



Our Neighborhoods

Citizens, government and industry working to promote public understanding and involvement in chemical risk management

Hazardous Material Emergencies In Your Community: How To Protect Yourself and Your Family

If a toxic gas like chlorine was released into your neighborhood, would you know what to do and how to do it?

Now, more than ever before, communities and individuals need to be prepared for the possibility of both accidental and intentional chemical emergencies.

Even if you don't live near an industrial facility, a hazardous material emergency could affect you. Chemicals and other hazardous materials are transported daily on our highways, rivers, railroads and through our skies.

Hamilton County Incidents

On average, about 100 hazardous material emergencies occur in Hamilton County each year. Most of these incidents are minor. Others are near misses, and a smaller percentage are incidents that cause harm to people and property. In the last 11 years, only the explosion at the BASF plant in Evanston in 1989 has resulted in fatalities and property destruction.

How Are Incidents Handled?

Although serious hazardous material incidents are rare, they do happen and can happen at any time. Emergency response personnel across Hamilton County spend a lot of time getting prepared for such possibilities.



CSX train derailment in summer 2000

If an incident occurs in your neighborhood, the local fire department will respond. The incident commander (highest ranking firefighter on the scene, usually the fire chief) is in charge of the incident and will make all the decisions.

If the situation involves a life-threatening airborne chemical release, the incident commander can request that the public be notified.

Public Notification

The public can be notified in the following ways:

- NOAA¹ weather radios
- Outdoors warning sirens
- TV/radio
- Door-to-door notification
- Public address system from vehicles

NOAA weather radios are Hamilton County's newest form of public notification for hazardous material incidents (see article, page 2).

Emergency Alert System

If you are notified of a hazardous material incident or hear outdoor warning sirens, turn on your TV or radio *immediately*. Hamilton County broadcasts all emergency information

(Continued on back page)



Shelter In Place: Staying Safe Inside

If you were told to "Shelter In Place," would you know what to do?

Shelter In Place means taking shelter inside your home, work place, school or other building during a hazardous material emergency until the danger has passed. Shelter In Place is used across the nation by firefighters and other emergency responders to protect citizens from airborne releases of hazardous materials, including chemicals and biological agents.

If instructed to Shelter in Place by local authorities, you should do the following:

- Turn on your TV or radio or stay tuned for information and updates.
- Close and lock all windows and doors.
- Turn off or close any system that draws in air from outside your home (i.e., air conditioners, vents, heaters, fireplace dampers).
- Go to the highest room above ground with the fewest windows and doors. **DO NOT GO TO THE BASEMENT.**

- Use the phone for emergencies only.
- For extra safety, place a wet towel along the bottom of the door, on the window sill or over your mouth.
- Stay in this room until local authorities tell you it is safe.
- When you are told the emergency is over, open your doors and windows, etc. Go outside until your home has been fully aired out.

Studies have shown that chemical exposures can be reduced by 80 to 90% by employing these basic Shelter In Place procedures.

Alliance Studies Household Hazardous Waste; Investigates Central Collection

Tired of taking leftover latex to Hader Hardware, old batteries to Auto Zone and used motor oil to Wal-Mart?

The Alliance for Chemical Safety wants to make life easier by bringing a central collection site for all household hazardous wastes to the Tri-State.

Alliance Awarded Grant

The Alliance was recently awarded an \$8,000 grant from the Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services (HCDOES) to study household hazardous waste generation and collection. The grant was jointly funded by the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati. The Alliance contributed an additional \$4,000 to this study.

Study To Examine Waste

A graduate student from the University of Cincinnati will be selected to conduct the study beginning in 2002. The study is expected to take six months.

The project will examine different aspects of household hazardous waste, including:

- Amount and type of household hazardous waste generated by consumers
- Amount and type of household hazardous waste disposed of in landfills
- Define alternatives to collection programs and review existing collection programs
- Preliminary design, construction costs and operating costs for a one-stop collection facility (for five years).

Current Program

The current collection program is administered by HCDOES's Solid Waste Management District. Residents can dispose of household hazardous waste, such as paint, batteries, antifreeze, motor oil, fire extinguishers, fluorescent light bulbs, explosives, propane tanks and tires at various locations, as specified in the agency's 2001-2002 Recycling Outlets booklet. In addition, every three years, the county sponsors a household hazardous waste collection day at different locations.

Local Activist Wants Change

Dr. Carl Evert, a long-time community activist, has long desired a more efficient and timely way of disposing of household hazardous waste. Dr. Evert, a professor emeritus in electrical and computer engineering from the University of Cincinnati, initiated this research study as a member of the Alliance's Steering Committee.

