

SAFEX Safety Alert 22-10

Explosives Inspectorate | Alert | No.104 V 1 | 04 August 2022

Incorrect consignment of security sensitive ammonium nitrate

What happened?

A full, (20 tonne) off-spec shipping container of security sensitive ammonium nitrate (SSAN) was incorrectly stored in the empty container area.

A transport triple road train combination vehicle attended the mine site reload to collect empty residual bulk SSAN containers and the full container was loaded onto the centre trailer and incorrectly recorded by the site consignor as an empty residual container.

During the journey from the reload location, the driver identified that a container was full and activated his security plan and travelled to a secure location.

How did it happen?

The authority holder investigated the incident and reported relevant findings:

- The container had not been marked or identified as off-spec and was incorrectly placed into a designated area for empty containers.
- The site lacked the ability to identify the weight of SSAN in the containers. i.e. the forklift was not fitted with scales.
- The site lacked a dedicated area for off-spec (out of service) containers.

Key issues

- Effective and accurate accounting for explosives could not be accomplished.
- The actions that allowed the removal of a full container of SSAN compromised the integrity of explosives security.
- If not detected, the full SSAN container would have been stored in an area not assessed for bulk SSAN storage.
- Inaccurate documentation could result in an inappropriate response by emergency services during a public transport incident – such as setting inadequate exclusion zones.

Recommendations

To prevent a recurrence of this type of significant incident the following recommendations are made:

- Verify your safety and security management system to ensure the accurate reconciling of all explosives stored and used - including SSAN.
- When consigning SSAN for transport, ensure that accurate details are entered including authorised sender/receiver, a proper description, identifiers and verified weights.
- Verify training systems to ensure employees are aware of their accountabilities as consignors of security sensitive explosives.
- Ensure clear marking of off-spec SSAN containers and clearly demarcate the purpose of storage zones.

Investigations are ongoing and further information may be published as it becomes available. The information in this publication is what is known at the time of writing.

We issue Safety Notices to draw attention to the occurrence of a serious incident, raise awareness of risks, and prompt assessment of your existing controls.

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References and further information

- [Explosives information bulletin 52 - Transport of security sensitive ammonium nitrate](#)
- [Explosives information bulletin 53 - Storage requirements for security sensitive ammonium nitrate](#)

Authorised by Snezana Bajic - Deputy Chief Inspector – Explosives

Contact: Haydn Isaac, Principal Inspector of Explosives , 07 4936 0142 haydn.isaac@rshq.qld.gov.au

Issued by Resources Safety & Health Queensland

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