



T: 0131-244 2324 F: 0131-2442564  
E: Andy.Shuttleworth@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

The Clerk to the Joint Fire and Rescue Board  
The Chief Executive, Dumfries and Galloway  
The Chief Executive, Fife Council  
The Chief Officer

12 May 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

**SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE CIRCULAR 7/2008**  
**HAZCHEM EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICE (HERS) SCHEME**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The Hazchem Emergency Response Service (HERS) is a voluntary marking and support scheme aimed at assisting emergency response to incidents involving the transport of packaged dangerous goods by road.
- 1.2 This scheme must not be confused with the existing statutory marking schemes required by the European ADR Regulations and the GB Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations. Neither should it be confused with the GB Hazchem plates incorporating Hazchem Emergency Action Codes.
- 1.3 The HERS Scheme is intended to assist member companies (about 40 independent haulage companies) when responding to incidents involving their vehicles carrying dangerous goods. In addition, the supplementary voluntary markings on vehicles and available support systems may assist emergency responders when dealing with these incidents

**2. The Scheme**

2.1 The scheme has two essential components:

- A supplementary marking (sign) which is additional to the standard orange plates required under ADR or the GB Carriage Regulations. This new marking displays an emergency contact telephone number that allows responders to obtain information without having to enter the vehicle cab for transport documents or the load compartment to seek information from package labels, which is the normal procedure where transport of packaged goods are involved.
- A tiered support system, similar in nature to the 'Chemsafe Scheme', currently operated by the National Chemical Emergency Centre, for incidents involving transport by tankers, tank containers or bulk loads.



2.2 Members of the network may display a sign, as shown above, on the rear of the vehicle when they are carrying packaged dangerous goods. **Again ‘The Hazchem Network’ is in no way related to the official UK Hazchem Scheme and should not be confused with Hazchem marking.** The above decal will be in addition to the orange plates that must be displayed on the front and rear of the vehicle. The decal should be removed or covered (as should orange plates) when the vehicle is not carrying dangerous goods. Responders should confirm the presence of dangerous goods at the earliest opportunity to ensure that no inappropriate or unnecessary action is undertaken because of driver error i.e. not removing plates when vehicle is empty or carrying a non-hazardous load.

2.3 The National Chemical Emergency Centre will handle telephone calls to the emergency number. This number gives access to the following three levels of assistance:

**Level 1** – Provision of advice by

- Recognising the hazards to people, property and the environment
- Rapidly access product information
- Recommend actions and provide straightforward advice
- Make direct contact with the Member’s depot and advise on whether a Level 2/3 provider is required.

**Level 2/3** – Response

- Following an assessment between the Hazmat Officer and the NCEC it may be decided to instigate a Level 2 or 3 response. For a Level 2 response an industry advisor will be mobilised to offer advice at the scene. When it is apparent that the incident will involve a clean up and/or removal of chemicals, a level 3 response may be instigated which will involve a team with containment and clean up equipment being dispatched.

2.4 It must be recognised that, where the vehicle is carrying dangerous goods in packages but the carrier is not a member of the scheme, it is likely that the only warning available will be the orange plates at the front and rear of the vehicle.

- 2.5 FRSs should be aware that using the HERS helpline is not the only method of obtaining assistance in dealing with the incident. Incident Commanders and Hazmat Officers should also consider obtaining and utilising other sources of information, such as information from the driver, 'instructions in writing' carried in the cab, labelling on packages, transport documents etc, where these are available and obtainable without undue risk to personnel.
- 2.6 Incident Commanders and Hazmat Officers should also, in consultation with NCEC, consider alternative clean up companies if the estimated arrival time at the incident is unacceptable.
- 2.7 FRSs should also be aware that the HERS scheme can only be operated for scheme members, as the response costs will be borne as part of the membership arrangement. Where an incident involves a non-HERS transport, existing arrangements for clean-up should be operated.

Yours faithfully



**ANDREW SHUTTLEWORTH**  
**Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit**