

# **TOXICS RELEASE INVENTORY**

**It's Your Right to Know.**

It's  
your  
right to  
know about  
toxic chemicals  
that are transported,  
treated, stored or released  
into the environment in your  
community. The Environmental  
Protection Agency's Toxics Release  
Inventory (TRI) provides information on  
toxic chemical use and release so citizens,  
businesses, and governments can work  
together  
to protect  
the quality  
of their land,  
air, and water.

## **Information Kit**



# What is the Toxics Release Inventory?

## Background

In 1984 a deadly cloud of methyl isocyanate killed 2,500 people in Bhopal, India. Shortly thereafter there was a serious chemical release in West Virginia. Following these events, public interest and environmental organizations around the country accelerated demands for information on toxic chemicals being released "beyond the fence line" — outside of the facility. Consequently, the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) was enacted.

## The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986

Hailed as one of the most potent pieces of environmental legislation in over 20 years, EPCRA's primary purpose is to inform communities and citizens of chemical hazards in their areas. The overall goal of EPCRA is to reduce risk for communities as a whole.

Through EPCRA, Congress mandated that information on toxic chemical releases to the environment be collected into a database. Hence, EPA established the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) -- a database which provides citizens with information about potentially hazardous chemicals and their use. By using TRI, communities have more power to hold companies accountable and make informed decisions about how toxic chemicals are to be managed.

Section 313 of EPCRA specifically requires industries and facilities to report releases of more than 600 designated toxic chemicals and chemical categories into the environment. The reports are submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), state and tribal governments. EPA compiles this data in an on-line, publicly accessible national computerized Toxics Release Inventory (TRI). This vast source of data is indeed a powerful force for environmental improvement.

Facilities are required to report on releases of toxic chemicals into the air, water, and land. In addition, they need to report on off-site transfers — a transfer of wastes for treatment, energy recovery, recycling, or disposal at a separate facility. As of 1991, facilities are also required to report on pollution prevention activities and chemical recycling. Reports must be submitted on or before July 1 each year and must cover activities that occurred at the facility during the previous year.

In 1996, over 71,000 reports — representing 5.5 billion pounds of chemical releases and a significant environmental threat — were submitted to EPA by over 21,000 facilities.

TRI is unique in that it marks the first time that the public has direct access to detailed information about releases and management of toxic chemicals in their communities. With information from TRI, citizens can increase their knowledge of chemical usage in their area and use this knowledge to affect community environmental policy and change.

**Each year over 70,000 reports, representing billions of pounds of chemical releases, are submitted to EPA by more than 21,000 facilities.**

## TITLE III

The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986 is also known as Title III of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act.

The Act provides for the collection and public release of information about the presence and release of hazardous or toxic chemicals in our nation's communities. The law requires industries to participate in emergency planning and to notify their communities of the existence of, and routine and accidental releases of, hazardous chemicals. The goal is to help citizens, officials, and community leaders to be better informed about toxic and hazardous materials in their communities.



## TRI INFORMATION

The TRI database includes information on:

- What chemicals were released into the local environment in preceding years
- How much of each chemical went into the air, water, and land in a particular year
- How much of the chemicals were transported away from the reporting facility for disposal, treatment, recycling, or energy recovery
- How chemical wastes were treated, disposed, recycled, or burnt for recovery at the reporting facility
- The efficiency of that treatment
- Pollution prevention and recycling activities

## Reporting Requirements

A facility is required to report if it:

- has ten or more full-time employees (or the equivalent of 20,000 work hours per year); and
- manufactures, imports, or processes over 25,000 pounds of one of the approximately 650 designated chemicals or the 28 chemical categories specified in EPCRA, or uses more than 10,000 pounds of any subject chemical or category; and
- conducts selected manufacturing operations in certain industry groups specified in the US Government Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes -- as listed here on the right.

## STANDARD INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION (SIC) CODES BY INDUSTRY

10	Metal Mining (excluding 1011, 1081, 1094)*
12	Coal Mining (excluding 1241)*
20	Food
21	Tobacco
22	Textiles
23	Apparel
24	Lumber & Wood
25	Furniture
26	Paper
27	Printing & Publishing
28	Chemicals
29	Petroleum & Coal
30	Rubber & Plastics
31	Leather
32	Stone, Clay & Glass
33	Primary Metals
34	Fabricated Metals
35	Machinery (excluding electrical)
36	Electrical & Electronic Equipment
37	Transportation Equipment
38	Instruments
39	Miscellaneous Manufacturing
4911, 4931, 4939	Electric Utilities*
4953	Commercial Hazardous Waste Treatment*
5169	Chemicals and Allied Products - Wholesale*
5171	Petroleum Bulk Terminals and Plants*
7389	Solvent Recovery Services*

\* effective July 1, 1999

TRI provides the first comprehensive overview of toxic chemical pollution from manufacturing facilities in the United States; however, reporting requirements do not cover all industries that release toxic chemicals. Also, the law does not cover toxic chemicals that reach the environment from non-industrial sources. Reported releases are estimates and there is no way to discern whether a chemical has been released in a single large burst or routinely throughout the year. Though the TRI database does offer information on the health effects of a specific chemical, the user cannot ascertain levels of exposure or risk without combining TRI information with information from other sources. Although the TRI reporting base has its limitations, it provides communities with a springboard from which citizens can seek further vital information about toxic chemicals in their area.

## A Public "Report Card"

TRI is a public "report card" for the industrial community, creating a powerful motivation for waste reduction. This annual accounting of the nation's management of industrial toxic chemical wastes is a valuable source of information for concerned individuals and communities. Citizens can use TRI to evaluate local facilities through comparisons, determine how toxic chemicals are used, and with other information, identify and evaluate potential health risks for their community. Organizations can use TRI information as a starting point for constructive dialogue with manufacturing businesses in the area.

## 33/50 Program Update

TRI served as the foundation for the implementation of EPA's 33/50 Program, a voluntary pollution prevention initiative that established national emissions reduction goals for high priority chemical wastes — 33 percent reduction by 1992 and 50 percent by 1995. Through a collaborative partnership between government, industry, and the public, the program met its goals a year early, and went on to exceed expectations by the end of 1995.





# Who uses TRI?

The TRI is a rich source of data originally intended for concerned citizens who, on their own or through organized groups, use TRI to raise and answer questions about chemical releases in their communities. Today, TRI has a broad-based audience that includes manufacturers, environmental consulting firms, trade associations, labor groups, health professionals, state and local environmental agencies, Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs), and federal agencies. Whether the TRI is used to influence local government action, emergency planning, the education of citizens, or to spur industry-citizen cooperation, it is clear that it plays a vital role in enhancing nationwide efforts to improve our nation's precious environment.

**CITIZENS.** The Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA) was written on the principle that the more citizens know, the more effective they can be in avoiding chemical hazards in their communities. TRI enables citizens to become more aware of toxic chemicals in their own neighborhoods. It encourages dialogue between individuals and local companies which can result in a change in current practices and improve the local environment. For example, a group of Minnesota residents used TRI data to encourage a local firm to reduce the use of a carcinogen by 90 percent. The state later passed tougher regulations limiting the amounts of chemical releases allowable under state permits. One neighborhood near Houston, Texas worked directly with a local plant to develop an emissions reduction plan, using recent TRI data as the basis for discussions. Citizens often use the TRI data in combination with other information sources to determine health-related risks in their communities.

**BUSINESSES.** Businesses can use the TRI data as a basis for reducing large stocks of toxic chemicals located in dense population areas or to lower levels of chemical releases. TRI data is also used to cut costs and improve operations. "Wastes" represent an expense — an estimated \$100 billion + is spent in producing the toxic wastes reported in TRI alone. Companies are using TRI to increase awareness of environmental business opportunities and, as a result, reduce the use of toxic chemicals. TRI is also used to market a chemical or process that is cleaner, safer, or more cost-effective for the reporting facilities. Law firms, real estate companies, and banks use TRI to identify potential liability issues associated with a particular parcel of land. Most important of all, the publicity that has resulted from the availability of TRI data has caused many companies to voluntarily reduce toxic chemical releases.

**EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.** Academic researchers rely heavily on TRI data to conduct critical studies of the environment. Several universities use TRI reports to study how chemicals are used and develop alternative technologies for the prevention of toxic releases. The Environmental Studies Program at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania requires its students to prepare toxic waste audits on communities or facilities, using TRI as a resource.

**PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS.** Public interest groups make effective use of the TRI data by challenging facilities to educate citizens and to gain access to revealing company profiles. Most often, they use TRI to bring public sentiment to bear on facilities and public officials. For example, the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition used TRI to identify companies emitting potentially harmful chemicals, and urged them to cut releases. One official from a well-known company was quoted as saying that the "right to know" was a "significant factor" in the decision to significantly reduce their chemical releases. National public interest groups often publish reports based on the TRI data. For example, a study highlighting the nation's toxic polluters and a report naming companies releasing known ozone-depleting chemicals were developed as a result of the availability of the TRI data. The TRI data is also vital for presenting a convincing case to influence legislators. The Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group figured prominently in the passage of the nation's first state toxics-use reduction law, and many other states have followed suit.



**LABOR ORGANIZATIONS.** Concern for worker safety was a key factor in the original passage of the national right-to-know legislation. The right to know about chemical hazards in the workplace has been a consistent goal of organized labor since the early 1970s. The Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union teamed up with a Minnesota community and used the TRI data to campaign for a reduction in the use of methylene chloride, a known health hazard to the workers, and to search for safer alternatives. Union members and activists pressured the state for tougher regulations that would force the company to cut emissions by 93%. One worker remarked, "Right-to-Know provided the catalyst. Once the community got involved, there was tremendous pressure on the business to reduce the risks!" Publication of toxic release data often causes companies to improve environmental performance. Unions can capitalize on public awareness to help protect their members.

**STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES.** TRI data is vital to hospitals, schools, and state and local governments for emergency planning and response at the state and local level. Many Emergency Management Agencies, fire departments, and Emergency Medical Services use TRI to identify chemicals in use and map facility layouts for more effective, quicker response to emergencies. The TRI data is also used to identify the need for and the introduction and passage of state and local legislation. In 1989, Louisiana used the TRI data as the basis for passing a new air toxics law requiring a 50 percent reduction of emissions by 1994. TRI is also used in combination with other data to determine whether companies are complying with environmental legislation already in effect. For example, TRI data on off-site transfers can be used to identify chemicals or wastes being transported from a facility to verify that the receiving landfill has the proper permits for incoming amount and type of waste.

**FEDERAL AGENCIES.** TRI data is used extensively at the federal level for a variety of programs. Congress relies on TRI to prepare environmental legislation, such as the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. Through TRI data, federal lawmakers discovered that the nation's Clean Air Act toxics control program was not adequate. Of the top 25 TRI reported chemicals released to the air, only two were regulated by the Clean Air Act. In 1990, amendments to the Clean Air Act required manufacturers to develop risk management plans, shifting the initial emergency planning responsibility from the mostly-volunteer LEPC to industry. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, a federal public health agency whose job it is to prevent or minimize adverse health effects from exposure to hazardous substances, uses TRI data to set goals for improving the nation's health. The Internal Revenue Service uses TRI data to measure the compliance of reporting companies with tax laws pertaining to the use of toxic substances.

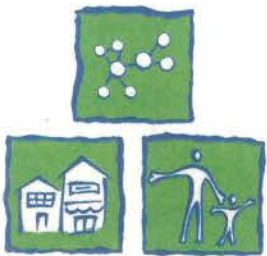
**U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY.** TRI is used by EPA as a baseline for measuring improvements in companies across the nation. Company performance records are tracked over time to monitor efforts, and to monitor emission reductions called for under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. TRI is also used to measure company compliance with other laws, to target areas where enforcement of other regulations is needed, to gauge the need for additional regulatory efforts to clean up water, air, and solid waste problems, and to develop strategies for assessing pollution prevention programs.

**HEALTH OFFICIALS.** TRI data can be used to build an information base on hazardous chemicals used, manufactured, or transported in a state or community. Health professionals can use this information to prepare personnel for emergencies. TRI is used to diagnose, treat, or study health effects resulting from chemical exposure in the community or workplace.

**MEDIA.** TRI is important to the education of the community about facilities and potential hazards in the local area. Many large newspapers, such as *USA Today*, the *New York Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal* have published stories on the effectiveness of the right-to-know statute, as have scores of trade and labor union publications and periodicals.

**INTERNATIONAL.** TRI enhances the ability of the world to work collectively in monitoring the earth's environment. Several nations use the data to become more environmentally conscious. *Environment Canada* uses the TRI data to determine which industries and chemicals need greater regulation in their country and is preparing a National Pollutant Inventory modelled on TRI. The Russian Federation Embassy used TRI data to evaluate companies interested in opening facilities in their country. Other users of TRI around the world include Great Britain, continental Europe, India, and Japan. The international group is one of the fastest growing segments of the TRI-user community.





# How does TRI affect me?

## A Matter of Risk

- What are these chemicals and how toxic are they?
- Will these chemicals affect my health?
- What other chemicals are made or stored at this facility?
- What is the government doing about these releases?
- How do I find out what's going on in my community?

These are not easy questions to answer. Many factors must be considered in order to evaluate what risks, if any, you face from the presence of toxic chemicals in your local environment. Risk is the measure of the chance that you will experience health problems or the environment will be degraded. Risk screening uses available information, such as TRI, to develop a relative estimate of risk for a given set of conditions. Risks are ranked as high, medium, or low in order to set priorities for further evaluation.

## Risk Screening

TRI data is a first link to discovering which chemicals being manufactured, released, or transferred in your community pose a threat to human health and the environment. TRI will tell you the names and estimated amounts of chemicals released in your area during the preceding year. You can also find out about chemicals that were transferred into or away from your area for treatment and disposal. This information alone does not indicate the risks that these chemicals pose or may pose to human health and the environment. Small releases of highly toxic chemicals may be a greater risk than very large releases of less toxic chemicals. Though TRI data is useful to evaluate the risk in your community, other information is required to form a complete picture. A determination of risk depends on the release conditions, extent of exposure, environmental conditions, and other factors.

## So What Can I Do?

Once you become aware of toxic chemical releases in your community, you can decide what to do next. Here are several ideas...

**RANKING THE POTENCY OF THE CHEMICAL.** The toxicological potency of a chemical is a measure of a chemical's potential to harm human health and the environment. Health effects include the potential to cause cancer, genetic damage, reproductive damage, or harm to the nervous system. Environmental effects incorporate potential for damage to plants, animals, and fish.

**RANKING THE EXPOSURE OF THE CHEMICAL.** Regardless of how toxic a chemical is, it cannot do harm unless it has contact with the environment or a human being. In ranking exposure, you must first look at the amount of the chemical that is being released, the duration and intensity of the releases, and how long the chemical remains in the environment. Then it is important to define the route of the exposure. Is the chemical moving through the air, surface water, or ground water? Finally, the exposed population must be defined, as the more people exposed the higher the likelihood that health problems will occur.

**RANKING THE POTENTIAL RISK OF A CHEMICAL.** Using the potency and the exposure ratings, risk screening identifies the chemicals, facilities, and routes of exposure that present a "high," "medium," or "low" priority for a follow-up investigation. This final step establishes the probability that a release in a particular area will harm human health or the environment.

**LEARN THE FACTS.** In addition to chemical release information, TRI contains the names and telephone numbers of public contacts at reporting facilities. Companies are becoming more sensitive to citizens' concerns about health and the environment, and some have begun community outreach programs. Company officials may provide answers to your questions that could affect risk screening. They can also steer you toward local agencies, for example, the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC).



**GO TO YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY.** Ask your librarian to help you find information about chemicals in your community. There are several standard reference works that can help you decide whether further investigation is warranted.

