

TRANSPORT OF VEHICLES – NEW SPECIAL PROVISION 980 AND AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING SP 961 AND 962

IMO CCC 11 E&T 43

At CCC 11 (8-12 Sep) and E&T 43 (15-19 Sep 2025) IMO agreed major changes to the regulation of **all types** of Vehicle transport, including Traditional fuel, Hybrids, Lithium and other Battery Vehicles (UN 3166, 3171, 3556, 3557, 3558).

Summary of outcomes

Vehicles driven onto RoPax by passengers

- exempt from SP980 changes, can still use SP961 exemption

SP 980

Vehicles as cargo

- absolute prohibition of offering unsafe vehicles (leaking, damaged, impacted by extreme events) for transport.
- mandatory assessment of the safety condition of the vehicle by the consignor before offering the vehicle for transport.
- the burden of assessment and prohibition is on the consignor who offers the vehicle. When a vehicle is prohibited, the consignor can only offer the vehicle for transport if effective corrective action has been taken and evaluated ensuring that the prohibition is lifted.
- mandatory removal of damaged batteries from all vehicles, otherwise the vehicle is prohibited for transport.
- waste vehicles: the prohibition, including mandatory removal of damaged batteries, also applies to waste vehicles.
- hybrid electric vehicles, and electric vehicles (powered by lithium batteries), are brought fully into the scope of regulation: no exemptions are allowed for these vehicles under SP 961.
- mandatory placarding of CTUs containing vehicles, removing previous uncertainty and problems with delays in port. The placarding of CTUs applies regardless of whether the vehicle inside the CTU is packaged or unpackaged.
- improved electrical insulation of batteries.
- more stringent provisions for exempting dual-fuel vehicles (powered by both a flammable liquid fuel and flammable gas).

SP 980

SP 980

SP 980

SP 980

SP 980

SP 961

SP 961

SP 961

SP 962

SP 961

Instruments and timeline

The agreed new regulation is provided in draft agreed form below. This draft agreed regulation (subject to any minor editorial modifications and an expected procedural sign-off by IMO in 2026) is to be inserted in the next amendment of the IMDG Code (Amendment 43-26), with early voluntary entry into force on 1 January 2027 and mandatory entry into force on 1 January 2028.



New special provision SP 980 (applying to UN 3166, 3171, 3556, 3557, 3558)

This Special Provision is not applicable to vehicles driven on board under their own power by a passenger, when carried on ro-ro passenger ships as defined in SOLAS regulation II-2/3.42.

The consignor shall assess the safety condition of the vehicle prior to offering for transport.

A vehicle shall not be offered for transport if it is forbidden in accordance with 1.1.3.1 or if it:

- .1 has, or shows signs of, leakage from the battery, engine, fuel cell, compressed gas cylinder or accumulator, fuel system, or braking system, when applicable; or
- .2 has, or shows signs of, damage to electric equipment (including but not limited to frayed or damaged cables); or
- .3 has or shows signs of damage to supplemental restraint systems (SRS) (e.g. airbags, seat belt tensioners); or
- .4 has been impacted by extreme events (e.g. flood, hurricane, tsunami, fire, submersion).

If any of the above condition(s) applies, the vehicle shall not be offered for transport unless corrective actions have been taken. Such corrective actions shall be evaluated regarding their effectiveness ensuring that the condition(s) no longer apply.

Batteries subject to Special Provision 376 shall be removed.

Vehicles transported as waste are also subject to the provisions of 2.0.5.

Amended Special Provision 961

Vehicles which are not prohibited for transport in accordance with SP980 are not subject to the provisions of this Code, other than those in P912, SP388 and SP977 when applicable, if any of the following conditions are met:

- .1 vehicles are stowed on the vehicle, special category and ro-ro spaces or on the weather deck of a ro-ro ship or a cargo space designated by the Administration (flag State) in accordance with SOLAS 74, chapter II-2, regulation 20 as specifically designed and approved for the carriage of vehicles, and there are no signs of leakage from the battery, engine, fuel cell, compressed gas cylinder or accumulator, fuel system, or braking system when applicable. When packed in a cargo transport unit the exception does not apply to container cargo spaces of a ro-ro ship;
- .2 vehicles powered by a flammable liquid fuel with a flashpoint of 38°C or above, there are no leaks in any portion of the fuel system, the fuel tank(s) contains 450 L of fuel or less and installed batteries are electrically insulated to protect from short-circuit;
- .3 vehicles powered by a flammable liquid fuel with a flashpoint less than 38°C, the fuel tank(s) are empty and installed batteries are electrically insulated to protect from short-circuit. Vehicles are considered to be empty of flammable liquid fuel when the fuel tank has been drained and the vehicles cannot be operated due to a lack of fuel. Engine components such as fuel lines, fuel filters and injectors do not need to be cleaned, drained or purged to be considered empty. The fuel tank does not need to be cleaned or purged;
- .4 vehicles powered by a flammable gas (liquefied or compressed), the fuel tank(s) are empty and the positive pressure in the tank does not exceed 2 bar, the fuel shut-off or isolation valve is closed and secured, and installed batteries are electrically insulated to protect from short-circuit;
- .5 vehicles solely powered by a wet or dry electric storage battery or a sodium battery, and the battery is electrically insulated to protect from short-circuit;
- .6 vehicles solely powered by a sodium ion battery, and the battery is short-circuited in a way that the battery does not contain electrical energy. The short circuiting shall be easily identifiable (e.g. busbar between terminals).

For vehicles powered by both a flammable liquid fuel and a flammable gas, all applicable conditions from .2 to .4 shall be met.

Sub-paragraphs .2 to .4 do not apply to hybrid electric vehicles as identified in special provision 388. Sub-paragraph .5 does not apply to vehicles powered by lithium batteries.

Amended Special Provision 962

Vehicles, which are not prohibited for transport in accordance with SP980 and do not meet the conditions of special provision 961 shall be assigned to class 9 and shall meet the following requirements:

- .1 for flammable liquid powered vehicles the fuel tank(s) containing the flammable liquid shall not be more than one fourth full and in any case the flammable liquid shall not exceed 250 L unless otherwise approved by the competent authority;

- .2 for flammable gas powered vehicles, the fuel shut-off valve of the fuel tank(s) shall be securely closed;
- .3 installed batteries shall meet the provisions of SP388 or SP977, as applicable, and be protected from damage, accidental activation during transport, and electrically insulated to protect from short-circuit.

Unpackaged vehicles are not subject to the marking and labelling requirements of chapter 5.2.

Note: When transported in a cargo transport unit (CTU) the placarding requirements of chapter 5.3 apply, regardless of whether the vehicle is packaged or unpackaged.

Consequential changes:

Amended Section 1.1.3 Dangerous goods forbidden from transport

1.1.3.1 Unless provided otherwise by this Code, the following are forbidden from transport:

Any substance or article which, as presented for transport, is liable to explode, dangerously react, produce a flame or dangerous evolution of heat or dangerous emission of toxic, corrosive or flammable gases or vapours under normal conditions of transport.

In chapter 3.3, special provisions 349, 350, 351, 352, 353 and 900 list certain substances, which are forbidden for transport. For vehicles which are prohibited from transport, see special provision SP 980.

Deleted Special Provisions

SPECIAL PROVISIONS SP 404 and SP 405 are deleted.

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