



# NEWS

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ROBERT FLIDER, DIRECTOR • PAT QUINN, GOVERNOR

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
March 12, 2013

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## **IDOA AND AG INDUSTRY PARTNER TO PROVIDE WEB-BASED ANHYDROUS AMMONIA SAFETY TRAINING**

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Preventing accidental releases of anhydrous ammonia is a high priority for the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) and Illinois agricultural organizations. These accidents can not only result in the loss of valuable nitrogen fertilizer, but also cause injury to farmers and emergency responders.

“The IDOA investigates all agricultural-related anhydrous ammonia incidents,” Jerry Kirbach, bureau chief of Ag Products Inspection, said. “Our investigation of incidents over the last three years shows that improper management of ammonia hoses, failure to maintain safety devices on tool bars and not properly securing the tanks during highway and field transportation are among the leading causes of accidents.”

The department and Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association (IFCA) jointly provide training programs for employees of retail anhydrous ammonia facilities, who are required to be trained every three years. But to address the critical need to improve ammonia safety when farmers are handling the product, the department, IFCA, Illinois Corn Growers Association (ICGA) and Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) collaborated to develop a detailed web-based training program for farmers.

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## TRAINING/2222

IFCA submitted a grant to the newly formed Nutrient Research and Education Council (NREC) to fund the program. IFCA and IDOA staff then developed the program content, which features video and animation of actual ammonia accidents that occurred in Illinois and detailed instructions on how they could have been prevented. The program's five training modules cover properties of ammonia, personal protective equipment, transportation of ammonia to and from the field, the safe hook-up of ammonia tanks in the field and emergency response and first aid procedures. After completing the training, farmers can take a knowledge assessment to determine their understanding of the material and print a certificate of completion for their records.

“In the past we have tried various venues to get important information to farmers about ammonia safety, including pamphlets, seminars, an awareness video and checklists for fertilizer dealers to share with farmers,” Kevin Runkle, Manager of Regulatory Services for IFCA, said. “Unfortunately, these efforts have been insufficient to convey the importance of specific preventative measures that must be understood and followed each time a farmer uses anhydrous ammonia. This web-based program is unique in its sophistication and detail. It allows the farmer to log in and then return to the program at any time to pick up where he left off or to go back and review the safety modules.”

Thanks to funding from NREC, the program is free to farmers or anyone who wants to improve their knowledge of ammonia safety.

“When not handled properly, anhydrous ammonia can cause serious injury and impact the environment,” Agriculture Director Bob Flider said. “I encourage farmers who apply their own ammonia to use the program, take the knowledge assessment and self-certify that they are trained to safely handle this product.”

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The program can be accessed at the following websites; specific questions about the program or its features should be directed to IFCA.

Illinois Fertilizer & Chemical Association: [www.ifca.com](http://www.ifca.com)

Illinois Corn Growers Association: [www.ilcorn.org](http://www.ilcorn.org)

Illinois Farm Bureau: [www.ilfb.org](http://www.ilfb.org)

Illinois Department of Agriculture: [www.agr.state.il.us](http://www.agr.state.il.us)

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