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Governor

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Director

Advisory
New York State Office of Homeland Security
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Health / EMS / Fire Advisory

General
Message
Green

This communication is Sensitive.

In light of recent events in Iraq, the Office of Homeland Security and the Upstate New York Regional Intelligence Center - Counter Terrorism Center issue the following advisory for situational awareness:

Subject: Chemical Dirty Bombs Using Chlorine Gas

Aviation Sector All international & domestic flights Alert Level 4 - Orange High
United States Alert Level 3 - Yellow Elevated
New York State Alert Level 3 - Yellow Elevated
New York City Alert Level 4 - Orange High

In the past month, Iraqi insurgents have perpetrated three attacks using chlorine-based chemical dirty bombs, resulting in more than a dozen deaths and over 200 injuries. These devices have been assembled by attaching conventional explosives to containers of chlorine gas, with the goal of dispersing the toxic fumes over a wide area. Two of the three attacks entailed attaching explosives to chlorine canisters placed inside general purpose trucks, while the third entailed fixing an explosive device to a specialized chlorine tanker truck. Current assessments suggest that much of the gas in all three attacks burned in the explosion before it could be widely dispersed.

***Analysis:** The use of these chlorine-based chemical dirty bombs suggests a disturbing trend of tactical evolution in the Iraqi insurgency. While the devices deployed up to this point have proven fairly ineffective relative to their potential for causing mass casualties, their use demonstrates a clear willingness on the part of militants in Iraq to experiment with unconventional tactics. Furthermore, though the precise path of tactical learning from one operation to another is difficult to determine or predict, there is the possibility that other terrorists may copy these tactics and adapt or refine them for use against other targets, including US targets at home or abroad. However, no specific, credible evidence exists to suggest the imminent use of chlorine weapons against targets inside the United States.*

Past Incidents Involving Chlorine Gas:

- March 2005: Two explosive devices constructed from household containers and chlorine tablets were detonated under a police car in Sydney, Australia.
- January 2005: A train crash in Graniteville, South Carolina resulted in a 14-car derailment, including three chlorine cars. The accident caused nine fatalities and more than 200 hospitalizations as a result of chlorine gas exposure. More than 5,000 people within a mile radius of the crash were ordered to evacuate by local authorities.

- June 2004: Two trains collided head-on near San Antonio, Texas, causing a chlorine tanker to break open. Three people were killed by toxic chlorine fumes.
- July 1997: A chlorine bomb placed near a shopping center and railway station in Sydney, Australia injured 14 people.

Chlorine Gas Cylinders as Targets of Theft:

- Illegal intrusions at drinking water facilities illustrate that terrorists could enter sites to steal water disinfection chemicals, including high pressure cylinders of liquefied chlorine gas. No known incidents of chlorine gas theft have been linked to terrorism as of yet, but criminal theft of these materials suggests the potential for terrorists to do the same.
- In some cases of chlorine gas cylinder theft from end-user facilities, the only security measures in place were fences or easily defeated locks, and in other cases, the cylinders were left entirely unsecured. These thefts reinforce the importance of maintaining even modest security equipment, such as locks, barbed-wire fences, alarms, electronic surveillance equipment, and guard personnel.

The New York State Office of Homeland Security has encouraged facilities that use or store gaseous chlorine in one-ton cylinders or less to review their security measures intended to deny access to individuals and vehicles. Further, companies that transport gaseous chlorine have been encouraged to be vigilant and to review their en-route security measures.

Reporting of Suspicious Activity:

Relevant facilities have been instructed that if any of the following suspicious behaviors are observed, or any other activities that seem out of the ordinary, to notify the Upstate New York Regional Intelligence Center, Counter Terrorism Center Tips line at 1-866-SAFE-NYS:

- The unexplained loss or theft of chlorine or any other chemical (regardless of amount, i.e., pilfering, shoplifting) from your facility's inventory.
- A theft or unexplained loss of chlorine or any other chemical during product shipment to your facility by the supply manufacturer or trucking company.
- Any unusual incidents reported during the shipping of chemicals to your facility.
- Unusual inquiries by individuals regarding the storage of chlorine (or any other chemical) and the handling of it.
- Requests for information on amounts, suppliers, purchasers, transporters, etc. Questions specifically involving operations and

safeguards of suppliers, purchasers, transporters, etc.

- A request to ship chlorine to an outside area or region.
- The apparent hesitation by the customer when asked for information such as name, address, signature, Photo ID, etc.
- Payment of goods in the form of cash. Buyer will not write a check or use credit; has no credit account with your or other businesses in the area.
- Customer acts nervous, jittery, uneasy, vague and avoids eye contact.

This transmission may contain confidential or privileged information, which is intended only for use by the individual or entity to which the transmission is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, dissemination, copying or distribution of this transmission is strictly prohibited. If you have received this transmission in error, please notify us by telephone at 212.867.7060 immediately so we can arrange for the return of the documents to us at no cost to you. Additionally, email us immediately at info@security.state.ny.us

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