



Fertilizer Safety & Security Council  
Conseil de la sécurité en fertilisation

## **FAQ**

### **The Ammonia Standards Program**

#### **What is the Ammonia Standards Program?**

The Ammonia Standards Program is based on a code of practice that sets best practices applicable to the manufacture, distribution, storage and handling of anhydrous ammonia.

The code of practice was drafted by members of the Fertilizer Safety & Security Council (FSSC) including fertilizer manufacturers, distributors, and agri-retailers. The code covers a broad range of topics, including location and exterior requirements, storage vessels and transportation vessels and equipment, application equipment, training, employee knowledge, and emergency response.

#### **Why do we need a code?**

Anhydrous ammonia is a highly effective fertilizer used by farmers across the country, but it can also be extremely dangerous if it is not properly handled.

The industry is facing increasing security and public safety concerns as well as legal and regulatory pressures to demonstrate that the risks arising from the manufacture, distribution, storage, handling, and use of ammonia are minimized.

Many industries already have stewardship programs and codes of practice which are verified by third party audits.

The Ammonia Standards Program is an approach to risk management intended to improve safety and demonstrate that the industry is taking every reasonable step to safeguard its employees, customers and communities.

#### **Why do we need audits?**

Audits provide credibility to the Ammonia Standards Program and assist retailers in reaching compliance. They are a tool to measure and report success, and are recognized by government agencies as an effective way to manage risk without regulation. The program will be phased in between now and December 31, 2010. During this time the emphasis will be on helping retailers to meet provisions of the code.

Test audits have shown that many participating sites are already in compliance in most areas of the code.

### **Who does the code affect, am I included?**

The Ammonia Standards Program applies to agri-retail facilities in Canada that store or retail anhydrous ammonia. The program is intended to eventually cover the entire life-cycle of anhydrous ammonia, from manufacturing through transportation, distribution, retail, and end use but it begins with those who handle, store, and sell anhydrous ammonia for agricultural use. This includes farmers who are also sellers.

### **Do sites with nurse tanks need to be audited?**

Nurse tanks are an integral part of most retail operations handling ammonia. Auditors will verify that nurse tanks are being operated and maintained safely and are meeting applicable laws such as the Transportation of Dangerous Goods regulations and WHMIS.

### **What are the timelines for this program?**

#### PHASE I - Fall 2007- Dec.31, 2008

Voluntary training audits will begin in the fall of 2007 and will end by Dec.31, 2008. Retailers are strongly recommended to take advantage of this opportunity and arrange for a voluntary training audit before the end of 2008.

#### PHASE II - Jan.1, 2009- Dec.31, 2010

The first 2-year auditing cycle will begin on January 1, 2009. During the following 2 years all agri-retail facilities dealing in ammonia will be audited.

#### PHASE III- Jan.1, 2011 onwards

On January 1, 2011, after the completion of both the voluntary training audits and formal auditing cycle a no-ship policy will come into effect. Under this policy Canadian manufacturers and distributors will not supply agri-retailers with ammonia if they do not meet requirements of the Ammonia Standards Program.

### **What happens if I don't want to participate in the Ammonia Standards Program?**

All ammonia retail sites must be in compliance with the code by the end of 2010 or they will be refused delivery of ammonia by their supplier. From a business perspective, it is therefore a good idea to comply with the program. Our initial pilot audits found that many sites are already in compliance in most areas of the code.

With increasing security and public safety concerns, legal and regulatory pressures, the industry is implementing the code to remain credible and competitive. A policy of withholding ammonia shipments to retailers who do not participate in the program has been approved by the Board of Directors of the Canadian Fertilizer Institute.

By supporting the code, everyone involved in the ammonia fertilizer business and the communities in which they operate stand to benefit.

**How can I prepare for an audit?**

Auditors will be available to provide voluntary or “training” audits starting in the fall of 2007. Auditors currently providing services under the Agrichemical Warehousing Standards Association (AWSA) will be trained to provide ammonia code audits for a fee. If you are also operating a chemical warehouse speak to your AWSA auditor as soon as possible to discuss this.