**IDENTIFY YOUR LOCAL SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES.** These groups can help you evaluate what you have learned and identify any additional information you may need. Most counties have a public health agency staffed by one or more doctors, including a county health officer. Some areas have poison control centers with toxicologists and other staff who may be of some assistance. If you have difficulty identifying appropriate agencies in your area, call the local hospital or fire department for a referral.

**LOCATE YOUR LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE.** The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) which created TRI also established LEPCs to plan for emergency action in the event of hazardous chemical spills and similar incidents. LEPCs are aware of hazardous chemicals used and stored by facilities in your area. They receive Material Safety Data Sheets that detail physical properties and health effects of hazardous chemicals used by local manufacturers and other facilities. LEPCs, while often associated with existing county-level emergency planning and civil defense agencies, include representatives of environmental and transportation agencies, fire fighters, hospitals, the media, community groups, and others.

**CALL THE AGENCY FOR TOXIC SUBSTANCES AND DISEASE REGISTRY (ATSDR).** ATSDR is the leading federal public health agency concerned with risks resulting from chemical exposure. Located in Atlanta, Georgia, it was created by the Superfund legislation in 1980. ATSDR makes information on the health effects of hazardous substances available to the public, conducts health assessments, and sponsors research. The ATSDR publication series titled Toxicological Profiles characterizes toxicological properties and health effects information for specific chemicals so they can be understood by a lay person. These publications, widely distributed to libraries across the country, are invaluable if you are interested in a specific chemical. ATSDR maintains contacts with state and local health agencies throughout the U.S. For more information, call ATSDR at (404) 639-0727.

**CONTACT EPA FOR FREE FACT SHEETS.** EPA publishes fact sheets that summarize the health and environmental effects of TRI chemicals. A typical 4 or 5-page fact sheet describes the symptoms that may result from exposure as well as accepted methods of treatment. Fact sheets are free on request when you call the EPCRA Hotline at (800) 535-0202. EPA also administers ten regional offices across the country for additional assistance.

**CONTACT YOUR LOCAL COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY.** Leading experts can often be found in the academic community, and professors and staff are often willing to share their knowledge with local residents. Be prepared to make a few phone calls – several attempts may be necessary to find the right department or person.

**NETWORK WITH NEIGHBORS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS.** This is a good way to exchange information, participate in meetings with officials, experts, and company representatives, and plan activities that address your concerns. The more people who are involved, the more attention you are likely to receive from industry officials, government agencies, and the news media.

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## Hotlines

**Risk Communication** - responds to questions on risk communications issues and literature, provides information on EPA's Risk Communication Program, and makes referrals to other related agency sources of information. (202) 260-5606 Monday - Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm EST

**National Air Toxics Information Clearinghouse** - collects, classifies, and disseminates air toxics information and makes callers aware of published air toxics information from EPA, other federal agencies, and similar relevant sources. (919) 541-0850 Monday - Thursday 8:00am - 5:00pm EST Friday 8:00am - 4:00pm EST

**Air Risk Information Support Center** - assists state and local air pollution control agencies and EPA regional offices with technical matters pertaining to health, exposure, and risk assessment or air pollutants. (919) 541-0888 Monday - Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm EST

## Publications

**Chemical Releases and Chemical Risks: A Citizen's Guide to Risk Screening**, U.S. EPA Office of Pesticides and Toxic Substances, 1989, 8 pages. Free by calling (800) 424-9346 or (703) 412-9810 in AK & VA.

**Hazardous Substances in Our Environment: A Citizen's Guide to Understanding Health Risks and Reducing Exposure**, U.S. EPA Office of Policy, Planning and Evaluation, 1990, 125 pages. Free by calling (202) 260-5606. Answers questions about health risks from hazardous substances. Contains glossary, lists, and other resources.

**TRI Risk Screening Guide, Volume 1 - The Process**, U.S. EPA Office of Toxic Substances, 1989, 102 pages. Describes in greater detail how to use TRI data to conduct risk screening. Contains glossary, lists, and other resources. Charge: \$44.50. Order by calling the National Technical Information Service at (703) 487-4650 and specify publication #PB90122128.