A Look At Other Programs

In May 2001, Dr. Evert and Mr. Jeffrey Aluotto, manager of the Solid Waste Management District, visited a centralized household hazardous waste collection site in Summit County near Akron, Ohio. The facility, which has operated since 1996, is the first and only centralized site in the state. It operates several days a week and offers both afternoon and evening drop-off hours. The land for the collection site was donated by a local company.

In 2000, 9,419 vehicles dropped off 801,970 pounds of household hazardous waste to the site. Of that total, nearly 89% was recycled, everything from tires and antifreeze to nickel, lead and cadmium from batteries and pesticides.

Dr. Evert and Aluotto also are reviewing collection programs in Lancaster County, Pa. and Milwaukee.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

In 1988, the Ohio General Assembly passed House Bill 592, which encouraged all Ohio communities to reduce their municipal waste streams by 25 percent. The bill placed particular emphasis on yard waste, scrap tires and household hazardous waste.

The Alliance wants to help Hamilton County exceed this goal.

"The purpose of our study is to find the best way to collect, treat and dispose of household hazardous waste," says Dr. Evert. "It would be great — from a convenience standpoint and an environmental one — to take all our household hazards to one central location."



New Use for NOAA Weather Radios

Hamilton County is now using NOAA weather radios to alert citizens to life-threatening hazardous material emergencies, as well as severe weather.

Hamilton County is the first county in Ohio to use this new method. The agreement was signed between the Ohio Emergency Management Agency and the National Weather Service office in Wilmington, Ohio, effective August 15, 2001.

The purpose of using NOAA weather radios is to quickly notify Hamilton County citizens of a life-threatening hazardous material release in their immediate area. The weather radios specifically target citizens who are inside a home, place of work or other building at the time of an incident.

The weather radio sounds an alert then gives a verbal message identifying where the release occurred and what areas of Hamilton County are affected. The message will also instruct citizens to Shelter In Place, which means taking shelter inside their home or other building (see article, page 1), and tune in to local TV or radio for more information.

The Alliance for Chemical Safety spearheaded the effort to use the weather radios for this purpose, along with the support of the Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency, the Greater Cincinnati Hazardous Materials Unit and the American Red Cross.

All schools, licensed day care centers and senior citizen centers in Hamilton County have weather radios. Many citizens also own weather radios, and the Alliance is working to increase this coverage.

Weather radios cost between \$20 and \$70, depending on the model, and are available at most stores that sell electronics equipment. Programmable radios need to be set for Hamilton County and to receive Civil Emergency Messages (CEMs).

Environmental Justice 101

Does it seem that lower-income neighborhoods are more densely riddled with industrial plants and waste disposal sites? This perception and frequent reality has resulted in a new battle cry in communities across the United States: *environmental justice*.

What Is Environmental Justice?

Environmental justice is a movement of Civil Rights activists and environmentalists working together to ensure the rights of low-income and minority communities. The environmental justice movement contends that these communities bear a disproportionate amount of adverse health and environmental effects, mainly due to the proximity or siting of hazardous waste disposal sites and other industrial facilities in their neighborhoods.

Environmental justice first emerged as a movement in 1982 in North Carolina when the state tried to site a disposal facility for PCB-contaminated soil in a rural, mostly African-American neighborhood in Warren County. More than 500 demonstrators were arrested, including several national civil rights figures. Although the protestors were not successful in blocking the landfill, they did draw national attention to the term "environmental racism." Soon after, the U.S. General Accounting Office conducted a study of states in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Region IV and found that three out of every four landfills were located near predominantly minority communities. In 1987, the Commission on Racial Justice report was conducted, which found that three out of every five African-Americans or Hispanics live in a community in close proximity to unregulated toxic waste sites.

Movement Gaining Clout

Over the years, the environmental justice movement has gained clout. Several states have passed environmental justice laws, numerous communities have filed lawsuits in the name of environmental justice, and environmental justice was a topic at the United Nation's international conference on the

environment in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

In 1994, President Clinton passed an Executive Order, which requires *all* federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice into their programs, policies and activities. In a separate memorandum, President Clinton identified Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as one of several federal laws already in existence that can help to "prevent minority and low-income communities from being subject to disproportionately high and adverse environmental effects."

In August 2001, U.S. EPA Administrator Christine Todd

Whitman reaffirmed her agency's commitment to environmental justice. In a memo to top agency officials, she wrote: "Environmental justice is achieved when everyone, regardless of race, culture or income, enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making..."

Powerful Tool for Citizens

As a top priority for many community groups, environmental justice has become a powerful tool for opposing undesirable projects.

