

The security of explosives in transit through ports

INTRODUCTION

1. It is essential to take effective security measures to prevent the theft of explosives. The delivery of explosives to a port for loading into a ship provides opportunities for theft which could lead to loss of life. The handling of explosives in ports is subject to the Dangerous Substances In Harbour Areas Regulations 1987. Regulation 37 places duties on Harbour Authorities, berth operators and others (such as freight agents and hauliers) in respect of security of explosives being handled or held at a port.

2. This document is designed primarily to give advice to prevent theft and wrongful use of explosives. It supplements the legal requirements in the Regulations and the contents of the Approved Code of Practice to the Regulations. Where in this guidance the term "licence" or "licensee" is used it refers to a Licence granted under Regulation 36 or a person holding such a Licence, respectively, unless there is a specific reference to the contrary.

3. Security measures are the more effective if taken without fuss and publicity. It was considered during the course of preparation whether this document should be classified as U.K. Government "Restricted", but that classification would operate to inhibit the dissemination of instructions based on the document. The guiding principle is that this Information should be restricted to those who "need to know". When this document is sent by post, the envelope should be sealed and no markings should appear on the outside which indicate the nature of the contents.

4. These recommendations apply to all explosives covered by the Regulations and not just those covered by the Licensing requirements of regulations 34 to 36. The recommendations apply equally to explosives being Imported and those being exported.

5. All persons involved with the transport-of explosives by road are reminded that the provisions of the Road Traffic (Carriage of Explosives) Regulations 1989 apply to all parts of the journey from first loading the vehicle to finally off-loading whether at a port or elsewhere.

EXPLOSIVES SECURITY OFFICER

6. Each operator in control of a berth at which explosives are handled must appoint an Explosives Security Officer. In addition, each harbour authority within whose area explosives are carried or handled must appoint a Harbour Explosives Security Officer. In either case, this person should be a member of the port police force or a trained security officer as appropriate. Where this is not practicable, a senior, responsible manager or similar person (e.g. harbour master) may hold the post. Such a person should receive training appropriate to the post.

7. The Explosives Security Officer is responsible at all times for the security of all types of explosives while they are within the area under his control.

8. The Explosives Security Officer's duties include educating port employees, particularly those with a responsibility for explosives handling, so they have awareness for security.

9. The Explosives Security Officer should ensure that documents giving details of explosives consignments and their movements should be kept to the minimum consistent with maintaining control of movements and meeting statutory requirements. All records relating to explosives should be kept in a secure place and distributed on a strict "need to know" basis. This also applies to the records relating to explosives handled (required by Regulation 42) and to transfer of custody of explosives (required by Regulation 37(3)).

The security of explosives in transit through ports

10. The Explosives Security Officer should draw up contingency plans to deal with foreseeable threats to security. There should be close liaison between the local police and port security authorities, and Services' security authorities where appropriate. All parties concerned should be familiar with the contingency plans which should be frequently reviewed and kept up to date. Where it does not conflict with the advice in paragraph 3, it may be beneficial to try out the plans, under controlled conditions from time to time. In addition, the plan should be coordinated with the Emergency Plan required by Regulation 26.

PROGRAMMING OF MOVEMENTS OF EXPLOSIVES

11. Consignments of explosives should not be called forward to the port until required for loading in order to avoid the problem of temporary stabling of the transport at potentially insecure locations, e.g. in British Rail sidings, at the side of the road, on farms, premises, in insecure areas in the port, etc. The time spent by explosives consignments in the port should be kept to the bare minimum.

12. If it is necessary to unload the explosives from a vehicle for a short time prior to re-loading for movement away from the port, adequate arrangements must be made to ensure their safety and security. This may be done by keeping the explosives under constant attendance at a safe place within the port. If the storage time is likely to exceed 24 hours arrangements must be made for transferring the explosives to a place licensed or registered (under the Explosives Act 1875) for that purpose. Where the goods are liable to customs clearance then prior arrangements should be made with HM Customs & Excise for swift clearance so that explosives are not held in transit longer than necessary. Explosives handled by freight agents or others must not be held in transit as a means of putting pressure on the owner of the explosives to pay costs incurred.

13. Ministry of Defence transport agencies will normally program the movement of military consignments to ensure that railway wagons and road vehicles are not held at insecure locations. In the event of a delay in the ship's loading date, the MOD transport agencies will, if possible, make arrangements for military explosives to be held over in a nearby Ministry of Defence secure location.

