



# Chemical Weapons Convention Bulletin

Department of Commerce  
Bureau of Industry and Security

## The Chemical Weapons Convention— A Quick Guide

The United States is one of more than 176 States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which prohibits the development, production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons (CW). The CWC does *not* prohibit production, processing, consumption, or trade of related chemicals for peaceful purposes, but it does establish a verification regime to ensure such activities are consistent with the object and purpose of the treaty. This bulletin provides an overview of the chemicals monitored by the CWC and the components of the CWC verification regime. These components include declaration and reporting requirements, and on-site inspections that are triggered when quantitative threshold activity levels are exceeded.

### Overview of CWC Chemicals

The CWC monitors chemicals listed in three *Schedules* and certain “unscheduled discrete organic chemicals.”

#### Schedule 1

- Toxic chemicals with few or no legitimate uses.
- Developed or used primarily for military purposes.
- Examples include nerve agents, such as Sarin, and blister agents, such as Mustard and Lewisite.

#### Schedule 2

- Chemicals that can be used for CW production, but having certain legitimate uses.
- Not produced in large commercial quantities.
- Examples include certain chemicals used to manufacture fertilizers and pesticides.

#### Schedule 3

- Chemicals that can be used for CW production, but having significant legitimate uses.
- Produced in large commercial quantities.
- Examples include chemicals used to manufacture paint thinners, cleaners, and lubricants.

#### Unscheduled Discrete Organic Chemicals (UDOCs)

- “Any chemical belonging to the classification of chemical compounds consisting of all compounds of carbon except for its oxides, sulfides and metal carbonates.” (Plant sites that exclusively produce explosives and hydrocarbons are exempt.)

### Declarations and Reports

The CWC imposes declaration requirements upon industry

in States Parties when production, processing, or consumption exceeds certain thresholds. These requirements include:

- Initial declarations.
- Annual declarations of the past year’s activities.
- Annual declarations of next year’s anticipated activities.
- Declaration amendments or updates for changes to previously submitted data or additionally planned activities.

The CWC imposes reporting requirements upon industry in States Parties when imports or exports exceed certain thresholds. Reports are used for national aggregation purposes only and are not sent to the OPCW.

### Inspections

The CWC mandates on-site inspections when certain (generally higher) activity thresholds are exceeded.

#### Initial Inspections

- Verify accuracy of declarations and ensure activities are consistent with the object and purpose of the CWC.
- Assess risk to determine frequency and intrusiveness of future inspections.
- Prepare facility agreements (mandatory for Schedule 1 and 2; optional for Schedule 3 and UDOCs).

#### Subsequent (“Routine”) Inspections

- Purpose is to verify declarations, the absence of Schedule 1 chemicals (if not declared), and the non-diversion of scheduled chemicals.
- Schedule 1 facilities: number, intensity, duration, timing and mode of inspection based on risk.
- Schedule 2 plant sites: maximum 2 inspections per year, per plant site; inspections may last 96 hours.
- Schedule 3 plant sites: maximum 2 inspections per year, per plant site (national annual maximum of 20 Schedule 3 and UDOC inspections); inspections may last 24 hours.
- UDOC plant sites: generally similar to Schedule 3.

To learn more about the CWC and industry obligations under the CWC regulations, visit our website at [www.cwc.gov](http://www.cwc.gov), or contact the Bureau of Industry and Security’s Treaty Compliance Division at (703) 605-4400 or fax (703) 605-4424.

## Education, Assistance & Support

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