Many communities are fighting at the federal level by filing complaints to the U.S. EPA under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. These complaints allege discrimination in environmental permitting of facilities.

Other communities, like Cincinnati, are battling on the local level, using more grass-roots tactics. The Cincinnati Environmental Advisory Council and a local group called Communities United For Action are currently battling the construction of a waste transfer station in Winton Hills, a low-income neighborhood located amidst multiple industrial facilities and waste sites. The two groups have appealed to the Cincinnati Board of Health, which is responsible for issuing the operating license to Waste Management Inc. The board's vote is expected by the end of the year.



Company Contacts

Bayer Corporation
Duane Day, (513) 467-2217

Cincinnati Water Works
Bill Phelps, (513) 591-7971

Cinergy
Steve Brash, (513) 287-2226

Cognis Corp.
Mike Groh, (513) 482-2425

DuPont Specialty Chemicals
John Ferguson, (513) 941-4121, x12

Fierro Technologies, Inc.
Ed Jackson, (513) 563-0786, x105

General Mills
Michele Smith, (513) 612-5518

GRACE Davison
John Terbot, (513) 305-8080

Hillshire Farm & Kahn's
Bob Perry, (513) 853-1353

Interplastic Corporation
Mike Flannery, (859) 292-7462

Metropolitan Sewer District
Ann Newsom, (513) 557-7110

Noveon Hilton Davis
Tom Eickhoff, (513) 841-4073

Pilot Chemical
Tom Melhorn, (513) 733-4880, x30 (Cinti)
Dennis Callison, (513) 424-9700, x224 (Middletown)

P&G's Ivorydale site
Rick Tremblay, (513) 627-6677
Bob Harper (513) 627-8452

Queen City Terminals
Gary Sampson, (513) 871-9018

Rohm and Haas
Robin Cole, (513) 733-2132
Linda Stichtenoth (513) 733-2213

Royster-Clark Nitrogen
Bill Chokran, (513) 941-4100, x14

RUETGERS Organics Corporation
Frank Canepa, (513) 738-1255, x118

Shepherd Chemical
Bayard Pelsor, (513) 458-6847

Steelcraft
Leon VanDerzee, (513) 745-6428

Please call these Alliance industry contacts if you have questions about chemicals in your neighborhood.

Hazmat Emergencies (continued from page 1)

over local TV and radio via a communications network called the Emergency Alert System or EAS.

On TV, these emergency messages appear as white text scrolling along the bottom of the screen. On the radio, the public will hear an extended emergency alert tone, then a verbal message. Information and updates will continue to be broadcast over TV and radio for the duration of the emergency.

For additional information, the public can refer to the Cincinnati Bell White Pages for emergency procedures.

Shelter In Place

In nearly 99 percent of all hazardous material emergencies, the public will be instructed to Shelter In Place (see article, page 1). A Shelter In Place will be ordered when the emergency poses a threat to life or human health, but there is not enough time to safely evacuate. In most cases, there is not enough time to evacuate. To date, Shelter In Place has been used several times over the last decade, but a large-scale Shelter In Place or evacuation has never occurred in Hamilton County.

Educational Campaign

The Alliance for Chemical Safety recently initiated an educational campaign to inform local citizens about how and when to Shelter In Place. If you or your company/organization are interested in hearing this presentation, please contact Deb Leonard at (513) 612-3074. The Alliance is also looking for individuals willing to give the presentation to community groups. The presentation is about 12 minutes long and comes with a script, video, handouts and giveaways.

¹NOAA stands for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

For More Information About HazMat Emergencies...

If you want to learn more about hazardous material emergencies, Shelter In Place and how to protect yourself and your family, please contact the following agencies/organizations:

- Alliance for Chemical Safety: (513) 612-3074
- American Red Cross, Cincinnati: (513) 579-3000
- Butler County Emergency Management Agency (EMA): (513) 785-5810
- Clermont County Dept. of Public Safety Services: (513) 732-7661
- Hamilton County EMA: (513) 851-7080
- Warren County Emergency Svcs. (513) 695-1315
- Kenton County Emergency Mgmt. (859) 431-2326
- Campbell County Emerg. Mgmt. (859) 635-1111
- Boone County Emergency Mgmt. (859) 334-2279
- Your local fire department
- Your neighborhood industries. If they are an Alliance member, see page 3 for contact information.

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This newsletter is a publication of the Alliance for Chemical Safety, a Greater Cincinnati non-profit organization dedicated to promoting public understanding and involvement in chemical risk management. The Alliance holds monthly meetings from 3-4:30 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at the Avon Woods Nature Preserve, 4235 Paddock Road. Please call (513) 612-3074 or visit our website at www.acs-online.org if you would like more information.



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