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Ammonia Code of Practice QA/QC 2015 Program

Fertilizer Canada's Ammonia Code of Practice (Code) was first implemented in 2009 and provided a standardized approach for the safe and secure storage, handling and transportation of agricultural anhydrous ammonia. Since that time, the industry has worked diligently in maintaining operations to meet the Code requirements supporting its world-class status.

Certification under the Code is verified through a third-party audit every two years. In order to verify compliance between audits, Fertilizer Canada launched a quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) program which was fully implemented in 2015 after several pilot years. Conducted by the Senior Code Auditor, QA/QC or 'spot' audits are completed to verify that the conditions of certification are being met. Typically, these audits are conducted during the busy season when implementation of code requirements and operational practices can be best verified.

During the 2015 audit cycle, QA/QC audits were completed in the all provinces with anhydrous ammonia retail locations. The audits identified four areas most frequently out of compliance (please refer to the Code protocols for details on the requirements):

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – it was noted in a number of cases that pertinent PPE was either not within reach of the operator or was not being worn when handling ammonia.
- **Security/General Safety** – several instances of non-compliance were noted for protocol A4.1. Failure to lock gates, secure nurse wagons and install/use valve locking mechanisms were identified as concerns during the quality assurance audits.
- **Training** – a number of deficiencies in the training records of employees were identified with respect to PPE use, security and emergency response.
- **Emergency Response Plans (ERP)** – in some cases, sites did not adhere to an annual review schedule of their ERPs.

Several notices of violations were issued as a result of audit findings. Sites were required to rectify these non-compliances within a time period prescribed by the Senior Code Auditor. Failure to complete the corrective action(s) results in the withdrawal of a site's certification. Ammonia manufacturers/distributors are notified of all de-certifications and a site must complete a full re-audit in order to reinstate their certification and requalify to receive product. Fortunately, all instance of non-compliance identified in the QA/QC audits were corrected.

It is important to recognize that the Code outlines best practices to maintain a high standard of safety and security for agricultural anhydrous ammonia across the supply chain. The protocols were developed with key industry members and partners with years of experience in these areas. Adherence to the Code at all times of the year will provide the best defence against safety and security issues related to this product as well as intervention from regulatory bodies.



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The 2016 QA/QC audit program will aim to evaluate more sites. In addition, sites found in violation during the 2015 QA/QC visits could be subject to another visit this year. The QA/QC audit process validates that industry best practices are being implemented and that our employees, our customers and our communities can rely on their local businesses to keep them safe. Through this exercise, we are able to demonstrate the fertilizer sector's commitment to the safe and secure storage, handling and transportation of ammonia fertilizer and that we continue to raise the bar on how we do business.