

FIAS Update

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FERTILISER INDUSTRY ASSURANCE SCHEME



Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of the FIAS Update. Despite the impact of COVID-19 on our daily lives, FIAS has continued to operate remotely to support the fertiliser industry.

This issue focuses on the new version of the FIAS Standard, the Beirut AN explosion and its effects and, how the fertiliser industry has responded to remote auditing and where our learnings from the experience may take us in the future.

Thank you for your continued support of FIAS and if you have any comments or suggestions, please contact me.



Roberta Reeve
Technical Manager
for AIC Services

The New FIAS Standard – Version 5, April 2021

The FIAS Standard review is now complete culminating in a new Standard: version 5, which was published in November 2020. It has now been submitted to UKAS for final approval.

The new Standard will be implemented from 1st April 2021, a later date than originally planned to allow adequate time to secure UKAS approval and for Kiwa Agri Food to obtain accreditation against the new Standard. The next issue of the TASCC Code of Practice will be on the same date to facilitate joint audits.

The basic requirements of the FIAS Standard remain unchanged – to ensure the legality, safety, security and traceability of fertilisers throughout the supply chain.

Some key changes include:

- Business process risk assessment: the name has been changed to highlight the need for risk assessment at every stage of fertiliser handling across a business.
- Training: at least one designated person from the business is required to have completed the relevant FIAS i-learning module or equivalent training.
- Derogation for non-FIAS contractors and merchants: this has been clarified and the process for approval written in more detail.
- Online sale of fertilisers referenced.
- Product recall: the role of each business type in a product recall has been defined.
- Section added on DRT certificate requirement.
- Outside storage areas, quaysides and operation of bulk stores specified.
- Clause added about driver PPE and communication requirements about deliveries.





FIAS Standard Version 5 Questions

Where can I see the new version of the FIAS Standard?

This is available on the AIC FIAS website.

What's changed in the new version?

Some changes have been highlighted in this FIAS Update (page 1) but you can also access a detailed document that fully summarises the changes on the AIC FIAS website.

One of the more noticeable changes is that the four existing Standards for manufacturers, merchants, transport and storage as well as the scheme rules, have been brought together into one document. Each section is colour-coded to make it easy to find the relevant sections for your business.

The online version of the Standard contains links to external reference sites for legislation and guidance documents. It also benefits from navigational links within the Standard itself as well as linking to useful information such as key definitions and contact details.

Why change the format to one document?

Having all the Standards in one document demonstrates that FIAS applies to the whole fertiliser supply chain; from sourcing materials through transportation to delivery to the end user. The scheme rules and the general section apply to all FIAS participants and these make up the main body of the Standard followed by specific sections for each business type.

Can I get a printed copy of the Standard?

Printed copies will be available from February 2021. Please request these from Kiwa uk.fias@kiwa.com / 01423 878873 or from AIC enquiries@agindustries.org.uk / 01733 385230.

However, to reduce the impact on the environment, we would encourage you to use the online version of the Standard on our website.

<https://www.aictradeassurance.org.uk/fias/documents/fias-standards/>

When will auditing to the new Standard start?

The new Standard will be audited and implemented directly from the 1st April 2021 with no 3 month observation period.

What support is there to prepare for the new Standard coming in?

AIC and Kiwa Agri Food will provide information and support to ensure participants are aware of the changes. The AIC FIAS web page will be updated with additional guidance, templates and checklists.

Auditors will also have training on the new Standard. This forms part of the UKAS accreditation of Kiwa Agri Food as the certification body for FIAS.

The FIAS i-learning modules for drivers, transport managers, stores and merchants will undergo revision to ensure they match new Standard requirements.

Lessons from Beirut

The devastating explosion in Beirut in August 2020 served as a painful reminder for everyone who handles fertilisers, such as ammonium nitrate (AN), of their potential destructive power if not stored safely or handled correctly.

As the world learnt more about the events that led up to the explosion, media outlets in the UK had questions and AIC Fertiliser Sector Head Jo Gilbertson was able to represent the UK fertiliser industry in explaining how the Beirut explosion happened as well as providing assurances that the same thing could not happen in the UK.

Robust safety regulations

The UK and Europe have many controls and regulations in place regarding ammonium nitrate and other hazardous materials including:

- COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards).
- ALARP (as low as reasonably possible) risk assessments.
- Legal requirements for positive release testing on every batch of fertiliser made to test the material's resistance to detonation.

