

EIG Brief Guide #2: ER2014 – Commercial storage of explosives

Brief guidance for those storing large quantities of explosives in the UK.

Manufacture and Storage

Storage of explosives is covered by the Explosive Regulations 2014 (ER2014) which describes general measures needed to prevent fire and explosion and minimise the effects in the event of a fire or explosion. They detail the “Separation Distances” needed around buildings holding explosives depending on the Hazard Type and quantities of explosives held, the structural nature of the building and the nature of neighbouring properties, roads etc. They also detail where licencing is required, who the licencing authority is and some of the conditions of the licence. Large or complex storage sites in general are licenced by HSE and may be subject to the COMAH Regulations if the total quantity held exceeds 10te. Sites may also be subject to the COMAH Regulations where other dangerous substances are present alongside the explosives.

Security

General security provisions are covered by ER2014

Transport

All explosives must be classified before they are transported. Explosives that already have classifications from an ADR signatory country do not need to be reclassified in the UK but the importer should hold copies of any such classification documents in a form readily understood by the enforcing authorities. EIG have produced guidance on the changes to classification in the UK – see <http://www.eig.org.uk/eig2007/?p=271>

Use

In general “use” is not covered by specific explosives regulations, however testing and product development on an explosive storage site may be subject to specific licencing of an area or building.

Product Conformity, Sale and Supply

Importers of explosives may have obligations to ensure compliance with the “Civil Uses Directive” (1997/15/EU) or the “Pyrotechnic Articles Directive” (2007/23/EU) if the products are to be supplied within the EU. There are exemptions for certain military and similar items.

More information

HSE’s website contains more information on compliance – see <http://www.hse.gov.uk/explosives/index.htm>

HSE has published two Overarching guides to ER2014

- L150 – dealing with the safety provisions of the Regulations
- L151 – dealing with the security provisions of the Regulations

In addition HSE has produced a guide for those storing explosives which may be available shortly.