



Our Neighborhoods

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

Sitting Down At The Same Table: Citizens and Industry Work Together

Is there an industrial plant in your neighborhood? Ever wonder what goes on at that facility? Becoming personally involved with your neighborhood industries can help you get direct answers and establish a relationship that bridges the fence line.



In Hamilton County, several local communities have struck up an ongoing conversation with their neighborhood companies.

Pleasant Ridge

In Pleasant Ridge, a community group called Citizens Concerned About Hilton Davis (CCHD) meets with Kodak, former owner of Hilton Davis (now BF Goodrich Hilton Davis), to discuss cleanup issues at the site. CCHD and residents from Pleasant Ridge, Norwood, and Golf Manor also meet periodically with BF Goodrich Hilton Davis to discuss risk management issues. Affiliated with the Pleasant Ridge Community Council, CCHD was established in the mid-1980s.

"We started working on odor issues with the company," says Marjorie Evert, chair of CCHD. "The community and Hilton Davis are working to develop a cooperative effort similar to that with Kodak in the remediation process."

Reading

Morton International, a Reading chemical manufacturer, organized a community advisory panel (CAP) in 1995

to discuss mercaptan odors (similar to rotten eggs). The group met regularly for about 1 1/2 years during which time the plant installed controls that eliminated the odors. Soon after, the CAP disbanded due to lack of interest, but the company is still seeking interested citizens to revive it.

"The CAP was really effective when it was in operation," says Glenn Schaaf, Morton's manager of Health, Safety and Environment. "Please call us if you're interested in starting it up again (please see Contacts, Page 3)."

Addyston

In Addyston, Bayer Corporation's Public Advisory Group (PAG) has met every other month since 1989. Every meeting starts with a review of how the plastics business is doing and upcoming plant changes.

"I like the fact that I can call (the plant) anytime to discuss problems, and Bayer will work to solve them," says Addyston Mayor Carol Kolb, a long-time member of Bayer's PAG. "Residents call me to ask questions. It's good to have contacts to get information."

The Bayer PAG has tackled numerous issues, including noise, odors, change in ownership, annual Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) releases of toxic chemicals, hazardous waste permits, and most recently changes in truck traffic patterns that affected the Village of Addyston. Membership on the Bayer PAG is diverse: the mayor, an elementary school principal, a Cincinnati firefighter, a Miami Township trustee, and residents from Addyston, Saylor Park, and Sedamsville.

North Bend

The Brower Road Community Advisory Panel (CAP) in western Hamilton County covers five industries in the vicinity of North Bend along Brower Road: DuPont, IMC AgriBusiness,

Cinergy's Miami Fort station, Ashland Marathon, and Koch Materials.

"We were getting a lot of people wondering what was going on behind the fences (at our companies), and we wanted a way to answer their questions," says John Diesch, former plant manager of IMC AgriBusiness.

The CAP's 15 members meet every other month at a different company.

"We've really just started," says Rita Allen, a resident member. "We ask questions, and at the next meeting we discuss the answers. I am learning a lot."

St. Bernard

Henkel Corporation Chemicals Group in St. Bernard has one of the longest-running CAPs -- since 1992.

"Henkel's tried to let the CAP drive the issues. We're interested in addressing what's of concern to the community," said Mike Groh, Henkel's safety manager. "Past issues have included Mill Creek and combined sewer overflows, odors, employment, emergency response, and now they've decided to tackle education."

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Chemicals In Our Community: Help vs. Harm?

Chemicals. The word conjures up a myriad of feelings, some positive, many negative. We've all seen or heard media reports about chemical releases from industrial plants, hazardous wastes dumps, or environmental catastrophes such as Bhopal, India, and Chernobyl. Some of these stories even hit closer to home: Fernald, the BASF explosion in Evanston, an oleum release in Pleasant Ridge. But we also know that chemicals are the drugs we take to prevent or cure an illness, the food we eat to relieve hunger, the gasoline we use to power our cars, and virtually everything else we touch in our world.

So, how do we cope with chemicals when we don't always want to live with them, but we can't live without them?