All of these controls have been developed for safety and security to prevent tragic accidents or terrorist acts. The UK and Europe fertiliser industry takes its responsibility for stewardship of this material very seriously. FIAS provides a means to ensure the supply chain is in compliance with all controls and regulations through regular auditing.

What went wrong in Beirut?

The stored ammonium nitrate in Beirut had not been handled correctly and may have been contaminated, therefore making it unstable. The resulting explosion

in Beirut sadly demonstrates what can happen when safety procedures are not followed and complacency creeps in.

FIAS participants have a key role in ensuring a robust, safe and secure fertiliser supply chain and they demonstrate the necessary safety controls in business activities every day. The horrible event in Beirut reminds us why we must ensure those controls are always followed.

How have we responded?

Following the Beirut incident, the FIAS committees and stakeholders are looking to confirm the robustness of FIAS and provide additional guidance including a new checklist:

AIC Ammonium Nitrate Fertiliser Safety Checklist, based on the *AIC Guide: The Storage, Handling and Transportation of Ammonium Nitrate-Based Fertilisers 2015*.

The checklist is intended to support all production sites, stores and warehouses where AN-based fertilisers are handled and allows a business to check that it is following relevant legislation and good practice.

Both documents are available on our website.



Other useful publications and sources of information are:



HSE: Storing and Handling Ammonium Nitrate INDG230 - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg230.pdf>



NaCTSO: Secure your fertiliser 5 point plan <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/secure-your-fertiliser/secure-your-fertiliser>



Photo by [rashid khreiss](#) on Unsplash

Successful Remote Auditing

As COVID-19 continues to affect all of our lives, AIC Services would like to thank our FIAS participants and certification body, Kiwa Agri Food, for the determination and energy that has gone in to continuing the FIAS auditing program. With the dedication of all involved, we have been able to maintain FIAS Standards whilst protecting auditors and participants from COVID-19.

The auditing process has seen several changes over the year and although challenging at times, these have been accepted and put into practice with very few issues. For example, the uploading of documentation via the portal system prior to audits has shortened the amount of time people needed to be on site as well as allowing the focus to be on key points.

AIC Services will continue to review the situation as the pandemic progresses. Some of the changes that were necessitated by the pandemic, have been received positively and looking to the future we will look to include remote auditing and the use of technology as additional tools become available to us. Whilst not suitable for all circumstances, a blended approach with physical site audits may be possible.

Participant Feedback

"We had a remote audit this year due to COVID-19 which was simple and the portal worked well with documents loading and allowed us and the auditor to audit business in a straightforward way."

"The audit was conducted remotely using "Zoom" technology. In my opinion this was extremely effective and should be considered moving forward. It saves time for both travel and costs and should be considered as a tool for the future and maybe have more frequent audits."

"We were pleased we could continue with the audit despite the Coronavirus situation"

"The online portal created for remote audits is a very user friendly solution during an uncertain time. It has made the whole audit experience a smooth operation."

Auditor Feedback

"The process seems to have been well received by many of the clients I have spoken to. Some of the clients may find it difficult with the technology but you have provided them with lots of information and user advice."

"All going very well. Have done zoom meetings with two out of three hauliers. Phone call with the other. Two out of three have used the portal."

"All going well so far and the portal allows time to look at paperwork better. My clients have to be commended on the quality of footage they have provided of their trailers."

If you have specific queries about your certification, please contact the certification body - **Kiwa Agri Food: 44 (0)1423 878873, uk.fias@kiwa.com**

General information about coronavirus, including links to government websites can be found here: <https://www.agindustries.org.uk/issues-and-topics/search-by-campaign/coronavirus.html>

For more detailed information, please visit our Coronavirus Update webpage: <https://www.agindustries.org.uk/resource/coronavirus-trade-assurance-schemes-faqs.html>



Kiwa – the Trade Assurance portal

The Portal is available to all AIC scheme participants and allows access to a range of services to support the trade assurance certification, including remote auditing. It is managed by Kiwa Agri Food on behalf of AIC.

The portal is easy to use and help is always available. You will need a personal login which you can get from Kiwa via email uk.fias@kiwa.com or telephone 01423 878873.

Once you have a login, you can access the portal here: <https://aicportal.kiwa.co.uk>



EU Exit. AIC are continuing to represent the views of the agri-supply industry to UK Government regarding the fertiliser sector. AIC are not expecting any impacts on FIAS, however, we are monitoring this and will keep participants updated accordingly.



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Kiwa Agri Food are the certification body for FIAS

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