



Our Neighborhoods

Citizens, government and industry working to promote public understanding of chemicals and chemical safety

Chemical Risks and You: Local Companies Talk to Neighbors

Do you live near a facility that handles chemicals, work for one or just care about your community? If so, maybe you've heard about a new environmental regulation called the Risk Management Program (RMP). Even better, maybe you attended a public meeting last June where local companies publicly released risk information about the chemicals used and stored at their facilities.

Sponsored by the Alliance for Chemical Safety, the meeting — a voluntary response to the RMP regulation — drew nearly 100 citizens, local government officials and industry representatives. Local media covered the event, which was held June 4 at the American Red Cross in Blue Ash.

RMP Affects 14,000 Facilities

For those of you unfamiliar with the regulation, RMP requires facilities that handle certain quantities of toxic or flammable chemicals to file "Risk Management Plans" with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). The plans detail "worst case" and "alternative case" or "more likely case" chemical accident scenarios and how facilities would prevent or respond to them. This federal regulation affects 63 companies in the Tristate and about 14,000 nationwide.

Public Made Aware of Risks

The Alliance for Chemical Safety organized the June meeting because it felt it was crucial for residents living near chemical facilities to be aware of and understand chemical risks, as well as learn what chemical companies are doing to prevent and respond to accidents. At the time of the meeting, the RMP regulation did not require facilities to publicly share the contents of "Risk Management

Plans," it only encouraged them to do so. In August, however, Congress approved a new RMP bill requiring all covered facilities to hold a public meeting by February 1, 2000 (see sidebar, this page). Only 11 of the 29 covered facilities in Hamilton County participated in the Alliance's June meeting.

"We organized this event as part of the Alliance mission to promote public understanding of chemical safety and risks," said Gary Miller, Alliance spokesperson and director of disaster services for the American Red Cross. "Because of this event, we helped to promote a better relationship between facilities and their local communities."

Local Facilities Participate

The hour-long program included detailed presentations by three Alliance member companies — The Procter & Gamble Company in St. Bernard, the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) in Price Hill and Bayer Corporation in Addyston. Eight other local companies were present to answer questions and hand out brochures on their Risk Management Plans. These facilities, also Alliance members, included BF Goodrich Hilton Davis in Pleasant Ridge, Cincinnati Specialties in Bond Hill, City of Cincinnati Water Works in California, DuPont Specialty Chemicals in North Bend, Henkel Corporation in Winton Hills, Morton International in Reading, Pilot Chemical in Lockland and Middletown, Royster-Clark Nitrogen (formerly IMC AgriBusiness) in North Bend, and Shepherd Chemical in Norwood.

In addition, two local emergency responders and a local environmentalist

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Right-To-Know vs. Terrorism

The battle between a citizen's right to know about chemical risks in his or her neighborhood and FBI concerns about terrorism wages on.

Citizens want unrestricted access to the "worst case" and "alternative case" accident scenarios in facility Risk Management Plans. FBI and Congress, on the other hand, fear that unrestricted access, through Freedom of Information requests and Internet postings, will lead to terrorist activity. In other words, terrorists could target the companies with the worst "worst case" scenarios, prompting chemical incidents that could harm thousands of citizens.

Legislative Compromise

In August, President Clinton signed a bill that attempts a compromise between the two sides. The bill restricts the general public's access to chemical accident scenarios until August 2000, but requires every covered facility to hold a public meeting to disclose this same information to local citizens by February 1, 2000.

As a result, citizens will not be able to request scenario information through the Freedom of Information Act or read about it on the Internet, but can learn about it at public meetings hosted by local companies.

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What's Up On The RMP Website?

Like most websites, the U.S. EPA's Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention Office site (www.epa.gov/ceppo) is a mixture of the good, the bad and the buggy. Overall, it provides good general background information on risk management planning and useful links to related web pages.

By clicking on the "RMP*Info" button, you can find your way to a handy how-to page for using the Risk



Management Program (RMP) database. Scroll down and click on "Risk Management Plans Query" to search for the facility Risk

Management Plans of your choice. You can search by facility name, parent company name, geographic location, chemicals or a multitude of other parameters. Try searching for all the facilities in your city, county, or zip code, but don't forget to click on the right state.

A request for all RMP facilities in Hamilton County yields 29 facilities, but the database gets buggy when you query for all RMP facilities in Cincinnati. Four of the Cincinnati facilities are not on the Hamilton County list!

When you "click" on a specific facility on the list, you can view:

- Section 1, Registration Information, which contains the facility's location, number of employees and local contact persons.
- Executive Summary, a link from within Section 1, which usually contains a plainly written overview of the entire Risk Management Plan.

