



The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) are jointly conducting an industry awareness initiative for businesses that distribute and sell black powder, black powder substitutes, and smokeless powder. The purpose is to increase industry awareness of potential criminal or terrorist activity indicators and provide guidance on how to report suspicious activity.

Black powder, black powder substitutes, and smokeless powder are common bomb-making materials that are readily available to a purchaser with criminal or terrorist intent. The enclosed **“Industry Advisory”** poster has been developed to educate retail employees involved in the sale of powders that have the potential for being used in bomb making materials.

If you are a distributor of black powder, black powder substitutes, or smokeless powder to retail outlets, you are asked to consider including the Industry Advisory posters with your shipments for use by retail establishments.

If you are a retailer of these powders, you are encouraged to provide this information to your employees, especially those who regularly interact with customers, as they are best positioned to observe these potentially suspicious behaviors and activities. By learning what to look for and how to report suspicious behavior, you and your employees can be a critical resource to law enforcement officials in preventing attacks. We strongly encourage your business to establish relationships with your local law enforcement agencies and the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). Finally, please consider integrating awareness and reporting of suspicious behaviors into your formal employee training programs.

Your collective assistance in reporting the suspicious activities of those you believe have exhibited warning indicators will greatly enhance our ability to prevent criminal or terrorist activity. By working together we can make America safer. We appreciate your support of this critically important undertaking.

### Report Suspicious Activity

**To report suspicious activity call 9-1-1 or contact local law enforcement.**

Suspicious activity reports (SARs) will be forwarded to the appropriate fusion center and FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force for further action. For more information on the Nationwide SAR Initiative, visit <http://nsi.ncirc.gov/resources.aspx>.

### Administrative Notes

This advisory does not relieve Federal firearms or explosives licensees from established ATF reporting responsibilities. For information on ATF regulatory requirements, please contact your local ATF office or visit [www.atf.gov](http://www.atf.gov).

For comments or questions related to the content or dissemination of this document, please contact ATF Explosives Industry Programs Branch at (202) 648-7120 or [eipb@atf.gov](mailto:eipb@atf.gov), the FBI (<http://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field>), or the DHS Office for Bombing Prevention at (703) 235-8209 or [OBP@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:OBP@hq.dhs.gov).



# DOJ



# DHS










## *Industry Advisory*

# **Black Powder, Black Powder Substitutes, & Smokeless Powder**

These products are commonly used as bomb-making materials. The U.S. Government is asking industry members to familiarize themselves with behaviors that may indicate intent for unlawful use and to report suspicious activity.

### ***What Are Potential Indicators?***

-  Asking questions that do not seem relevant to the lawful use of these products.
-  Inability to answer questions regarding the intended lawful use (such as the type of cartridge being reloaded or for use in antique firearms).
-  Expressing interest in bomb-making or engaging in violent activity.
-  Displaying injuries consistent with experimentation with explosives such as missing fingers or scarring, discoloration, or burns on skin.
-  Insisting on paying cash or using another person's credit card.
-  Making large and/or multiple purchases within a short period of time.
-  Behaving nervously, shifting gaze, attempting to avoid cameras, or wearing a conspicuous disguise.







### **Incident Statistics**

Each year in the U.S.:

- Hundreds are killed or injured by explosive devices.
- Over 500 incidents involve black powder, black powder substitutes, and smokeless powder.

Source: U.S. Bomb Data Center (July 29, 2013)

### ***How Can You Help?***

-  **Be aware! Your efforts make a difference.**
-  **Talk to customers, ask questions, and observe behavior.**
-  **Report suspicious or unusual purchases to management and authorities.**
-  **Inform authorities of: a physical description, a vehicle description, license plates, identification numbers, or credit card information.**

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The behavioral activities described as possible indicators of terrorism could be just as indicative of lawful, innocent conduct and, in some instances, may constitute the exercise of rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution. For these reasons, the indicators should be considered in the context of other suspicious behavior and the totality of the circumstances in which they are observed or reported.