



International Material Data System

October 2020

Information from the IMDS Steering Committee regarding Warnings in IMDS quality checks

Within the last years, IMDS has introduced new features as well as new quality checks, to enhance the quality of data entered to IMDS. With these new functionalities and specifically the quality checks in IMDS the amount of Warnings has increased in IMDS. We have learned from supplier feedback that this is sometimes causing concern since the purpose of Warnings is not clear to all users, leading to different interpretations along the supply chain.

As a consequence, some suppliers select to reject a material datasheet based alone on the presence of a Warning. With this official letter the IMDS Steering Committee would like to clarify the purpose of the Warnings and as well give guidance on how the Automotive OEMs using IMDS will interpret the Warnings. The intent of a Warning in the IMDS system is to inform a data receiver that there are areas of the material datasheet that may be of special interest. The reasons may be several and not necessarily linked to errors on the data creator side. Examples of situations that trigger Warnings are wide substance ranges, unusual substance mixtures, deleted substances in old material datasheets etc.

The key point is that a Warning by itself does not automatically mean that there is anything wrong with the data that has been reported. If we take the example of a Warning linked to a deleted substance then this will mean that a material created today would not be able to select the same substance because it has been deactivated, however the information is still accurate and gives a correct description of the material. The deactivation is normally done because a better alternative has replaced the old, deactivated substance. In this case, the Warning should not trigger a rejection since there is no error in the data. In the case of a wide substance range then the Warning means that the data recipient needs to look closer at the material information. It might very well be that the substance ranges are accurate for this type of material. In regard to the material quality checks (i.e. verifying the substance composition of a material) the Warnings should normally not be seen as a reason for rejection, but more as a hint to the material supplier on how they can improve their data quality.

There are several cases where a material is acceptable according to the IMDS recommendations or industry standards but will still trigger Warnings. Information on Warnings and Errors can also be found in IMDS 001, p. 2. The position of the Automotive OEMs using IMDS is that any rejection along the supply chain related to Warnings needs to be clearly motivated on why the cause of the Warning is a reason for rejection.

To just reject any datasheet that has a Warning in it is not the recommended process by the IMDS Steering Committee, neither will any OEM impose such rules on the supplier community. The overall intent of the Warnings is to improve data quality over time by informing IMDS users of best practice over time, not to cause immediate rejections.

Yours faithfully,

The OEMs of the IMDS Steering Committee