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Trip Report for TRANSSC 36 and Pre-Meeting Working Groups

TRANSSC 36 was held between June 13th and 15th. Similar to the previous meetings, four working groups preceded the TRANSSC meeting on June 11th and 12th. The working groups topics were; A1/A2 Values, 20% Increase in Dose Rate during NCT, NORM and Criticality. I attended the 20% Increase in Dose Rate during NCT working group.

Pre-TRANSSC Meetings

A1/A2 Values –The group continues to evaluate the various Q values independently. The group’s current work plan is to end up with recommendations on A1/A2 values that could be incorporated into SSR-6 and SSG 26 some point after 2022. The group expects to be in a position to get feedback from the full TRANSSC committee. A half day workshop is proposed immediately prior to the next TRANSSC meeting. Going forward, this group will be included as a sub-group of the Radiation Protection TTEG.

20% Increase in Dose Rate during Normal Conditions of Transport – The group met without much new material to discuss. The work focused on proposed wording changes in SSR-6 (next revision) and SSG-26 (guidance) to support the changes discussed at TRANSSC 35. There was discussion about which TTEG should cover the 20% topic. There was no firm answer however the majority believe this should reside in the Radiation Protection TTEG.

No relevant updates for ISSPA were available from the NORM and Criticality working groups.

The TRANSSC meeting opened with standard review of past minutes, meeting conduct and set up of the agenda.

- A review of the TRANSSC Self-Assessment survey results was performed. There were only 7 participants who completed the feedback (one of which was ISSPA). Approximately 1/3 of the responses indicated a need for improvement. It is unclear if this was recognized by the IAEA. It is equally unclear if this feedback (or lack thereof) will result in any corrective action.
- The TRANSSC Technical Experts Groups were introduced. The Secretariat is hopeful that these groups will take a systematic look at the regulations and be able to defend or change them. The concept is that these groups will build momentum for transport relevant topics (changes to regulations, new issues) and that TRANSSC would still make the decision on changes. There was much discussion on how this may work and the members were not necessarily aligned with the IAEA

proposal. It is expected that each TTEG will meet prior to future TRANSSC meetings. This will evolve over time. One issue that was raised is the point that several members, ISSPA included, would be interested in more than 1 group, and would either have to “float” between meetings or participate in one yet be reliant upon the minutes from the other meetings.

- The group broke into four working groups to launch the TTEGs. There are four TTEGs; Criticality, Package Performance and Assessment; Radiation Protection and Transport Operational Matters. I attended the Package Performance and Assessment working group. As this was the kick-off meeting, we discussed how the group should move forward. In general the group was reluctant to open up the regulations and change for change sake. They were unclear about the Secretariat’s intent around TTEG. They noted the awkward timing as the current regulations have yet to be published. The view was that we have just obtained agreement to the regulatory text so why change now?
- TS-G-1.2 (Emergency Response Guidance) has been drafted. There is a risk that this will elevate the visibility of requirements for controls around emergency response. There were a number of TRANSSC comments related to instructions provided to, and arrangements for transport chain on how to respond to an emergency.
- The new version of SSR-6 is in the process of publication with availability expected in July. The document text has been submitted to UNECE for harmonization with modal regulations. The UN has a meeting at end of June to decide on incorporation.
- The draft of SSG-26 has received 462 comments from member states. These are being addressed through consultancy meetings. The expectation is that the final draft will be reviewed at TRANSSC 37.
- A draft of the Safety-Security Interface document was presented. The focus is on low levels - Category 3, 4 and 5 as requirements for Category 1, 2 are well established by member states. The target audience for this document is developing countries looking to implement some level of security controls around radioactive material. The first draft is available and there is a short deadline for comments (early July). The target publication date is this summer. There was a lot of debate from TRANSSC and concern about the content of the document.
- The Secretariat continues to try and publish the CRP on Air Transport, which is an aged report that speaks to safety during air transport. The target for publication is 2019.
- IAEA expects that the Package Design Safety Report (PDSR) procedure will be completed this summer, however they note that the document will require revision to match the current version of the regulations.
- Each TTEG provided a summary of their discussions. The comments from each, save Criticality which has been meeting for a while, were similar in that the direction was unclear however the groups were prepared to meeting at the next meeting. There is hope that these will become a valuable aspect of the TRANSSC meetings. I suspect that they will need a push and maintenance from the Secretariat in order to be successful.
- The meeting closed out with updates from the UN and International Bodies and updates from the IAEA Secretariat. ICAO noted that a new publication of their Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air document will be published in late 2018 for use as of January 1, 2019.
- The next TRANSSC meeting is scheduled for November 2018.