

The new chemical security rules — Will it make us safer?

■ featured columnist

Since September 11, 2001, lawmakers have been dutifully going through the parliamentary motions of debating the extreme need to secure the nation's 15,000+ chemical plants from terrorist sabotage or attack. Rather than follow the advice of Homeland Security committees in both the House and Senate to tighten chemical security regulations, the congressional leadership opted to pass a modest, two-page rider on the federal agency's appropriation bill. The rider required the Bush administration to promulgate rules governing the highest-risk facilities.

Companies will be required to assess their own vulnerabilities and provide the government with their plans for fixing them. Both congressional committees with jurisdiction over Homeland Security advanced far more comprehensive – and thus effective and more expensive – proposals for security chemical plants.

The Department of Homeland Security 550 Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standard, final rule published in April 2007 requires all chemical* (includes petrochemical, LNG, and petroleum products) facilities to conduct two vulnerability assessments, the first one being short in detail, will give DHS the basis to identify those facilities that pose a "High Risk."

"High Risk" facilities will then be required to conduct an in-depth vulnerability assessment using a common methodology and design based threat to measure against. Once this is completed the company will now develop a security program to address the vulnerabilities. Some companies will spend thousands of dollars to upgrade existing security equipment or personnel. Others, who already comply with other government regulations (i.e., Maritime Transportation Security Act) will require less upgrades if any at all.

Some controversy over the newly proposed rules include pre-emption of stricter state laws – meaning if New Jersey, for example, had stricter chemical security legislation it would be pre-exempted and the new CFATS would take precedent. So what does all this mean? Will it make us safer at the end of the day? AlliedBarton Security Services is assisting the chemical and petrochemical industry with security programs needed to comply with pending new Federal security regulations. We are working to ensure highly sensitive sites are in compliance with the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards. These new Federal regulations will require that chemical and petrochemical industries take a critical look at the methodology in place to secure their facilities. Many companies are facing security regulations for the first time while others are already in compliance with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security regulations developed in 2002.

To ensure that vital information is shared and strategic relationships are forged, AlliedBarton formed the Chemical Petrochemical Security Alliance (CPSA) which consists of the United States' top chemical and petrochemical security consulting companies as well as key industry leaders including a former USCG Captain of the Port from a major East Coast city. The wide range of security services provided through the CPSA members benefits chemical and petrochemical companies as it provides a single source to address all of their security and safety needs.

As a result of this new government regulation and input from clients, AlliedBarton developed specialized training that includes five levels customized to meet facility-specific needs. The AlliedBarton Chemical Petrochemical Security Officer (CPSO) and Chemical Petrochemical Security Supervisor (CPSS) certifications include highly specialized courses and curriculum that ensure our personnel are trained to assist in making our client facilities safer, more secure and less vulnerable.

AlliedBarton's training and certification program encompasses a range of topics designed specifically for the security challenges of these highly sensitive sites including vehicle bomb

inspection techniques, MARSEC, CFATS procedures, and extensive safety training. The new Federal regulations will require multi-layered security programs. Protecting our nations' assets requires the development and implementation of comprehensive security plans. Introducing new procedures and ensuring the overall effectiveness of physical security measures already in place, including perimeter protection and access control, is of paramount importance and will provide for a safer and more secure environment. As the regulations and laws evolve and the enhanced security programs fall into place it remains to be seen how the regulations will truly impact chemical facilities. Whatever the fallout, whatever the path to more secure facilities, if the end result is increased security – be it according to state or federal regulations or the industry's or companies' own initiative – then our country is better off.

About the author

Scott R. Gane, CPP, leads AlliedBarton's Special Service Offering in the Chemical and Petrochemical industry. He can be reached at scott.gane@alliedbarton.com. AlliedBarton Security Services, www.alliedbarton.com, is the industry's premier provider of highly trained security personnel to many industries including chemical/petrochemical. AlliedBarton has approximately 47,000 employees and over 100 offices servicing a client base that includes more than 175 Fortune 500 companies across the country. AlliedBarton is the only contract security company selected as one of Training magazine's Top 125 training companies for two consecutive years.

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