BS5609

General Overview

What is BS5609?

BS5609 is a durability specification for chemical drum labels being used in maritime environments.

- A maritime environment is defined as prolonged exposure to salt water; both immersion in salt water and abrasion from salt water.

To obtain BS5609 approval, a two-part test is conducted by an independent third-party laboratory.

- Step one is to test material (blank label) adhesion and durability.
- Step two tests print permanence of the printed label.

Successful completion of the above allows for a specific ribbon and a specific material to be offered as meeting BS5609 specifications when used in conjunction.

It is important to understand that ink alone is not BS5609 compliant.

What is GHS?

GHS stands for Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals. Specifically GHS governs the physical design of a printed label used on chemical drums transported across an ocean. GHS is an add-on to BS5609.

In everyday terms, GHS stipulates black and red ink, and specific symbols are to be used. It is a global initiative designed to make hazardous chemical drum shipping labels universally recognizable by standardizing the symbols used. Think of it in terms of a stop sign, the world over knows that a red octagon means "stop."

- The first step for GHS compliance is to use a label/ink combo with BS5609 approval.
- The second step is for the label printer to use the correct GHS symbols for whatever potential hazards are contained within the product being labeled.

It is important to understand that GHS is not a label/ink specification, it is a compliance standard, meaning only the label designer can ensure GHS compliance.

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