

Poisons Act 1972 – Selling chemicals responsibly

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Certain chemicals can be used in the illicit manufacture of explosives or to cause harm. To reduce the risk of harm from these substances the Poisons Act 1972 sets out the obligations that suppliers have in relation to regulated and reportable substances.

New restrictions on poisons and explosive substances came into effect on Sunday 1 October 2023, strengthening existing controls for poisons and chemicals which could be used to make explosives.

Under these changes, there are stricter requirements on reporting suspicious activity, including new obligations for online marketplaces.

Video

The Poisons Act requires a supplier to:

- Not supply a regulated substance, above the concentration threshold, to a member of the public unless they hold a valid licence.
- Report any relevant transaction that it makes or proposes to make if the supplier has reasonable grounds for believing the transaction to be suspicious:
 - If it is a regulated or reportable explosives precursor – consider if it is intended for the illicit manufacture of explosives.
 - If it is a regulated or reportable poison – consider if it is intended for any illicit use.
- Always take appropriate steps to assess if there are reasonable grounds for suspicion.
- Report all significant disappearances or thefts of regulated or reportable substances.
- An EPP License is required before regulated substances, above set concentration levels, can be legitimately supplied to a member of the public (not required for business to business but steps must be taken to ensure sale is for a legitimate business purpose)
- Ensure that any regulated product is labelled with the following text: Acquisition, possession or use by the general public is restricted

A full list of regulated and reportable substances, along with the entire update of legislative changes from 1st October 2023 can be located at [Supplying explosives precursors and poisons](#).

Complying with the law

In order to ensure your company is complying with this legislation please adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Identify which of your products are affected by suspicious transaction reporting requirements.
2. Implement a system that reminds the cashier that a product requires suspicious transaction reporting.
3. Be clear with staff about suspicious behaviours.

4. Make sure your staff know about the [Report Suspicious Chemical Activity](#) or other internal company record procedures) and how to report.
5. Make sure the above points are in your training manual.
6. [Use these posters and leaflet to inform your staff about the law.](#)

Remind your staff about the Tips for refusing a sale

Read the [Guidance on labelling requirements for regulated poisons and explosives precursors](#)

The [Sell chemical products responsibly leaflet and poster](#) provide advice to managers on how to alert your staff to suspicious transaction reporting requirements.

Any suspicious transactions (business to consumer and business to business) of regulated substances and reportable substances must be reported via the [Report Suspicious Chemical Activity](#)

Any significant disappearances or thefts of regulated substances and reportable substances must be reported to your local police force using 101 (or 999 in an emergency).

Please contact the Explosive Precursor Engagement Team

ChemicalReportingTeam@homeoffice.gov.uk if you have any questions or need further support.

KEYWORDS

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