

All together now

Road Transport

*Peter Newport** highlights the need for the industry's response to the terrorist threat to be consistent, coherent and co-ordinated, whatever individual states or companies might feel about the reality of that threat

The post-9-11 fact of life is that the chemical industry may be high on the list of terrorist targets. Materials routinely handled by the industry on a day-to-day basis are dangerous and, in the hands of terrorists, could be lethal. Without over-reacting, the industry has a responsibility to its stakeholders to take appropriate security precautions.

New security measures for the transport of dangerous goods by road must be implemented in a consistent, coherent and co-ordinated way if they are to be effective against the terrorist threat.

They must be *consistent* in the way they are applied by national governments. They must be *coherent* in reinforcing existing regulations. And they must be *co-ordinated* across national frontiers because of the global nature of both the chemical industry and the terrorist threat.

National governments, therefore, however they perceive the level of threat from terrorism, have to introduce and enforce the new measures effectively. Failure to do so will only result in terrorists seeking out the weakest points in our trans-national security systems and perpetrating their outrages against society.

Everyone's invited

Worryingly there is growing concern that some national governments do not perceive the level of threat from terrorists to be serious and will therefore fail to give the new dangerous goods security arrangements the priority they deserve.

The speed with which these new regulations have come into being reflects the overall level of official concern about the carriage of dangerous goods in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. In January 2003, the UN published a new text for the Modal Regulations on the transport of dangerous goods. This text will be adopted by the RID and ADR regulations in January next year and, a few months later, become part of similar regulations at a national level.

In the UK, initial work has focussed on the creation of a voluntary Code of Practice and extensive supporting guidance. A group consisting of the leading chemical and transport industry associations, relevant government departments, the police and the security services have prepared this voluntary Code. It was published in January 2004 and can be found on the website of the UK Department for Transport (www.dft.gov.uk - click on Transport Security).

The Code covers everyone involved in the transport of dangerous goods by road: consignors, loaders and unloaders and carriers (including third party operators). The Code distinguished between 'dangerous goods' and 'high consequence dangerous goods' that attract more stringent security procedures. In broad terms, this latter group includes defined types and quantities of explosives; flammable and toxic gasses; flammable liquids; infectious and toxic substances; certain substances in bulk; and radioactive and corrosive materials. A definitive list is provided in Annex 2 of the Code.

The Codes provisions cover three key areas: people, procedures and assets. It makes recommendations about the recruitment and training of people and the security procedures to be adopted by companies, including the need to undertake a security risk assessment. It highlights good security practice for drivers on journeys as well as the question of limiting access to the load. As far as assets are concerned, the Code focuses on the security of sites, vehicles and the perimeter security of business premises.

Work has already started on enabling legislation for the UK to meet the implementation deadlines for 2005.

The Code of Practice is the result of a working partnership between industry, Government and the security services. We now need to safeguard our people and our business by implementing its provisions.

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