14. The harbour authority or licensee should ensure that similar arrangements are made with the consignor of commercial explosives, either by himself or others (such as freight agents) who operate under his control, to eliminate delays. Where delays are unavoidable, such arrangements must ensure that railway wagons and road vehicles are held over at a safe and secure place, that is, in an explosives factory or magazine licensed under the Explosives Act 1875, or at a site under the control of the Ministry of Defence.

15. At all times other than when they are in such safe and secure places, railway wagons and vehicles carrying explosives must be constantly attended. In circumstances where retention of rail wagons or road vehicles carrying explosives cannot be arranged at a safe and secure place nearby, the rail wagons or road vehicles should be parked in a designated parking area in the port which should be fenced, illuminated and constantly patrolled. Where this is not possible, equivalent measures should be taken to ensure security for the explosives while in the port. The advice of the local police should be sought in such cases.

16. Explosives and railway wagons and road vehicles containing explosives should not be called forward from the designated parking areas until the explosives can be loaded onto the vessel.

17. Explosives should be kept in the railway wagon or road vehicle until they are loaded onto the vessel if this is at all possible. Railway wagons and freight containers should be kept sealed and flat-bed road vehicles should not be unsheeted until handling is due to begin.

The security of explosives in transit through ports

18. Trailers, semi-trailers or containers of explosives may only be detached from the vehicle in a safe and secure place, as defined in paragraph 14 above, or in a designated parking place in the harbour area, secured as described in paragraph 15.

19. Particular attention should be paid to the movement of small consignments of explosives or single cases not forming part of a full railway wagon or road vehicle load.

LOADING AND UNLOADING PROCEDURE

20. On arrival at the port, rail wagons and road vehicles should be inspected for signs of any break-in. A check should be made on all explosives held in transit at least at night and in the morning. The Berth Explosives Security Officer (or the Harbour Explosives Security officer where he is responsible for security at the berth) should be informed immediately of any signs of tampering with the load. In such an event the Explosives Security Officer should ensure the following:

- (a) All explosives handling operations in the vicinity should cease;
- (b) The area around the suspect wagon/vehicle should be isolated to prevent personnel access;
- (c) The police and the consignor or consignee should be informed;
- (d) No one should touch the load until the police arrive.

21. Access to the explosives loading and unloading areas should, where appropriate, be restricted to personnel directly involved in the handling operations. Likewise, it may be necessary for the quayside to be closed off by barriers and warning notices posted to exclude anyone not directly involved. When quantities of less than 10kg of explosives are being handled, or where the explosives are in a vehicle involved in roll-on roll-off loading or unloading, it will only be necessary to exclude outsiders from the immediate vicinity of the package or vehicle. Any unknown or otherwise suspicious person in the vicinity of the loading or unloading should be challenged by the security staff or by any person involved in the handling operation.

22. If any package containing explosives is found to have broken seals, or shows signs of having been tampered with, or is otherwise damaged, it should be set aside in an appropriate place (see Para 12 above). The consignor (or consignee if the explosives are being imported) should be informed so that suitable arrangements may be made for checking the contents and re-packing, if necessary.

23. The Explosives Security Officer should make arrangements for himself or a security guard to be in attendance at all times during loading or unloading. During meal breaks or at any other time when loading or unloading ceases for a short period, no explosives should be left outside on the quayside, the doors of railway wagons should be closed and locked, road transport secured and the area secured and patrolled by a security guard.

24. Railway wagons and road vehicles should be thoroughly searched after unloading for explosives or packages which may be concealed by packing material etc.

25. Any losses or apparent losses should be notified immediately to the person having custody of the explosives. That person must then report the loss forthwith to the Explosives Security Officer for the place where the loss occurred, to the harbour master, and to the police. The person who had custody of the explosives at the time they were lost is responsible for their recovery, to the extent reasonably practicable.

The security of explosives in transit through ports

26. Railway wagons and road vehicle which have not been completely unloaded or loaded at the end of the work-day should be returned to the segregated area and be properly secured, and no explosives should be left elsewhere.

27. Once packages containing explosives have been loaded into, or before they have been unloaded, from a ship, their security is the responsibility of the ship's master. The Explosives Security Officer should liaise with the master on the adequacy of security arrangements, and should there be any, obvious deficiencies during loading or unloading for example, which the master may not be aware of, should draw them to his attention.

ADVICE

28. Advice on problem related to the security of explosives generally may be obtained from

Explosives Inspectorate
Health and Safety Executive
Merton House
Bootle
Merseyside L20 3DL
(Telephone 0151 951 4025)

In the case of military consignments, advice may also be obtained from:

Secretary ESTC,
DOSG TS2,
Ash2b#3212
Ministry of Defence,
Abbey Wood,
Bristol BS34 8JH
(Telephone 011791 35592)