

Alert 14-16: Testing Procedures for Steel Drums

On Feb. 28, 2014, the Industrial Steel Drum Institute (ISDI) and the Reusable Industrial Packaging Association (RIPA) announced the publication of a Steel Drum Testing guide. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) requires this type of testing to qualify packaging used to transport hazardous materials.

The ISDI/RIPA Testing Procedures Manual includes key information on testing and recordkeeping requirements, as well as insight on testing procedures. ISDI and RIPA members believe that container safety is a continuous improvement process that begins with proper container testing. This manual provides guidance on the packaging testing procedures and methods that will lead to improved packaging performance in transportation. Some of the methods recommended are based on years of professional experience and can be used to supplement the basic regulatory directives.

The tests described were largely developed by the UN Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, which meets regularly to develop recommendations concerning the transport of hazardous materials. The U.S. DOT then adopts UN Recommendations and/or adopts its own policies as the department may deem necessary. Drums that pass the required design qualification tests are often referred to as “UN rated drums.” These U.S. regulations are known as the “Hazardous Materials Regulations” and are codified as 49 CFR 105-190.

Although the U.S. Hazardous Materials Regulations and several ASTM Standards outline the basic performance testing requirements, testing procedures can be vague and open to some interpretation due to a large number of variables. ISDI and RIPA felt it important to provide the industry with a resource laid out in general terms. The organizations hope the new guide brings greater consistency and harmony to the testing environment and, as a result, improves packaging safety.

However, the new manual does not serve as a substitute for strict adherence to applicable regulatory procedures, as established by the DOT and based upon recommendations from the United Nations.

Links for More Information

- [Download a copy](#) of the manual.
- View [ISDI and RIPA’s joint press release](#) announcing the test manual.

Issued 03/14

The information above is intended to provide interpretative and authoritative information as a service to our members and has been offered in good faith based on the information provided to us. We do not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of any such interpretation or information.

