



The Chemical Weapons Convention UK National Authority

DECC's role in safeguarding the peaceful application of chemistry

DECC has the responsibility for ensuring that the UK continues to meet its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

The CWC is an international arms control treaty that entered into force in 1997 and is administered by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague, Netherlands. It introduced a verifiable ban on an entire class of



weapons of mass destruction by prohibiting the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, and use of chemical weapons (CW). It also requires the destruction of existing CW stockpiles, and the destruction or conversion of CW production plants and storage facilities.

All 188 CWC States Parties are required to designate a National

Authority to ensure that the State meets its obligations. The UK's CWC National Authority (UKNA) is based in DECC and implements the CWC in the UK, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories through the Chemical Weapons Act 1996. The Act places legal requirements on all companies, universities, other bodies and individuals that work with certain toxic chemicals. DECC pays the UK's annual subscription to the OPCW.

The work of the UKNA covers several areas:

Monitoring and reporting of chemical activities

The non-proliferation of CW is one of the fundamental aspects of the CWC. Each State Party must ensure that toxic chemicals are only developed, produced, acquired, retained, transferred, or used for purposes not prohibited by the CWC.

Anyone producing, processing, consuming, importing or exporting certain toxic chemicals is legally obligated to provide information about these activities to the UKNA, who declares this information to the OPCW on an annual basis. The UKNA coordinates information on chemical activities from around 400 organisations.

Inspections of chemical Industry sites

To certify that all activities are in accordance with the CWC, States Parties are required to subject certain toxic chemicals to inspection by the OPCW. This serves as a confidence-building measure that each State Party is meeting its obligations and acts as a deterrent against any intention to contravene the CWC's provisions.

The UKNA has facilitated an average of eight OPCW inspections in the UK per year since the CWC entered into force. It is a credit to the UK chemical industry that all inspections have been accomplished in a cooperative spirit which has helped to demonstrate the UK's compliance.



Export and licensing controls

The trade in certain chemicals covered by the CWC is controlled through the UK's export and import licensing regulations, operated by the UKNA and the Export Control Organisation. Anyone importing or exporting particular chemicals into or from the UK must meet certain legal requirements, which may vary depending on the country supplying or receiving the chemicals. In some cases imports and exports are strictly prohibited, the types and quantities of chemicals limited and a possession and production license from the UKNA required.

National and international policy development

The UKNA collaborates with FCO, MoD and Dstl at Porton Down in the development of UK policy on chemical related non-proliferation issues and also with the Home Office, BIS and the police to improve chemical security at CWC facilities.

Internationally, it plays an active and influential role in negotiations in the OPCW, providing regular representation at the OPCW's Executive Council, Conference of States Parties and other regular meetings in The Hague.

The UKNA also has a CWC Advisory Committee in order to obtain advice from external industrial and academic stakeholders on the implementation of the CWC and the Act, as well as on technical developments which may have potential application in chemical weapons.

For more information please see the DECC website www.decc.gov.uk or email the UKNA cwcn@decc.gsi.gov.uk

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