



**FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION DIRECTORATE
WMD INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS SECTION
OPERATIONS BULLETIN**



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(U//FOUO) Use of Fraudulent University E-Mail Accounts to Purchase Chemicals

(U) Background

(U//FOUO) Several chemical companies have received purchase orders for bulk chemicals and equipment from individuals using fraudulent e-mail accounts in an attempt to pass themselves off as representatives of universities. Many of these requests have been deemed legitimate likely due to e-mail content containing information commonly associated with university purchase orders:

- (U//FOUO) The alleged identity of the requestor is an individual legitimately associated with the university's finance or purchasing department. Perpetrators have identified who is typically responsible for submitting purchase orders on behalf of the university and uses the name of the individual in the e-mail request.
- (U//FOUO) Purchase orders often include language related to "Net 30" payment terms, allowing for shipment of materials prior to the chemical provider receiving payment. Under these terms, purchasers typically have 30 days to pay for bulk chemicals ordered in this manner.

(U//FOUO) Fraudulent purchase orders associated with this scheme often share similar identifying characteristics, including:

- (U//FOUO) E-mails originating from domains such as *edu.com* or *edu.us*, as opposed to the standard *.edu* reserved for use by degree granting institutes of higher education; and
- (U//FOUO) the shipping address appears to be unrelated to the purported requesting university, sometimes referencing out-of-state locations. For example, a University of Middle Delaware purchase order requests that shipment be sent to an address in Illinois.

(U//FOUO) The FBI continues to monitor fraudulent purchase orders targeting chemical and scientific supply companies. The FBI respectfully requests your assistance in identifying and mitigating threats associated with this fraud scheme by reporting any similar purchase orders to your local FBI WMD Coordinator.

(U//FOUO) Please contact your local WMD Coordinator with information relating to suspicious activities, threats, or incidents.