# PROOF POSITIVE: TRI Success Stories

(taken from *Chemicals in the Environment*, Fall 1997 edition  
published by the EPA Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics)

Now in its eleventh year, the TRI program continues to expand its outreach. As the Right-to-Know concept broadens its purview, more and more people are interested in learning about the TRI's successes. To meet this growing interest, EPA is creating a compendium of success stories. The purpose of this compendium is to collect and share information on the program's uses for addressing and enhancing public awareness of the potential risks posed by toxic chemicals released into the environment by industrial facilities.

Many facilities realize the environmental and societal benefits of disclosing their information. As a result of the program's influence, EPA has expanded the list of chemicals and industries covered under TRI. There has also been a doubling in the number of chemicals reported by facilities around the US. Over 31,000 facilities are now submitting reports, representing a 30% increase over the past year. To date, there are over 600 chemicals listed in the database.

The recent TRI/Right-to-Know Conference held in Washington, DC presented an opportunity for TRI to celebrate its successes. In the opening and closing plenaries as well as in a course entitled, "Success Stories of TRI Use," there were several discussions on how TRI has made a positive impact through communities, industries, State and local government, advocacy groups and other organizations. Here are some of the highlights in TRI's achievements as mentioned in the conference:

## BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

In the steady increase of industry participation, several companies have stepped to the forefront in reducing chemical releases to the environment. Companies such as Rhône-Poulenc and DuPont attribute their successes, wholly or partly, to the TRI program. Since Rhône-Poulenc (the 6<sup>th</sup> largest chemical company worldwide) joined the program, their toxic emissions have decreased by 50% and they are now recycling 90% of the chemicals they use. DuPont's chemical releases have declined by over 50% and it has experienced a 70% decrease in the number of injuries, illnesses and incidents involving chemical releases.

TRI has even influenced businesses not covered under the regulation. Lucrative investments in environmentally-friendly industries are on the rise. According to Neuberger & Berman (N&B), because of the growing interest in environmentally conscientious companies, N&B is now using TRI to screen socially-responsive portfolios.

## STATE GOVERNMENT

Examples of states that have recently instituted TRI-based initiatives include Tennessee and Louisiana, two states with a high population of industrial facilities. Tennessee is proud of its 2000 Initiative on air pollution. This program emphasizes industry outreach and the participation of local facilities in pollution reduction schemes. Louisiana is equally pleased with its Environmental Leadership Program. This initiative encourages partnerships with the local chemical industry and stresses voluntary reductions of emissions beyond levels of compliance.

## COMMUNITY GROUPS AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Administrator Browner recently stated that more than 1,500 community groups use TRI data in their dealings with local government and industry. Grassroots groups and non-profit organizations, well represented at the conference, were eager to voice their successes in the legislative and legal systems. Inspired by TRI's momentum, some groups successfully lobbied for state laws such as the Toxics Use Reduction Act (Massachusetts) and a Toxics Right-to-Know charter amendment (Oregon). Other organizations, such as Don't Waste Arizona, Inc., successfully sued facilities for failure to report under EPCRA — but with a constructive twist: instead of paying hefty fines to EPA, court judgments were issued for companies to apply some fines toward facility improvements to meet compliance.

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**"Doing well and doing good are  
not mutually exclusive."**

Neuberger & Berman

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TRI is successful because there is something in it for everyone. In complying with regulations, industry benefits the environment by reducing chemical releases. In some cases, a company's stock investments increase and the bottom line improves as a result of more socially-responsive practices. As community groups learn about the hazards around them, they can coalesce to promote safer, healthier communities. Non-profit organizations serve to increase public awareness and efficacy by bridging communications with government. Finally, while serving the public at large, Federal, State and local governments become stewards of environmental protection by operating programs and initiatives that further awareness of potential chemical hazards.





