



WMD Operations Unit Bulletin

(U//FOUO) POTENTIAL CHEMICAL PURCHASE SCAM

12/9/2010

This information can be shared with state and local partners. Please contact the WMD Coordinator at your local FBI field office with any questions.

(U//FOUO) The FBI has identified a trend of suspicious purchases or attempted purchases of large amounts of silver nitrate and potassium iodide for unknown purposes by individuals masquerading as legitimate businesses. Although silver nitrate could be used in the synthesis of primary explosive material, neither chemical is associated with any known chemical or biological weapon production. It is unknown if the purchases of these chemicals are being used for non-legitimate purposes.

(U//FOUO) Some of these individuals have been able to obtain silver nitrate and/or potassium iodide using fraudulent credit cards. The individual attempts to purchase varying quantities of chemicals, splitting the cost of the purchase amongst several valid credit card numbers. The chemicals are shipped to a third party address, usually a shipping company, who then ships the chemicals overseas for an unknown purpose. Companies will receive a fraudulent credit card transaction notice after the chemicals are shipped to the third party address. The FBI would like to notify your company of a potential scam to obtain chemicals without payment for a possible non-legitimate purpose. The FBI is concerned that the individuals who were successful in obtaining silver nitrate and potassium iodide through this method may attempt to purchase additional chemicals, especially those that could be used for chemical or biological weapons, or explosive devices.

Silver nitrate and potassium iodide are not associated with any known chemical or biological weapon, but silver nitrate could be used in synthesizing explosives.

Be aware of the following potential indicators of suspicious purchase:

- *Requests for unusual amounts*
- *Requests for chemicals that your company does not supply*
- *Payment with multiple credit cards (neither of which are in the name of the requester or their company)*
- *Requests to make payment after chemicals are shipped*
- *Requests that may not originate from a business email*
- *No inquiry into cost saving discounts on bulk purchases*
- *Vague or generic answers to questions about end use of the chemicals.*

If you suspect a suspicious inquiry or purchase, or would like more information on chemicals and equipment of concern, please contact your local FBI Field Office and request to speak to the WMD Coordinator.

FBI FRAUD ALERT