



Frequently Asked Questions on the Ammonia Standards Program

The Ammonia Standards Program, launched by the Fertilizer Safety & Security Council, applies to all agri-retail facilities in Canada that store or retail anhydrous ammonia. Under the Ammonia Standards Program, all anhydrous ammonia retail sites in Canada will need to be fully compliant with the standards outlined in the ammonia code of practice by the end of 2010.

As agri-retailers across Canada are signing up for voluntary audits, I wanted to take this opportunity to answer some of your questions on the Ammonia Standards Program.

Does the Ammonia Standards Program (ASP) apply to me?

The Ammonia Standards Program applies to all agri-retail facilities in Canada that store or retail anhydrous ammonia. This includes farmer-owned equipment serviced at a retail site, as well as farmers who are also sellers of anhydrous ammonia.

Each fixed storage tank will be considered a separate site with its own ASP number and its own audit. 'Satellite sites' where there is no storage tank such as nurse tank storage areas are regarded as linked to the main site, and are a part of the same audit. An operation that has no fixed storage tank such as a transport truck operation will be regarded as the 'main' operation, and any other facilities such as parking lots would be satellites to that main location. A transload site will be treated in the same way as a fixed storage site. All satellite sites must be in compliance with the code, unless all ammonia vessels at the site have been cleaned and purged.

Does the program affect my business?

The code applies to every aspect of your ammonia business. For example, nurse tanks, which are an integral part of most retail operations handling ammonia, are covered under the ammonia code of practice. As part of the Ammonia Standards Program, auditor verification is required to ensure that nurse tanks are being operated and maintained safely and are meeting applicable laws such as the Transportation of Dangerous Goods regulations and WHMIS.

Why should I sign up for a voluntary audit?

A voluntary audit will prepare you for the mandatory audit phase which begins in January 2009.

Voluntary audits will assist retailers in reaching compliance by identifying deficiencies ahead of time, allowing for correction before the mandatory audit phase of the program begins. Agri-retailers need to find out what changes, if any, they will need to make in their operations. This will allow retailers to assess the safety and security of their operations and prepare for a mandatory audit.

Audits provide credibility to the Ammonia Standards Program. They are a tool to measure and report success and are recognized by government agencies as an effective way to manage risk without regulation.

How do I sign up for a voluntary audit?

Contact a certified ammonia code auditor to sign up for your voluntary audit. Certified auditors include those who are currently qualified in the AWSA chemical warehouse inspection program. Most ammonia retail sites are also part of this program so you will have the opportunity to arrange for an ammonia audit with your current warehouse auditor, benefiting from their experience with your business and coordinating these two valuable programs. For a list of auditors please visit our website (www.fssc.ca).

How can I prepare for my audit?

In addition to signing up for a voluntary audit, you should familiarize yourself with the current edition of the ammonia code of practice and accompanying implementation guide. Both are posted on the Fertilizer Safety and Security Council website (www.fssc.ca). The implementation guide will help you to interpret the technical requirements outlined in the ammonia code of practice.

What are the timelines of the Ammonia Standards Program?

September, 2007 to December, 2008: Voluntary audit program. Agri-retailers are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this period of time to arrange for a voluntary audit. Through this you will learn what areas of your operation will need attention to pass the formal audit process.

January, 2009 to December, 2010: Mandatory audits. All ammonia retail sites must have passed an audit during these two years in order to meet the new industry-wide standard.

January 1, 2011: All ammonia retail sites will be covered by the Ammonia Standards Program.

Who can I talk to for assistance with the program?

To assist you with further questions and help prepare for your audit, a hotline has been established. Retailers can call toll-free (866) 311-0444 or direct (416) 260-2432 to speak with a representative about the program's implementation schedule and auditing program. For regular updates on the Ammonia Standards Program, please visit the Fertilizer Safety and Security Council's website (www.fssc.ca).