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# Pesticide Alert

## Pesticide Safety and Site Security

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The Environmental Protection Agency is issuing this *Alert* to all pesticide industry organizations, facilities, and handlers as a precaution during this heightened state of security awareness. This *Alert* highlights some general security areas that companies may want to review to ensure that appropriate measures are being implemented. EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs has developed this tailored summary of the Agency's Chemical Safety Alert entitled, "Chemical Accident Prevention: Site Security," which outlines measures to ensure secure and accident-free operations. Published in February 2000, the more detailed Chemical Safety Alert is available on the Web at: [www.epa.gov/swercepp/p-small.htm#alerts](http://www.epa.gov/swercepp/p-small.htm#alerts).

It is important that all pesticide establishments review this information and take appropriate steps to minimize risk. This document does not substitute for EPA's regulations, nor is it a regulation itself. It cannot and does not impose legally binding requirements on EPA or the regulated community, and measures it describes may not apply to a particular situation based upon circumstances. The Agency may continue to provide further guidance in the future, as appropriate.

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### Knowing and Understanding Potential Security Threats

Businesses that manufacture, reformulate, sell, distribute, transport, store, or apply pesticides have long known the importance of risk mitigation steps for the safety of their workers, their customers, and their communities. For manufacturers and reformulators, efforts focus on ensuring that the facility is operated safely on a day-to-day basis. Manufacturers must use well-designed equipment, conduct preventive maintenance, implement up-to-date operating procedures, and employ well-trained staff. Those who distribute pesticides have focused on safe storage and accurate labeling of their products. For the pesticide user community, safety efforts have focused on strictly reading and following all label directions. Today, these efforts aren't necessarily enough.

While many of the steps to ensure an effective security program seem routine, they are *critical* to the health and safety of your business, facility, and community. Without effective security procedures, your business

may be vulnerable to both internal and external threats, posing risks to yourself and employees, your building and machinery, stored pesticides, and even sensitive business information. If you have mobile pest application equipment, particularly aerial application equipment, special precautions should be taken to protect both your equipment and the surrounding community.

## **Recommended Considerations in Evaluating Pesticide Security**

The security needs and critical control points will differ for every business and facility. However, some of the fundamental security control points include:

- **Securing Buildings, Manufacturing Facilities, Storage Areas, and Surrounding Property:** One of the most fundamental security needs is the prevention of intrusion to areas used to manufacture or store pesticides and other toxic chemicals. Elements of an effective security plan can range from basic fencing, lighting, and locks, to intrusion detection systems, cameras, and trained guards. For more information on basic tips on protecting your site, review EPA's report "Chemical Accident Prevention: Site Security" listed below in the section entitled "For More Information."
- **Securing Pesticide Application Equipment and Vehicles:** Facilities and pesticide businesses should ensure that they have appropriate security protections to prevent intruder access to equipment used in mixing, loading, and applying pesticides. Before operating pesticide application tools and vehicles, handlers must have proper authorization and identification.
  - ▶ **Aerial Application Equipment:** Security awareness is particularly important for large-scale pesticide application equipment like aircraft and large trucks. The FBI has requested that aerial applicators be vigilant to any suspicious activity relative to the use, training in, or acquisition of dangerous chemicals or airborne application of same, including threats, unusual purchases, suspicious behavior by employees or customers, and unusual contacts with the public. Any suspicious circumstances or information should be reported to the FBI.
- **Protecting Confidential Information:** As business, safety, and security systems become more reliant on computer and communications technology, the need to secure these systems has grown. Such efforts include contingency planning for power losses, effective monitoring of access ports, adherence to password and backup procedures, and other mechanisms to maintain access for authorized personnel only.
- **Designing Facilities and Equipment to Minimize Risk of Damage:** Whether an intrusion to a computer by a hacker or a physical intrusion of your facility by a vandal or saboteur, it is important to take steps to minimize the extent of damage. For example, in order to prevent damage, the use of sturdy, reliable, and potentially blast-proof materials is essential in the construction of equipment used to transport and apply pesticides.
- **Developing Procedures and Policies that Support Security Needs:** Even the best hardware and staffing budgets are only as effective as the procedures and policies that control their use.
  - ▶ Effective hiring and labor relations policies are important to obtain and retain good employees who will support and follow safety precautions. For example, the hiring process should ensure that pesticide handlers have all requisite training necessary to handle pesticides safely. Background

checks of staff who have access to secure areas, particularly those areas where pesticides may be stored, are also necessary.

- ▶ Inventory management policies can help limit the amount of potentially hazardous pesticides stored on site, reducing the risks of accidental or intentional release or theft.
- ▶ Effective advance emergency response procedures can be critical, helping ensure that business officials and employees understand how to respond and whom to contact in the case of an emergency. Aside from accidents, such plans must also consider vandalism, bomb threats, and potential terrorist activity.

### **Timely Coordination With Authorities**

If a breach of security or suspicious activity does occur, timely cooperation authorities is crucial. In addition to cooperation with your local police department, the FBI requests that you expeditiously report any threats or suspicious behavior to your local FBI field office. These agencies also must be informed if, as a registrant, you are made aware of any reports of adverse exposure under circumstances that are incongruous with your pesticide product's normal use pattern. Information on the location of the appropriate FBI office is available at [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov).

### **For More Information**

EPA and other Federal agencies have developed a variety of reference materials that may be helpful in reviewing the security of your business or operation.

- Many of the tips listed in this fact sheet are described in more detail in the Chemical Safety Alert entitled: "Chemical Accident Prevention: Site Security," published by EPA on February 2000 and available on the EPA Web site at: [www.epa.gov/swercepp/p-small.htm#alerts](http://www.epa.gov/swercepp/p-small.htm#alerts).
- For information on other Agency programs to promote facility security and readiness, visit <http://www.epa.gov/swercepp/>
- DOT has produced a separate advisory for transporters, available by contacting DOT at 202-366-6525.
- For a 10-step procedure to analyze, identify, and prevent threats, prepared by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), review its document entitled "Industrial Chemicals and Terrorism: Human Health Threat Analysis and Prevention," available on their Web site at: [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/OFP/terrorism/indterr.html](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/OFP/terrorism/indterr.html).
- For objective science-based information about a variety of pesticide-related subjects, including pesticide products, recognition and management of pesticide poisonings, toxicology, and environmental chemistry, contact the National Pesticide Telecommunication Network (NPTN). NPTN, a toll-free hotline funded, in part, by EPA, lists state pesticide regulatory agencies and provides links to their Web sites. NPTN can be contacted at: 1-800-858-7378, by e-mail at [nptn@ace.orst.edu](mailto:nptn@ace.orst.edu), or by visiting the Web at: <http://ace.orst.edu/info/nptn/>.

