Guidance for Complying With the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standard (CFATS)

SafetyNet #: 142

Introduction:
The Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standard (CFATS) was enacted by Congress in 2007. It established a risk-based approach to screening and securing chemical facilities determined by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to be “high risk.” To make this determination, DHS requires “facilities” (including colleges and universities) in possession of specific quantities (Screening Threshold Quantity – STQ) of Chemicals of Interest (COI) to complete a Top-Screen questionnaire. DHS recognizes that colleges and universities, in the course of teaching and research, frequently possess chemicals of interest that are regularly used, stored, or manufactured. Many of these chemicals have the potential to be intentionally diverted, released or otherwise misused by terrorists. UC Davis has completed a Top-Screen survey and is subject to regulation under CFATS.

Policy Statement:
It is the policy [1] of the University that no department may possess COI in excess of the STQ without express written authorization of EH&S. Principal Investigators or supervisors who possess any quantity of a chemical of interest in their laboratory or work area must include the quantity on their Chemical Inventory System (CIS) inventory.

Chemicals of Interest:
Appendix A of the Standard lists over 300 COI that are organized by security and vulnerability issues. Generally, chemicals are considered COI if they can be used as a weapon, if they can be used to manufacture an explosive or other weapon, or if their release would pose a threat to human health or the environment.

The Top-Screen Survey:
The Top Screen Survey is an online questionnaire that collects basic information about a facility’s location and operation and is used by DHS to determine if the facility is high risk. At UC Davis, the Office of Environmental Health and Safety and the UC Davis Police Department prepares and submits Top Screen Surveys on behalf of the campus.
Security:
Once UC Davis was determined to be regulated under the standard, a Security Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) was completed. DHS has reviewed the SVA, has placed UC Davis facilities into a risk tier, and has required the submission of a Site Security Plan (SSP). DHS Inspectors will visit each facility covered under the SSP and verify the facility’s adherence with the SSP before the Plan is approved.

If a laboratory or work area has COI stored within it, the COI should be stored in a secure location and the inventory monitored to make sure the COI isn’t diverted. If the inventory shows COI missing, the PI/supervisor must notify EH&S and the campus Police Department immediately. This is part of our stated SSP.

Compliance:
The CFATS regulation gives authority to DHS to inspect facilities and issue appropriate orders to the facility, specifying the violation(s) and the steps that must be taken to correct the noncompliance. Failure to comply with such an order may result in civil penalties of $25,000 per day or a “stop work” order.

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More information

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