



BSI Standards Publication

**Printed pressure-sensitive,
adhesive-coated labels for marine use,
including requirements for label
stock – Specification**

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Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 31 December 2024. It was prepared by Subcommittee PKW/0/4, *Packaging – Dangerous goods*, under the authority of Technical Committee PKW/0, *Packaging*. A list of organizations represented on these committees can be obtained on request to the committee manager.

Supersession

This British Standard supersedes [BS 5609:1986](#), which will be withdrawn on 31 December 2030.

Information about this document

This is a full revision of the standard, and introduces the following principal changes:

- inclusion of high density polyethylene (HDPE) test methods in [Section 2](#);
- provision is made to allow for separate testing and certification of [Section 2](#) and [Section 3](#).

Product certification. Users of this British Standard are advised to consider the desirability of third-party certification of product conformity to this British Standard. Users seeking assistance in identifying appropriate conformity assessment bodies or schemes may ask BSI to forward their enquiries to the relevant association.

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Where websites and webpages have been cited, they are provided for ease of reference and are correct at the time of publication. The location of a webpage or website, or its contents, cannot be guaranteed.

Unless otherwise directed by a certification body:

- labels that were manufactured to [BS 5609:1986](#), Section 2, need only be tested on HDPE; and
- labels that were manufactured to [BS 5609:1986](#), Section 3, do not need to be re-tested.

Use of this document

[Section 2](#) gives methods for determining the performance of unprinted label stock for resistance to marine immersion, weathering, temperature cycling and abrasion. [Section 3](#) determines the performance of the printed facestock for print key adhesion, abrasion and artificial weathering.

The standard is subdivided to separate the requirements for the adhesive-coated facestock from those for the printed label.

Presentational conventions

The provisions of this standard are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its requirements are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is “shall”.

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

Where words have alternative spellings, the preferred spelling of the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* is used (e.g. “organization” rather than “organisation”).

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Section 1 General

0 Introduction

0.1 Responsibility of shippers

It is obligatory for shippers to durably mark dangerous goods packagings, including large containers such as portable tanks and freight containers, for carriage by sea. To emphasize that responsibility for this rests with the shipper, BS 5609 includes guidance to shippers to enable them to discharge those responsibilities.

Compliance with [Section 2](#) of this British Standard ensures adequate performance of the facestock, plus adhesive, and its adhesion to both aluminium test surface and polyethylene drum material under marine conditions. Compliance with [Section 3](#) of this British Standard ensures adequate colour fastness and durability of the inks or dyes when used with a particular facestock. Facestock can be tested for compliance with [Section 2](#) and [Section 3](#) separately. [Section 2](#) compliance is not required before [Section 3](#). However, full compliance requires the printed label construction to conform with both [Section 2](#) and [Section 3](#). It remains for the shipper, having noted the points outlined in [0.2](#), to carry out such tests as are necessary to satisfy themselves as to the adequate performance of the labels as applied in normal use to the packages being shipped. Guidance for this purpose is given in [Annex A](#).

0.2 Summary of legal requirements

The International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code [[1](#)] applies to shipment of dangerous goods by sea from most maritime countries. It contains provisions that, unless otherwise provided in the IMDG Code [[1](#)], each package containing dangerous goods is to be durably marked with the proper shipping name of the contents, and durably identified with Dangerous Goods class label(s) (the “diamond” label), or stencil(s) of the labels. It further provides that the method of marking the name and affixing the label is such that the name and label (or stencil) would still be identifiable on packages surviving at least three months’ immersion in the sea.

The Merchant Shipping (Dangerous Goods and Marine Pollutants) Regulations 1997 [[2](#)], Regulation 11(1a), requires such provisions and applies to packaged dangerous goods taken on board a ship within the United Kingdom or its territorial waters and requires compliance with the IMDG Code [[1](#)].

NOTE Attention is drawn to the Merchant Shipping (Dangerous Goods and Marine Pollutants) Regulations 1997 [[2](#)] for detailed information, while further guidance can be found in Merchant Shipping Notices issued from time to time by the Department for Transport.

1 Scope

This British Standard specifies requirements for printed pressure-sensitive, adhesive-coated labels suitable for use under marine conditions.

This standard describes methods for determining the performance of label stock for resistance to marine immersion, weathering and temperature cycling. It also determines the performance of the printed facestock for print key adhesion, abrasion and artificial weathering.

Test methods are given in the annexes, including a recommended method for the evaluation of label adhesion to specific surfaces.