

NEWS ALERT – 9/28/11

Members of Michiana, unless there is a serious issue rest assured we, the BOD of Michiana would not request you to take political action. So today, there is something that we feel is serious and am requesting all of you to do what you can to help.

The USDOT has seen fit to label all model rocket motors with "EXPLOSIVES" placards on all boxes containing them rather than "FLAMMABLE SOLIDS." This is a change from the exemption granted some 33 years ago. Even though there have been NO incidents shipping rocket motors, they feel the change is needed.

This change will negatively effect us in the following ways:

- Teachers, Cub Scouts, 4H groups and so on will be getting these boxes labeled "EXPLOSIVES" when they order motors. How is this going to look for a teacher when a principal or parent sees a box in the school with that label on it? What are our chances of reaching out to kids groups with this sort of thing happening?
- According to our own Dave McVeigh, this means an additional cost of \$25 will be added to all motor shipments. This will only add to the cost of motors all across the board.



There is no realistic justification that I am aware of for this step by the USDOT. In 33 years there have been NO incidents with rocket motors and yet as an example of how ridiculous this change is, there have been dozens of incidents involving lithium batteries and in fact one incident caused a UPS cargo plane to crash killing the crew and those do not require special "EXPLOSIVE" labeling:

<http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20101008/NEWS02/101009832>

This step by the USDOT is particularly frustrating especially after we (the NAR and TRA) won the almost 10 year and \$350,000+ lawsuit with the BATFE proving that rocket motors are NOT explosives.

What can you do to help? It would be appreciated (not required) if each and every one of you can write a letter to the USDOT special permits and Cc your U.S. congressman and U.S. Senator requesting this silliness be lifted immediately. Also, if it could be a *unique* letter would be even better. If a congressman gets 20 letters saying the same thing but are unique, will have a bigger impact than 200 letters that are all exactly the same. If inspiration is needed the following letter is a good starting point:

LETTER:

Subject: DOT-SP 7887 Show Cause Response

Dear Associate Administrator,

The purpose of this e-mail is to request that DOT-SP 7887 be kept in force as written. The Special Permit, previously DOT-E 7887 has been in place since 1978 and is used by many of us who enjoy hobbies including model rockets, motors and igniters. To my knowledge, there has never been an incident involving the shipping and transporting of model rocket motors and igniters. Further I

believe that shipping these products as "Explosives" will create unnecessary fear and difficulty for those handling, transporting, receiving, storing, selling and using these products. After 33 years of use, the termination of the Special Permit is unwarranted and possibly damaging to an educational and recreational product that has an excellent record. In closing, I again request the Special Permit be kept in place as written.

Here is a letter I wrote to Congressman Upton from Michigan:

RE: DOT-SP 7887, DOT-SP 7887 Show Cause Letter

The above listed show cause letter indicates to companies such as Estes and Quest that rocket motors will be shipped with "explosive" placards instead of "flammable solids" as it has been done without incident for the last 33 years.

As the president/prefect of Michiana Rocketry (www.michianarocketry.org) we strive to bring a hobby to a younger generation all the time. Our launches consist of high-powered rockets but also cater to cub-scouts, girl scouts and other organizations and groups geared toward youth. This action by the busy-body's at the USDOT will only serve to hamper our efforts to expand this hobby and I personally ask for your help in talking some sense into these people so they don't try to fix what isn't broken. "Explosive" placards attract a lot of negative attention in schools, scout groups, etc. and thus making it more difficult for us to promote this hobby to a younger generation that desperately needs to get away from electronic media and doing something that will expand their interests. In essence, this action by the USDOT is completely stupid and unnecessary.

Rocket motors are not explosives. Period. The National Association of Rocketry and the Tripoli Rocketry Association both won a 10 year long lawsuit against the BATFE proving that rocket propellant is NOT explosive.

Should you happen to have any more questions please do not hesitate to contact me with the information provided. Thank you for your willingness to represent us in Washington.

-Dave Brunsting.

For reference, see the following post on The Rocketry Forum:

<http://www.rocketryforum.com/showthread.php?t=26799>

This is your opportunity to help out the rocketry community in a very positive way. This is by no means a requirement of membership in the club but all of us felt it is worth taking note.

Thanks,
Michiana Rocketry BOD