# Where do I find TRI resources in my community?

## Libraries

TRI has been distributed in one or more formats to over 3,000 public libraries and federal depository libraries across the nation. Also, libraries can be an invaluable source for other information about chemicals and their health and environmental effects. Ask your local librarian to assist you in identifying community resources which can provide additional assistance.

## Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)

ATSDR is a federal public health agency designated to prevent or mitigate adverse health effects and diminished quality of life resulting from exposure to hazardous substances. To accomplish its mission, ATSDR conducts public health assessments and sponsors and conducts research to increase scientific knowledge in this area. Health-care providers, state and local agencies, and the public are provided information and education opportunities that address the effects of hazardous substances. Call ATSDR at (404) 639-0727 or write to: ATSDR, 1600 Clifton Road, N.E., (E-28), Atlanta, GA 30333.

## Poison Control Centers

Poison Control Centers are located in communities across the country to assist residents and the medical community in the handling of accidental poisonings. Toxicologists at these centers are knowledgeable about acute and chronic health effects that result from exposure to hazardous chemicals. They can also identify the chemical hazards that are most prevalent in the community and can describe preventive and remedial measures required to minimize health problems. Information on your local poison control center is listed in the yellow pages of your telephone directory.

## State Emergency Response Commissions (SERC)

EPCRA requires each state to designate a SERC, responsible for establishing Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) and coordinating their activities, along with developing procedures for receiving and processing public requests for information collected under EPCRA, and for reviewing local emergency plans.

## State and Local Agencies

Government agencies serving your area are a vital source of information. TRI reports are filed with the state, as well as with the Federal Government. Most states provide access to the data collected, and many publish analyses of the data. Many states have a counterpart to the U.S. EPA, as well as a state health department — employing toxicologists, health and safety officers, environmental specialists, and others who can provide assistance. You can locate these agencies in the blue pages or government section of your telephone directory or you can call your EPA Regional Office listed on the enclosed insert.

## Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs)

EPCRA also required the establishment of LEPCs, designated to develop emergency response plans to prepare for and respond to chemical emergencies. The LEPCs are a focal point in the community for information about hazardous substances, emergency planning, and health and environment risks. Contact your SERC or call your local emergency management agency or Red Cross Chapter to obtain information on your LEPC.

## Emergency Management Agencies

Every state and most counties have emergency management agencies that are responsible for coordinating emergency preparedness planning and response. At the local level this task is often delegated to the police, fire, or medical service department. Many of these agencies have access to computerized emergency information bases, including TRI, that are accessible through CAMEO or other information systems. These agencies are good resources for basic information about known potentially hazardous chemicals in your community.



## Fire Departments

Fire departments are a good source of information about the hazardous chemicals used by facilities within their jurisdiction. Since fire departments are often the first to respond to a chemical emergency, they receive materials safety data sheets (MSDS) or lists of MSDS chemicals and hazardous chemical inventory forms that provide information about the properties and effects of a specific chemical. This information may be accessed through CAMEO or other information systems.

## Facilities

Each business or facility that reports chemical releases to the Toxic Release Inventory is required to designate an individual to serve as the public contact for inquiries about TRI. The name and phone number for the contact is included on the actual reporting form (Form R) submitted by the facility.

## Trade Associations

Health and medical associations, organizations of chemists and toxicologists, and associations of chemical manufacturers are good resources for assistance in interpreting the TRI data and for identifying people with expertise in your area of interest. For a listing of these organizations consult the *Encyclopedia of Associations* in the reference section of your library or check your local yellow pages.

## Academic Institutions

The TRI is available in the collections of all Federal Deposit Libraries, many of which are located at academic institutions across the country. Universities may also employ physical chemists and biochemists who can describe the properties and uses of hazardous chemicals. Universities with public health curriculum usually have faculty who are familiar with risk assessment procedures. Academic institutions, in general, are good resources for basic information about chemicals and toxicogenic properties.

## Environmental and Public Interest Groups

Many groups with an environmental or community health focus are knowledgeable about the Toxic Release Inventory. These organizations may be able to assist you with your personal concerns about health issues, or they may be able to refer you to a particular source. Many of the larger organizations have local chapters and active grassroots organizations.

