



# The Fertilizer Institute

Nourish, Replenish, Grow

## Ammonia Fact Sheet April 2013

While we cannot comment on the specifics regarding the Texas fertilizer plant accident yesterday, we extend our thoughts and prayers to all of the people who have been impacted by this tragic event.

Below, please find information on ammonia for your use as you report on the May 17 accident.

### About Fertilizer

- Nitrogen is an essential nutrient – plants cannot grow and people can't live without it.
- Nitrogen fertilizer is natural, in fact it contains the same element as the air we breathe.
- Nitrogen fertilizer is produced in a chemical process that uses natural gas to capture nitrogen from the atmosphere.
- Ammonia is the basic building block for all nitrogen fertilizers.
- Fertilizer retailers
- Ammonia is a colorless, pungent smelling gas lighter than air. At minus 28 degrees ammonia becomes a liquid. Anhydrous ammonia is classified as a non-flammable gas but will burn with certain vapor concentration limits and with strong ignition. Fire hazard increases in the presence of oil or other combustible materials.
  - According the American National Standards Institute's (ANSI) Standard for Storage and Handling of Anhydrous Ammonia, ammonia is extremely hard to ignite and is a relatively stable compound. The conditions favorable for ignition are seldom encountered during normal operations due to the high ignition temperature required.
  - Most states have adopted the ANSI Standard.

### Regulation and Voluntary Initiatives

- Fertilizer is regulated at both the federal and state levels. Federal agencies of jurisdiction include the Department of Homeland Security, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration and the Department of

Transportation. At the state level, fertilizers are regulated by state department of agriculture's fertilizer control official.

- Facilities storing anhydrous ammonia in quantities of 10,000 lbs. or more are required to have an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved Clean Air Act Risk Management Program plan to address accidental releases of ammonia. Each facility covered under the act is required to conduct an offsite consequence analysis for a worst-case accident, a hazard assessment and an accident prevention program.
- The Chemical Safety Board has been deployed to the accident scene. TFI has worked closely with the CSB and will serve as a resource should we be asked to do so.
- The Fertilizer Institute (TFI) is an active member of the Transportation Community Awareness and Emergency Response program (TRANSCAER). Through this initiative, emergency response personnel in 27 states have received training on responding to accidents involving anhydrous ammonia.

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