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X NEWS

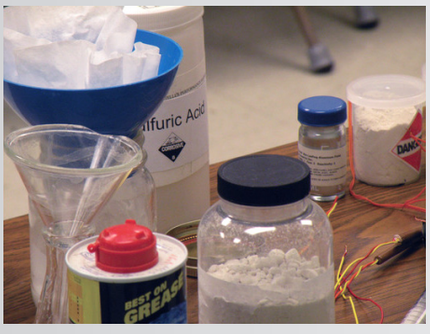
Counter Terror News and Solutions

HME – Homemade Explosives

In recent years, it has become significantly easier for terrorists to acquire explosives via diverse routes. The use of homemade explosives (HME) has become more and more common. A great deal of detailed information on the preparation of explosives can be easily found on the Internet. This information includes not only recipes, but also precise instructions on accessible sources for purchasing precursors for the syntheses of HMEs. Additionally, numerous discussions are held online on the subject, mainly by thrill-seeking youths.

While military ammunition and demolition explosives must comply with rigorous, high standards, HMEs have the potential to effectively produce harmful consequences even when the quality of the explosives is poor. The explosion of a car bomb in any central location is, in itself, much more significant than the quality of the materials used to produce the explosives and the intensity of the blast.

Methods, techniques and materials used to synthesize HMEs are diverse. Anti-terror personnel must therefore have a broad background and in-depth knowledge of this field.



HMEs can be mixtures of two or more compounds – each of which is harmless by itself. The simplest example is Ammonium Nitrate Fuel Oil (ANFO). Ammonium Nitrate is a commonly found fertilizer, and the fuel oil used can be either diesel or oil. The two are then thoroughly mixed, producing an HME that can be initiated with an energetic primer to produce a blast.

There are also single component HMEs. Many make-shift laboratories set up to prepare TriAcetoneTriPeroxide (TATP) have been found in recent years. This explosive is prepared from Acetone, Hydrogen Peroxide, and small quantity of acid. The preparation process is fairly simple, and the resulting TATP has been used both as the major explosive, and as a primer.

Alertness to unusual orders of chemicals, presence of labware, strange odors and non-typical behavior, are cause for suspicion of an HME production site. Explosives detection kits can confirm such suspicions.

X-TEST offers a wide range of training programs including HME course – comprehensive review of current HME threats including shooting range of live HMEs.

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