In addition to the Fertilizer Safety & Security Council web site ([www.fssc.ca](http://www.fssc.ca)) a toll-free number (1 866 311-0444) is now available for further information regarding audits or any other aspects of the program.

**How much will it cost if my facility does not meet the code standards?**

The cost of complying with the code depends entirely on which areas of the code, if any, need attention. A program of pilot audits indicated that most sites needed very little in the way of expenditures to be in compliance with the code.

**What happens if there is no reasonable way to meet the standard, for example, if my facility is in the wrong place?**

The program incorporates the principle of “equivalency” which allows flexibility to meet or exceed safety levels established in the code. It is recognized that there may be several ways to meet a code requirement. If someone has found a safer way to manage a particular risk then so much the better.

**How much will the audits cost? Who will pay?**

See “How can I prepare for an audit” above.

**How will I know what to do?**

Information sessions across Canada will take place covering topics such as implementation, auditing, cost and timelines for compliance. Stay tuned to the FSSC website ([www.fssc.ca](http://www.fssc.ca)) for details. For questions on the Ammonia Standards Program, please call our toll-free number: **1 866 311-0444**.

**Will insurance rates go down?**

While we do not know what will happen to insurance rates for ammonia sites, we do know that AWSA certified facilities have seen premium reductions and increased coverage over a period of time.

**Does the code favour facilities owned or affiliated with corporations?**

The objective of the ammonia code is to build a system of compliance with all facilities dealing with ammonia. There is one code that all facilities will be expected to meet. The ammonia code does not favour one facility over another.

### **Does the code only deal with ammonia?**

Yes, the code only deals with anhydrous ammonia.

### **Why is the Agrichemical Warehousing Standards Association (AWSA) involved? Don't they deal with only pesticides?**

After careful examination, it was determined that AWSA was best suited to handle the ammonia code audits.

Although AWSA audits pesticides, there is significant overlap between pesticide and ammonia facilities. For example, it is estimated that most pesticide farm supply warehouses also handle fertilizer. This means that auditors are able to audit both pesticides and fertilizers with the same visit, which makes it more convenient to retailers.

### **Who is in charge of the Fertilizer Safety and Security Council (FSSC) and do retailers have a say?**

The FSSC was launched in 2003 under the leadership of the Canadian Fertilizer Institute. Membership is comprised of fertilizer manufacturers, distributors and agri-retailers.

### **What is the relationship between the Canadian Fertilizer Institute (CFI), the Fertilizer Safety and Security Council (FSSC) and the Ammonia Standards Program?**

The **Canadian Fertilizer Institute (CFI)** is an industry association representing manufacturers, wholesale and retail distributors of nitrogen, phosphate and potash fertilizers.

The **Fertilizer Safety & Security Council (FSSC)** was established in 2003 under the leadership of the CFI to promote the safe and secure manufacturing, handling, storage, transportation and application of commercial fertilizer products. Membership in the FSSC is comprised of fertilizer manufacturers, distributors, agri-retailers, and as it evolves will include other companies and organizations with an interest in the fertilizer industry. The formation of the FSSC stems from increasing concerns about the safety and security of fertilizer products, and the desire of CFI and other members of the industry to take a leadership role in the stewardship of their products.

The **Ammonia Standards Program** is an initiative launched by FSSC, and is based on a code that sets best practices for safe and secure handling of anhydrous ammonia from manufacturing to end use. The program is an approach to risk management and is a concrete way to demonstrate that the industry is taking every reasonable step to safeguard its employees, customers and communities. The Ammonia Standards Program applies to all sites in Canada that store and retail anhydrous ammonia.

### **How can I get more information on the Ammonia Standards Program?**

To help prepare for your audit, a hotline has been recently established to assist retailers with questions about the program. Retailers can now 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 updates and further information on the Ammonia Standards Program, visit the Fertilizer Safety & Security Council website at [www.fssc.ca](http://www.fssc.ca).