Getting A Perspective

First off, let's get things into perspective. Chemicals can be both helpful and harmful, but relatively few chemicals out of the hundreds of thousands of existing chemicals are harmful under normal, everyday circumstances, and just because a chemical has the potential for harm doesn't mean it's going to harm you.

Chlorine, for example, is a chemical used to make paper products and disinfect drinking water supplies, wastewater, and swimming pools. It's a helpful chemical because it makes our water drinkable and swimmable and treats our sewage, but it's also a potentially harmful one that could affect a person's respiratory system under certain circumstances. Whether chlorine is safe or a danger depends on numerous factors: the amount of chlorine present, the concentration (strength of the chemical), the dose (amount that enters your body) and the type of exposure (how it enters your body).

Chlorine's benefits are balanced against its potential harm by prevention and control systems put in place by members of the chlorine industry and others. These parties are well aware of the chemical's potential risks and the best methods to manage them.

Managing Risks

We say "manage" the risks because the use of chlorine and other chemicals is

never 100% risk-free. Unless chemicals are not used at all, we can never reduce the potential for risk to zero. But it is always our prerogative not to use a material that is deemed or perceived to be too hazardous, and this does occur. Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), an insulating fluid formerly used in electrical transformers, were banned by the federal Toxic Substances Control Act in 1977



because they presented an unreasonable health risk to the public. Nuclear power plants, on the other hand, have not been banned by any governmental agency or law, but are perceived as highly hazardous by the public. The result? No new nuclear power plants have been ordered in the United States since the late 1970s.

Prevention and Control

For the rest of the chemicals still being produced for our comfort or survival, industry, government, emergency responders, non-profit organizations, and health providers have constructed an intricate safety net to prevent and control accidents and mitigate any harmful exposures. This safety net includes the following:

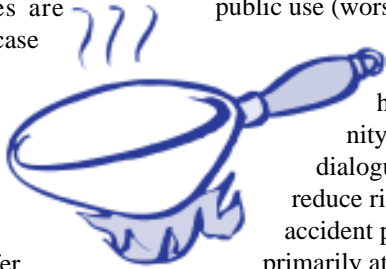
- ◆ Internal industry safety controls such as double-walled tanks, concrete containment areas around tanks, automatic shutoff systems, and alarms.
- ◆ Process Safety Management (PSM), a complex and comprehensive Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) program implemented by certain industries to prevent or minimize the releases of highly hazardous chemicals.
- ◆ Emergency response plans and drills which help emergency responders (e.g., local fire departments and/or hazardous material response teams) react to hazardous material incidents such as spills and fires.
- ◆ County emergency management agencies and non-profit organizations such as the Red Cross which are responsible for coordinating hazardous material response and relief.
- ◆ County and city health departments which are responsible for handling health complaints about hazardous chemicals.
- ◆ Hospitals and other health care providers which are trained to handle injuries or exposures involving hazardous materials.

Want Some More Information?

- ◆ Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency/Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), Phone: (513) 851-7080
- ◆ Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services, Phone: (513) 651-9437
- ◆ Cincinnati Office of Environmental Management, Phone: (513) 352-4682
- ◆ Hamilton County General Health District, Phone: (513) 326-4520
- ◆ Cincinnati Department of Health, Bureau of Env. Health Services Phone: (513) 357-7201
- ◆ Drug & Poison Information Center, Phone: (513) 558-5111

Managing Risk in Our Community

Both at home and on the job, our lives are safer when we plan to prevent and respond to accidents. In our homes, we frequently employ safety precautions such as keeping the cooking oil bottle off the stove top, turning the pan handle away from the stove edge, and *not* using a damp dish towel as a pot holder. In addition to practicing prevention, many of us also plan for emergency response. We have smoke detectors in our houses, 911 is programmed on our telephone's speed dial, and escapes routes are planned and practiced in case the worst happens. This informal risk management planning is designed to keep our families safe and secure. Now, in an effort to make our communities even safer, new prevention and response safeguards will soon be required of many industrial facilities nationwide.



