



Our Neighborhoods

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

Chemical Terrorism: Gearing Up For A Potential Attack

In March 2001, six months before the September 11 tragedy, a salvage-car dealer in Copperhill, Tennessee, was questioned by an out-of-town pilot about chemical storage tanks he had just flown over. Although the tanks contained



hundreds of tons of a potentially lethal chemical, the pilot, who called himself "Mo," was told they were empty. The salvage dealer, Danny

Whitener, later told the FBI he believes "Mo" was Mohammed Atta, the suspected leader of the World Trade Center attack. A few months after the attack, copies of U.S. chemical trade publications were found in an Osama bin Laden hideout.

Ever since September 11, the possibility that terrorists might strike again using chemicals has been on the mind of nearly every American citizen.

Chemicals include standard industrial chemicals, like chlorine or ammonia, or chemical warfare agents like nerve gas, mustard gas or phosgene. Terrorists could sabotage the chemical plant down the road or bring in their own agents.

Whether such an attack is inevitable or not, the U.S. government and the chemical industry are taking the matter seriously.

Chemical Plants Take Action

Chemical plants across the nation have improved site security and beefed up security checks on employees. Some

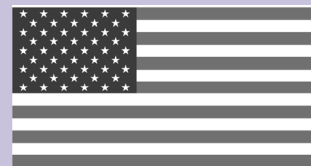
have eliminated the threat by getting rid of their hazardous chemicals. Locally, the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati eliminated the use of chlorine gas for disinfection of local wastewater one month after the World Trade Center attack. The chlorine, which was formerly stored on site in up to four 90-ton railcars at a time, was replaced with sodium hypochlorite (i.e., a bleach-like substitute). If just one railcar of chlorine had ever been released, it could have seriously impacted people's health within a 14-mile radius.

Other local companies, like Procter & Gamble, DuPont, Bayer Corporation and Rohm and Haas, have tightened physical security by restricting access to the plant site, adding additional security personnel and training employees to look for suspicious activities. Royster-Clark Nitrogen, located along the Ohio River in North Bend, has installed security cameras and increased surveillance of its barge docking area.

New Bill Introduced In Senate

In October 2001, Sen. Jon Corzine, a Democrat from New Jersey, introduced a new bill (S. 1602) that would require certain "high-priority" U.S. chemical plants to assess and address their vulnerability to terrorist attacks. The bill was unanimously approved by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on July 25.

Under this legislation, the chemical plants would be required to conduct vulnerability assessments, identify potential hazards and prepare a plan to eliminate or significantly reduce the potential consequences of a chemical release, including implementation of "inherently safer technologies," such as
(Continued on back page)



Are We Prepared Locally?

If chemical terrorism struck the Greater Cincinnati area, would we be prepared? The general consensus from area emergency responders, police and medical agencies is that we're better prepared now than we've ever been before.

Emergency Response

"A chemical terrorist event is just 'hazmat with an attitude,'" says Charles Perry, director of the Greater Cincinnati Hazardous Material Unit (GCHMU). "We would respond to such an event in the same way as a normal chemical accident."

The GCHMU was established in 1991 to assist area fire departments, including Northern Kentucky, with hazardous material spills and releases. Over the last four years, the agency has received grant money from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to purchase air monitoring equipment, protective clothing and mass decontamination equipment to handle chemical attacks, as well as biological, nuclear, explosive and incendiary incidents. The grant money was received by the Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency and administered to GCHMU, as well as Urban Search & Rescue and the Hamilton County Sheriff's Department.

The Cincinnati Fire Department also has a dedicated hazardous

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RMP Plans Taken Off the Internet

If you log onto the U.S. EPA's website (www.epa.gov/ceppo) and try to access a chemical company's Risk Management Plan, you will receive the following message:

RMP*Info - Temporarily Unavailable
In light of the September 11 events, EPA has temporarily removed RMP*Info from its website...

Risk Management Plans are required under the federal Clean Air Act for about 15,000 facilities that make or use large quantities of toxic or flammable chemicals. The plans detail "worst case" and "more likely case" accident scenarios and how the facility would prevent or respond to them. The plans were submitted to the U.S. EPA in June 1999 and posted on the agency's website soon after.

At the time, citizens and environmental groups were eager to use the plans to learn about chemical risks in local neighborhoods. The chemical industry and the U.S. Department of Justice, on the other hand, were concerned the plans would help terrorists target industrial plants with the greatest potential to kill or harm people.

In August 1999, after much wrangling, Congress passed a law limiting access to the plans:

- No accident scenarios could be posted on the U.S. EPA's website.
- Citizens could not request the accident scenarios through the Freedom of Information Act.

Companies, however, *were* required to hold a local public meeting to disclose their accident scenarios, and the information was made available to the public in a limited fashion at 50 federal reading rooms (one per state).

After September 11, the U.S. EPA removed all Risk Management Plan data from the Internet, including the names of the companies and the chemicals they used or manufactured. The agency has not yet determined when or if the data will be made public again.

The chemical industry feels more secure now, but would still like to see the federal reading rooms closed down.

Citizens and environmental groups, however, want access to the data so companies can be encouraged to use safer chemicals and less dangerous processes, thereby eliminating a terrorist threat in the first place.

Are We Prepared...? (continued from page 1)

material response team, called Squad 52, and is in the process of training another fire company to assist them. Squad 52 has similar capabilities to GCHMU. The department also has received grant money from DOJ for equipment and protective clothing.

In early August, Cincinnati Fire sponsored a county-wide Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) drill that involved a mock chemical and biological attack at Paul Brown Stadium, with related scenarios in Madeira and Colerain Township.

Numerous city and county agencies participated, along with two National Guard units (the 41st and 52nd Civil Support Teams from Louisville, Ky. and Columbus, Ohio respectively) with expertise in chemical and biological testing.

Law Enforcement

On the law enforcement side, the Cincinnati Police Department has formed a chemical/biological response unit as part of its existing SWAT team. The group is specially trained to perform regular SWAT duties, such as apprehending an active suspect, during a chemical or biological terrorist attack, according to Sergeant Chris Ruehmer. The team, which has mutual aid agreements with other Hamilton County police departments, tested its skills during the recent WMD drill.

Medical Assistance

On the medical side, an area-wide group called the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) is working to improve the capability of area hospitals, EMS, labs and emergency responders to handle the medical consequences of a terrorist event. Various grants from the federal government and the local Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati are helping MMRS and other agencies plan for such an event, as well as stockpile pharmaceuticals and establish an emergency communications system for area physicians.

Hamilton Co. Collects Mercury Thermometers

In May, the Hamilton County General Health District collected 4,550 mercury thermometers as part of its "Catch The Fever" residential thermometer exchange program. About 3,500 free digital thermometers were given out in exchange for the mercury ones.

"It was a highly successful campaign," said Dave Nutini, director of Waste Management Services for the Hamilton County General Health District. "We initiated this program because mercury is a highly toxic substance that can harm both humans and wildlife."

According to the U.S. EPA, mercury vapors from a broken thermometer can pose a health risk to people, especially if they don't realize the thermometer has broken or the mercury has seeped into a hard-to-reach place.

Thirteen drop-off locations participated in the exchange program, including local health departments, health centers and clinics. About 6-8 pounds of elemental mercury were also collected from area residences. All the mercury was transferred to Bowling Green State University by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. It will eventually be recycled through a facility in Bethlehem, Penn.

Although the residential collection program is officially over, the health district will still accept mercury thermometers on a case-by-case basis.

The mercury collection program will extend into Hamilton County schools this fall. In addition, the Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services will sponsor four household hazardous waste collection days in 2003.

Shelter In Place Update

About six months ago, the Alliance for Chemical Safety kicked off its *Shelter In Place* campaign in the Greater Cincinnati area. Shelter In Place is the preferred method used by emergency responders to protect citizens during a life-threatening airborne chemical release.

The Alliance developed a presentation, handouts, giveaways (i.e., magnets, static decals, stickers and zipper pulls) and a video to help educate area adults and school children.

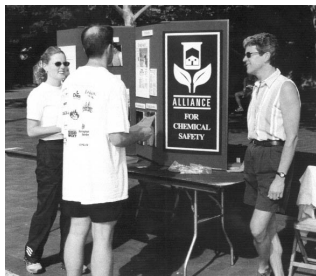


Jim Borgman, a nationally renowned local cartoonist, drew the "turtle logo" for our materials.

The Alliance also partnered with numerous agencies, including the Cincinnati Fire Department, the American Red Cross, the Blue Ash Fire Department, the Metropolitan Sewer District and the Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency, to help get the word out.

To date, Shelter In Place presentations have been delivered to

more than 40 groups or venues, including the Cincinnati Fire Department's Safety Fair and Safe Summer Nights campaign and Cincinnati's Clean Air-A-Thon this summer. Two special workshops were also organized for employees of day care centers and nursing homes. More than 100 people attended in total.



