping documents must accompany the hazardous materials being transported. **Accessibility** of the papers to the emergency crews in an accident situation, is extremely important. The papers should be placed in areas prescribed by DOT:

- Papers should be carried in a separate hazardous materials envelope.
- The papers should be readily visible and within the drivers reach when restrained by a seat belt, or should be kept in a pouch on the driver's door.
- When the driver is not in the vehicle, they should be placed in the door pouch or on the driver's seat.

Liabilities

In the state of Ohio, materials being transported to and from the farm are exempt from Ohio Public Utilities Commission jurisdiction. However, farmers may be covered under federal regulations. In the case of an accident, farmers may be held liable if they have not included shipping papers or properly placarded a load of hazardous material. Contact legal counsel for specifics of your potential liability.

**The table included contains important DOT identification information on 32 of the most commonly used pesticides in Ohio. Contact your agricultural chemical dealer for a copy of the material safety data sheet (MSDS) for verification of the information listed here or if you are unable to locate a particular chemical.

Review The Following Points

- DOT Placarding and shipping papers are extremely important in the case of an accident when hauling hazardous materials.
- Placards, which readily identify the hazard, should be placed on four sides of the vehicle.
- Shipping documents should be accessible to the driver or the emergency rescuers.
- Loads of hazardous materials either not placarded or improperly placarded could put the lives of emergency responders and the vehicle operator in jeopardy.

True or False Answer Key
1. T, 2. F, 3. T, 4. T, 5. T

Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) Placarding Quiz

True or False

Name _____

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Shipping papers should be carried in a separate hazardous materials envelope. | T | F |
| 2. The shipping papers should be kept under the seat, so they are out of the way. | T | F |
| 3. Placards should be placed on four sides of the vehicle transporting materials in quantities that are in excess of one thousand pounds. | T | F |
| 4. Emergency responders are trained to look for DOT placarding and hazardous material shipping papers. | T | F |
| 5. In the case of an accident, farmers may be held liable if they have not included shipping papers or properly placarded a load of hazardous material. | T | F |