In some cases, this section contains the facility's "worse case" and "alternative case" accident scenarios. Although this information was deleted from Sections 2-5 by the U.S. EPA, it was not deleted from the Executive Summary if a facility chose to include it.

- Process Chemicals, a link from within Section 1, which contains background information on the RMP chemicals used by the facility.

- Sections 2-5, Off-Site Consequence Analysis (OCA) Data, which used to contain the facility's "worst case" and "alternative case" accident scenarios. This section was deleted from the Risk Management Plan by the U.S. EPA due to FBI concerns about terrorism.
- Section 6, Accident History, which details any major accidents over the last five years involving RMP chemicals.
- Sections 7 and 8, Process NAICS/Prevention Programs, which contains the facility's accident prevention program.
- Section 9, Emergency Response, which contains a very general questionnaire about facility procedures to notify local emergency responders during chemical accidents.

By clicking on the "What's New" button, you can learn about the new RMP bill passed by Congress and obtain fact sheets.

Less useful, however, is clicking on the "Concerned Citizens" link under Stakeholders. In this section under Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs), you are invited to attend your local LEPC meeting or join your local LEPC. An LEPC is a group composed of local emergency responders, industry

representatives, community leaders, and citizens who coordinate emergency planning for communities. If you click on



LEPCs, then LEPC Contacts List, a list of LEPCs for only five states appears, with Ohio among the missing! If you are interested in getting involved with your

local LEPC, please contact Gary Miller, chair of Hamilton County's LEPC at (513) 579-3030. Gary is also director of disaster services for the American Red Cross, Cincinnati Area Chapter, and spokesperson for the Alliance for Chemical Safety.

While some of the information provided on this website is incomplete, frustratingly general, or written in techno-babble, there is still a lot of good information that will help citizens learn more about the facilities in their neighborhoods and what those facilities are doing to prevent and respond to potential chemical accidents. If you want to know more, call your local company directly!

Right-To-Know (continued)

Between now and August 2000, the federal government will assess the risks of posting accident scenario data on the Internet and based on its assessment, publish regulations governing public access to that data. In the interim, the U.S. EPA will make the scenario information available to local, state and federal officials for emergency planning and response purposes.

For more information on this new bill, called the "Chemical Safety Information, Site Security and Fuels Regulatory Relief Act," visit the U.S. EPA's website at www.epa.gov/ceppo and click on "What's New."

RMP Meeting (continued)

participated. Charles Perry, district chief for the Cincinnati Fire Division, and Bob Stegeman, president of the Hamilton County Fire Chiefs Association, described how local fire departments handle chemical accidents. Rachael Belz, director of Ohio Citizen Action, urged citizens living near chemical facilities to "request and read information from local companies, meet with them, and ask questions to reduce or prevent risk from chemicals." Ms. Belz also challenged local companies to "lead the State of Ohio by meeting and working together with communities in open dialogue."

For more details about a specific company's Risk Management Plan, please contact them directly or visit the U.S. EPA's website at www.epa.gov/ceppo and click on "RMP*Info."

Making Chemical Plants Safer

Highly publicized chemical accidents are a major cause of public mistrust of industries that manufacture and use chemicals. To help reduce accidents, the federal government and the chemical industry have been working together to improve safety performance at facilities.



In 1992, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued its Process Safety Management (PSM) standard to reduce the

likelihood and severity of chemical incidents. Complementary safety programs have also been initiated by the U.S. EPA through the Risk Management Program (RMP) and by the Chemical Manufacturers Association through the Responsible Care® program.

Process Safety Program Elements

With a goal of reducing or preventing chemical accidents, these process safety programs are based on four common elements:

- **Commitment:**

A commitment to process safety is required by every employee at the facility. Management must demonstrate its commitment by embracing the program and dedicating the resources (e.g., money, employees) to meet or exceed the letter of the law. Plant employees must demonstrate their commitment by putting the process safety program into practice.

- **Facilities:**

Facilities must be safely designed, constructed, operated and maintained to prevent accidents that could affect employees, the public and the environment. Specifically, equipment must be installed that meets applicable design codes, the building must be constructed to meet fire protection standards and additional safeguards such as automatic shutoff systems, alarms, leak detectors and scrubber systems, should be installed where a

malfunction could cause a hazardous incident.

- **Technology:**

In the design and operation of a chemical facility, technology plays a crucial role. The kind of technology used — computer systems, machinery, piping, storage tanks, treatment systems, etc.— can make a safe facility safer or cause serious safety problems. Facilities must routinely review technical operations to identify potential problems that could occur if the equipment failed or an employee made an error. Before making changes to plant technology, the facility must also examine how the change will affect the safety of the operation. This is key because the majority of catastrophic incidents that have occurred in the chemical industry have been linked to changes that reduced the safety integrity of the plant.