Making It Even Safer

A new regulation under the federal Clean Air Act Section 112(r), called the Risk Management Program, has been developed to help prevent accidental releases of regulated chemicals and reduce the severity of releases that do occur. Under this program, facilities which use, store, manufacture, handle, move, and/or process any of 140 toxic or flammable chemicals above threshold levels will be required to submit a *Risk Management Plan* (RMP) to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on or before June 21, 1999. This plan will identify in part a

“worst-case scenario” hazardous material incident for each facility, how the facility plans to respond to it, and safe practices already employed. Each facility's RMP will be available to the public and should be accessible through the Internet or other electronic form, such as a CD-Rom.

“EPA recognizes that regulatory requirements, by themselves, will not guarantee safety,” the final rules states. “EPA intends that officials and the public use (worst-case scenario) information to understand the chemical hazards in the community and then engage in a dialogue with industry to reduce risk. In this way, accident prevention is focused primarily at the local level where the risk is found.”

Impacted Industries

The industries impacted by this new regulation include propane gas retailers and large-scale users (44% of total); drinking and wastewater treatment facilities; food producers; electric and gas utilities; chemical, petrochemical, agricultural chemical, and paper manufacturers; military installations; and many universities. About 66,000 U.S. facilities will be affected, 200-300 of which are in Hamilton County.

In addition to the *Risk Management Plan*, all facilities are required to complete a hazard assessment, and some must prepare extensive prevention and emergency response programs.

Risk Management Program Seminar Scheduled for Fall 1998

The Alliance for Chemical Safety is sponsoring a “Risk Management Program Seminar” this fall at the Institute of Advanced Manufacturing Sciences, Inc. (IAMS) in Carthage. Tentatively scheduled for September 28 and 29, 1998, this two-day seminar is primarily aimed at helping industry prepare their Risk Management Plans (RMP) and learn how to communicate this information to their neighbors. The first day will cover worst-case

scenarios and emergency response plans. The second day will cover Process Safety Management and communicating RMP to the public.

The cost for participation is nominal for the public and Alliance for Chemical Safety members.

If you are interested in attending or finding out more information about this seminar, please call Debi Leonard at the Alliance for Chemical Safety, (513) 612-3074.



Contacts

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These contacts are industrial members of the Alliance for Chemical Safety. Please call them if you have questions about chemicals in your neighborhood.

Alliance for Chemical Safety: Who Are We?

Organized in October 1997, the Alliance for Chemical Safety (ACS) was created to promote public discussion and understanding of the risks and benefits associated with the use of industrial chemicals. The group also focuses on promoting safety measures used by industry to prevent accidents and reduce chemical risks, as well as educating the public about actions to take should a chemical accident occur.

ACS members are a diverse group representing industry, local government, emergency responders (e.g., fire and hazmat response teams), social service agencies, and citizens who either live near industrial facilities or are interested in environmental issues.

The Alliance is organized into several committees — communica-

tions, technical, emergency response, and membership — which are overseen by a steering committee to help direct their activities. Current projects include a bi-annual newsletter for Greater Cincinnati residents, promotion of community involvement with local industries, public speaking engagements with local civic organizations, and a fall seminar to help industries comply with the new RMP regulation and communicate it to the public.

If you are interested in getting involved with the ACS, please call Debi Leonard at (513) 612-3074 or attend a monthly meeting. Meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month from 4:30-6 p.m. at the St. Bernard City Hall in the Centennial Room on the lower level.



Free Chemical Safety Awareness Sessions

The American Red Cross, Cincinnati Area Chapter, and the Cincinnati Fire Division are sponsoring free Chemical Safety Awareness Sessions in Greater Cincinnati neighborhoods to educate the public about safety measures in the event of a hazardous material incident. Since May, programs have been conducted in Carthage, East End, Lower Price Hill, Pleasant Ridge and Winton Place. The sessions focus on emergency response and notification, primarily “shelter in place” and evacuations.

The programs are funded by a grant through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

If you are interested in scheduling a session in your neighborhood, please call Dawn Butsch at the Red Cross, (513) 579-3988.

How Do I Get Involved?

- ◆ **Ask questions, then find the best source to get answers:**
 - ⇒ **Call your local industrial plant**
 - ⇒ **Join or start a Community Advisory Panel or community group**
 - ⇒ **Contact the Alliance for Chemical Safety**
Phone: (513) 612-3074



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