By the end of 2002, every Cincinnati community council will have received information on

Shelter In Place. Beginning this fall, Shelter In Place programs will be available to Hamilton County school children.

In addition, several communities have initiated their own Shelter In Place campaigns, including Addyston, Reading, Winton Terrace and Northern Kentucky. Each community is focusing on adult education, as well as the education of school administrators, teachers and school children. Reading even developed its own giveaways using the turtle logo.

Household Hazardous Waste Study Update

The Alliance for Chemical Safety is still working hard to make a citizen-friendly, centralized, drop-off center for household hazardous waste (HHW) a reality in Hamilton County.

The project, which is being sponsored by the Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District (SWMD), the Metropolitan Sewer District and the Alliance, was initiated nearly 1 1/2 years ago.

HHW includes household cleaners, paints, tires, batteries, used motor oil, etc. Disposal of these items in a landfill or sewers has the potential to harm the environment and human health.

The SWMD is currently evaluating two ideas, which were referred by the Solid Waste Policy Committee:

- A drop-off center operated by an existing, local solid waste

contractor. This idea stemmed from a study of collection alternatives by a Hamilton County intern. The report also looked at curbside pickups, waste exchange programs and neighborhood collections.

- A drop-off center operated by the county or a non-profit group that would also conduct recycling research and serve as a "green business" incubator. This idea stemmed from an Alliance Interim Report, submitted by Dr. Carl Evert, the project leader.

Discussions are in progress with representatives from Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio, about the "green" incubator program.

In addition, Dr. Evert is examining the impacts of HHW on public health and trying to develop a method of estimating HHW collection volumes.



Company Contacts

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Pilot Chemical
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(Ivorydale site)
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Rohm and Haas
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RUETGERS Organics Corporation
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Shepherd Chemical
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Please call these Alliance for Chemical Safety industry contacts if you have questions about chemicals in your neighborhood.

Chemical Terrorism (continued from page 1)

substituting less toxic chemicals. The U.S. EPA would be required to review the plans and certify actual compliance.

Bush Administration Wants Voluntary Improvements

In early July, Tom Ridge, director of the Bush Administration's Office of Homeland Security, said he hopes to "avoid the need for legislation" to enhance security at chemical plants. Ridge said he believes the chemical industry will voluntarily improve site security.

U.S. EPA May Require Vulnerability Assessments

The U.S. EPA is apparently waffling over the issue. In May, the agency drafted regulations requiring about 15,000 U.S. chemical facilities to conduct vulnerability assessments and implement appropriate security measures. In June, the agency changed its mind and decided to issue voluntary guidelines that focused on perimeter and access control, cyber security and inherently safer technologies. In August, the U.S. EPA once again said it would publish a proposed rule requiring the vulnerability assessments.

A date for publishing this rule has not been set since the agency and the Bush Administration are at odds on this issue. The U.S. EPA does not support Sen. Corzine's legislation because it feels a rule would more quickly address the

problem than federal legislation.

Justice Department To Study Chemical Plants

Meanwhile, the U.S. Department of Justice is already investigating the vulnerability of chemical plants to terrorist activity and is expected to publish a report later this year. The study, which is required under the Clean Air Act Amendments, was partly prompted by a 1999 report by the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. Titled "Industrial Chemicals and Terrorism," the report stated that security at chemical plants ranged from "fair to poor."

The chemical industry has attacked this report as inaccurate because it only studied chemical plants in two U.S. communities, did not report on security measures already in place, and was written by one researcher.

Risk Reduction vs. Site Security

Whether the chemical industry is ultimately required to increase security or allowed to do so voluntarily, environmental activists hope it will focus more on reducing or eliminating hazardous chemicals than on tightening physical security.

The American Chemistry Council, a national trade group that represents 180 chemical manufacturers, said its members are taking steps to counter terrorist

attacks, including reducing risk by eliminating chemicals. Its main focus, however, has been improvements in physical site security. In October 2001, the group issued voluntary site security guidelines for the chemical industry. Three months later, it made enhanced physical security mandatory for all its members.

This article was based on a December 16, 2001, Washington Post article titled "Chemical Plants Feared as Targets," as well as Bureau of National Affairs, Inc. "Right to Know Planning Guide" reports from September 2001 through August 2002.

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This newsletter is a publication of the Alliance for Chemical Safety, a Greater Cincinnati non-profit group 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 Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, 3805 Edwards Road, Suite 500, Cincinnati, OH 45208. Please call (513) 612-3074 or visit our website at www.acs-online.org if you would like more information.



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