- **Personnel:**

Regardless of how well process safety is incorporated into the design and operation of a chemical plant, a program can't be successful without personnel who understand their day-to-day responsibilities.

Employees need to know how to operate equipment in a safe manner, what personal protective equipment they should wear, and what to do in an emergency situation. They also need to know how to keep equipment operating properly and how to check for signs of wear and tear that could affect normal operating procedures.

Additionally, facilities should sponsor well-trained Emergency Response Teams to handle chemical emergencies.

When consideration is given to these four key process safety elements, the incidence and impact of chemical emergencies can be substantially reduced. Make sure your neighborhood company is making



process safety a priority!



Company Contacts

Bayer Corporation

Duane Day, (513) 467-2217

BF Goodrich Hilton Davis

Tom Eickhoff, (513) 841-4073

Cincinnati Propane

Nelson Fisher, (513) 271-1880

Cincinnati Specialties

Jim McKenna, (513) 482-7350

Cincinnati Water Works

Bill Phelps, (513) 591-7971

DuPont Specialty Chemicals

John Ferguson, (513) 941-4121,x12

General Mills

Michele Smith, (513) 612-5518

GRACE Davison

John Terbot, (513) 482-5717

Henkel Corporation

Mike Groh, (513) 482-2425

Hillshire Farm & Kahn's

Jared Henthorn, (513) 853-1353

Metropolitan Sewer District

Ann Newsom, (513) 557-7110

Morton International

Glenn Schaaf, (513) 733-2132

Pilot Chemical

Tom Melhorn, (513) 733-4880 (Cinti)

Dennis Callison, (513) 424-9700
(Middletown)

P&G's Ivorydale site

Brian Bachman, (513) 627-4346

Royster-Clark Nitrogen

Bill Chokran, (513) 941-4100,x14

Rutgers Organics Corporation

Frank Canepa, (513) 738-1255,x118

Senco Products

Bob Schmidt, (513) 388-2998

Shepherd Chemical

Bayard Pelsor, (513) 731-1110

Silmar Resins

Mike Flannery, (606) 292-7462



News From Around Town ...

10th Anniversary of Responsible Care®

The Chemical Manufacturers Association (CMA) is celebrating the 10th anniversary of its "Responsible Care®" program this year. Responsible Care® was launched in 1989 by the chemical industry in response to public concerns about the manufacture and use of chemicals. Through this initiative, CMA member companies are challenged to continuously improve their environmental, health and safety performance. They are also challenged to open channels of communication with customers and neighbors to proactively address the issues that face their communities. Responsible Care® has been the driving force behind fewer chemical accidents and injuries, safer facilities, and the formation of industry partnerships with communities, especially in education.

Tri-State Environmental Resource Center Opens

The new Tri-State Environmental Resource Center (TERC) celebrated its grand opening in September with an open house. Located at 2828 Vernon Place in Clifton, this non-profit organization was

chartered by the Hamilton County Environmental Priorities Project. Formerly called the Hamilton County Environmental Resource Center, it consolidates, archives, and disseminates environmental news, information, and educational materials to the public. Visit the center on-line at <http://erc.uc.edu>.

The center's immediate goals are to provide a community environmental calendar, a database of local environmental organizations, a directory of environmental websites and an environmental education database. In the future, the center will house an environmental library, provide research assistance and sponsor a speaker's bureau.

For more information, contact the center at (513) 221-8853.

Upcoming Environmental Seminar

The Hamilton County Environmental Action Commission will present a free seminar, "Smart Growth Alternatives To Urban Sprawl," at 7 p.m., January 12 at University of Cincinnati's College for Design, Architecture and Planning.

For more information, contact Terry Harris at (513) 467-2470.

Chemical Industry Collaborative Meets Monthly

The Chemical Industry Collaborative is a group of local businesses that meet regularly to informally network, obtain information, discuss ideas, and explore solutions to a wide range of business and technical problems including pollution prevention, Y2K readiness, and supply chain management. The meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the Institute of Advanced Manufacturing Sciences (IAMS). If you would like more information, please contact Mary Beth Holley of IAMS at (513) 948-2038.

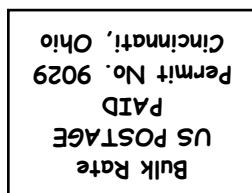
Our Neighborhoods

This newsletter is a publication of the Alliance for Chemical Safety, a volunteer group of emergency responders, industry, citizens and government working to promote chemical safety. We meet from 3-4:30 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at St. Bernard City Hall. Please call (513) 612-3074 if you would like more information.



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Read me for neighborhood news on chemical safety!



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