

Poison Expertise and Agent Selection in Cases of Malicious Contamination

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While little research has been conducted in the past in regards to crimes of poisoning and product tampering, one common feature is that individuals who commit such crimes often have some prior knowledge of poisonous substances. This poison knowledge can take many different forms, from working in medical or scientific fields, to military training or personal research. Although some degree of poison knowledge may be required to commit an act of poisoning, this is not the case with acts of product tampering, in which desired goals may be achieved through the threat of contamination alone. Indeed, in the case of a threat of contamination the most concerning substances such as chemical and biological weapons can also be the most powerful, creating public fear without the requirement for the perpetrator to have any knowledge of how to obtain or use such agents. This research addresses the relationship between poison expertise and agent selection in incidents of malicious contamination. The results will show which agents are most likely to be associated with threats alone and with actual contamination for experts and non-experts, which can be of assistance not only to law enforcement, but also companies targeted during acts of malicious contamination.