

Title:

Restricted Components Regulations Coming Into Force in Canada

Word Count:

405

Summary:

In an effort to deter terrorism the Government of Canada has classified 9 chemicals as "restricted components". Manufacturers and sellers of chemicals need to ensure they comply with the new regulations.

Keywords:

Reulations, Explosives, Canada, Regulatory Compliance

Article Body:

In an effort to hamper the ability of terrorists to manufacture explosives, the Government of Canada has introduced a new Restricted Components Regulations under the Explosives Act. The regulations designate the following nine explosive precursors as "restricted components":

- ammonium nitrate in solid form at a concentration between 28 and 34% nitrogen;
- hydrogen peroxide at a concentration of at least 30%, UN numbers: 2015 and 3149;
- nitromethane, UN number: 1261;
- potassium chlorate, UN number: 1485;
- potassium perchlorate, UN number: 1489;
- sodium chlorate in solid form, UN number: 1495;
- nitric acid at a concentration of at least 68%, UN numbers: 2031 and 2032;
- potassium nitrate, UN numbers: 1486 and 1499; and
- sodium nitrate in solid form, UN numbers: 1498 and 1499.

These chemicals were chosen due to their use in past terrorist incidents:

"The two most significant bombing incidents in the United States (U.S.)

involving Oklahoma City's Murrah Federal Building in 1997 and New York City's World Trade Center in 2001, as well as the deadly attacks on the London mass transit system in July of 2005, all involved explosives made from some of the chemicals that are targeted to be regulated as restricted components under these Regulations."

Only sellers that are "enrolled on the list of sellers of restricted components" will be allowed to sell the above restricted components. However, there is an exemption that allows the selling of restricted components to laboratories that are affiliated with a post-secondary institution, a hospital or a government agency.

The new regulations, unless specified, only cover pure substances, not mixtures including one or more of the restricted components. Canada's Ministry of Natural Resources provides the following clarification:

"Except for the H₂O₂, the Nitric Acid and the Ammonium nitrate, the other 6 restricted components (including Nitromethane) are currently regulated under their pure form (i.e. 100%)."

A number of rules are placed on sellers of restricted components, which cover items such as security, ensuring only authorized staff have access to the restricted components, do weekly stock inspections to ensure no restricted components have been lost or stolen, record keeping, and obtaining identification from purchasers of these components. The seller must also obtain very detailed records of sales of components above the following quantities:

- hydrogen peroxide, 1 L;
- nitromethane, 1 L;
- potassium chlorate, 1 kg;
- potassium perchlorate, 10 kg;
- sodium chlorate, 1 kg;
- nitric acid, 3.5 kg;
- potassium nitrate, 25 kg; and
- sodium nitrate, 25 kg

The regulations come into effect on June 1, 2008 for ammonium nitrate and March 1, 2009 for the other 8 chemicals.

Full details about the regulations can be obtained from the Government of Canada.