
What are some practical steps I can take to deter the theft of anhydrous ammonia at the fertilizer dealership?

- Make your employees and customers aware of the theft problem.
- Store nurse tanks in a well-lighted area.
- Store tanks with flow valves facing towards the drive lane to speed dealer visual inspections.
- Inspect the tanks visually first thing each morning. Many anhydrous thefts occur on weekends, so check them then as well.
- During the off-season, remove hoses and store them separately. An anhydrous ammonia hose contains enough product to make meth.
- Block driveway with gate or barricade to complicate the physical theft of a tank.
- Place brightly colored plastic wire ties or seals between the valve wheel and the roll cage to ease visual checks.
- Know your inventory. Record stored nurse tanks by identification number and estimate the weight of remaining product.
- Work with local law enforcement personnel on security steps and encourage frequent nighttime patrols.
- Be suspicious of those attempting to buy anhydrous who you know do not have a legitimate need for the product. If strangers attempt to purchase anhydrous note their physical description and that of the vehicle they are using. Contact your local law enforcement agency.

What practical steps can I take to deter the theft of anhydrous ammonia at the farm?

- Deliver tanks to farms as close to the time of actual application as possible. Anhydrous nurse tanks left unattended for extended periods of time are open invitations to would-be thieves.
- Position delivered tanks in open areas where they may be seen from the roadway. By placing tanks in open areas where they may be observed by passing motorists or law enforcement, would-be thieves are at a disadvantage.
- Encourage producers to return tanks immediately after use.
- Discourage temporary storage of nurse tanks and tool bars inside buildings or near the farmhouse or livestock confinements.
- Encourage producers relieve pressure with the bleed valve and then remove hoses between tool bars and nurse tanks when left in the field overnight.
- Inspect each nurse tank upon delivery and return for signs of tampering.

By raising awareness and taking some easy, common-sense steps, we can deter the theft of ammonia for illicit purposes and protect its safe, legal and intended use.

For additional brochures, contact the Agribusiness Association of Iowa at 800-383-1682.

Anhydrous Ammonia Theft

What You Need To Know

**Agribusiness
Association of Iowa**
in cooperation with the
**Iowa Department of
Agriculture and Land
Stewardship**
and
**Iowa Division of
Narcotics Enforcement**

Iowa agriculture depends on anhydrous ammonia as a low-cost form of nitrogen fertilizer on 61 percent of Iowa's 12.4 million acres of corn. Now we find a threat to that source of nutrient - the theft of anhydrous ammonia for use in making a powerful, illegal narcotic called methamphetamine. Naturally, the fertilizer industry is outraged by the illegal and illicit use of our products. We want to play a role in preventing abuse in the future. By raising awareness and knowing how to respond, fertilizer dealers can assist law enforcement in combating this illicit use of a product important to Iowa farmers.

What is anhydrous ammonia?

Anhydrous ammonia is one of several nitrogen fertilizer products. It is a basic building block in the manufacture of other types of nitrogen fertilizer, and is also directly applied to farmland as a fertilizer.

What is methamphetamine?

Methamphetamine, or meth, is a powerful central nervous system stimulant with a high potential for abuse and dependence. It is illegally produced and sold in pill form, capsules, powder and chunks. One simple recipe for making meth requires commonly available precursors, including anhydrous ammonia. The drug can be made in a makeshift "lab" that can fit into a suitcase. Very small amounts of ammonia are needed.

How do I know if I have had anhydrous ammonia stolen?

- Notice if the ground has been disturbed around the tanks. Watch for fresh tracks in mud or snow.
- Notice if valves are not closed tightly. Sometimes a valve works loose, but sometimes it's the result of tampering.
- Look for suspicious items left near the tanks like duct tape, garden hose, bicycle inner tubes, buckets and coolers. Thieves will leave these materials if they are scared off.
- Check for broken or missing wire ties or seals that you have placed on valve wheels as a marker.

What should I do if I see signs of anhydrous theft?

Do not disturb the crime scene and immediately contact your local law enforcement authorities and [the Iowa Division of Narcotics Enforcement](#) office nearest you:

Clandestine Laboratory
Emergency Response Team -
515-276-5760

Division of Narcotics
Enforcement
24-hour Hotline -
800-532-0052

What should I do if I see suspicious individuals or activity near anhydrous tanks?

DO NOT APPROACH OR CONFRONT these individuals...call local law enforcement authorities. Thieves may be under the influence of methamphetamine and may become dangerously violent with very little warning.