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Chemical Hazards Big And Small

*You can find out and
help make your community
safer*

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Action Checklist

It's easy to start getting involved. Here are a few ideas for steps you can take right now:

- ⇒ Call your library for information.
- ⇒ Ask your town or state government for the phone number of your Local Emergency Planning Committee.
- ⇒ Contact your regional EPA office.
- ⇒ Spread the word -- give this leaflet to a friend, neighbor, or schoolteacher.

Your Rights

Thanks to 1986 Federal legislation, you now have a special opportunity to help improve chemical safety in your community. Together with others, you can get involved and make a difference.

The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know law requires communities across the country to set up local committees that make plans for responding to chemical emergencies. You can join your local committee and become a full partner in preparing for emergencies and managing chemical risks.

The law also requires certain manufacturing plants and other facilities to submit information about the chemicals they use, store, and emit to the environment. Some small businesses also are required to file reports. You can get this information and take action to reduce chemical risks.

Remember - under the law, you are guaranteed the right to get information on chemicals in your community.

The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act is based on the idea of working partnerships. All sectors of the community must join forces under one or more of the law's four provisions:

The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act is also known as Title III of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA).

Under the Law

Planning for Emergencies

Each local committee develops its own plan to prepare for and respond to chemical emergencies using chemical information reported by local facilities.

Reporting Accidental Releases

Chemical plants and other facilities covered under the law must notify federal, state and local authorities if they accidentally release certain hazardous chemicals in amounts that exceed the limits EPA has set.

Storing Chemicals

Facilities covered must provide information on where and how they store chemicals and in what quantities. They submit this information to the local fire department, the local committee, and the State.

Reporting Annual Releases

Each year, manufacturing facilities that release certain toxic chemicals into the environment must estimate and report the total amount released, both accidentally and routinely. EPA is making this information available to the public via a national computerized data base called the Toxics Release Inventory, or TRI.

You Have a Right to Know

Just because you don't live in a town with a big chemical plant doesn't mean you don't have to be concerned about chemical risks. Chemical hazards can exist where you least suspect.

Did you ever stop to think that gas stations, garden centers, your local dry cleaners, and even your local swimming pool also use and store chemicals on their premises - and that these chemicals could pose risks to your community?

Chemical hazards come big and small. Their effects can be felt in a split second when an explosion occurs or over a longer time when the pollution they may cause leads to public health problems.

You can do something about chemical hazards. Information is available. You don't have to be an expert to understand it. You can use it to help lower chemical hazards by encouraging facilities to reduce their chemical inventories and emissions. Others may already be working on the problem and you can join them.

Find out. Take that first step today.

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EPA Library Region 4



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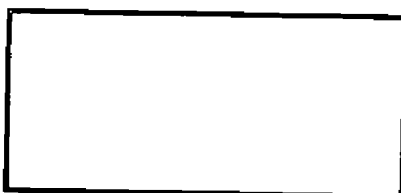
Want to find out more?

Call this number:

1-800-535-0202.

You will reach the EPA toll-free Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Information Hotline. The hotline will refer you to people in your area who are already involved. It is open between 8:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Eastern time on weekdays.

DATE DUE



"I urge you -- for the sake of your family, your neighbors, and your community -- to take an active role in your local emergency planning committee. Let's deal with potential chemical hazards before they become a problem. You can make a difference."

William K. Reilly,
Administrator,
U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency