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Community Safety Awards Program: Lake County, Indiana LEPC

RMP Network is designed to share successful practices in RMP implementation, risk communication, and use of the data. The projects detailed in RMP Network are easily reproducible, low cost and promote partnership-building in the community. This fact sheet does not provide extensive information about a project. Rather, it is intended to help stakeholders generate ideas, identify tools and pinpoint funding sources for accident preparedness and prevention initiatives.

Purpose

The Lake County, Indiana, Local Emergency Planning Committee has implemented a Community Safety Awards Program to recognize significant achievements by industry and municipalities in reducing risks to the public from chemical accidents. The LEPC has implemented a Community Safety Awards program that encourages industry representatives, among other things, to partner with other companies to ensure compliance and to discuss and share Risk Management Plan (RMP) data, information gathered under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act, and other hazard-related information with the public.

Background

Lessons learned from a controversy stemming from the transportation and incineration of U.S. Navy surplus napalm at a facility located in Lake County spurred the LEPC to find new approaches to risk management. Building on Department of Energy-prepared materials, the LEPC developed a training program for emergency response to radioactive material incidents. The LEPC plans to incorporate RMP data into its other emergency management efforts.

Partnerships

The Lake County LEPC sponsored an RMP Working Group that includes: BP AMOCO Whiting; U.S. Steel-Gary Works; Ispat Inland; Rhodia Chemical; Bethlehem Steel; Keil Chemical; Cerestar USA; and Grand Calumet Task Force (a local environmental group). The partners exchanged technical reporting approaches to ensure consistency, held a joint public exposition to release information on facility RMPs, and fostered the formation of an Industrial Emergency Response Network comprised of 10 companies. The Network meets monthly to coordinate emergency response and training efforts among the participating companies.



Funding

Approximately \$1,500 was used as seed money for the Awards Program.

Awards Criteria

Annual awards are given to industry and municipalities for risk reduction in any of the three areas:

- **Chemical Accident Prevention** - lowering the potential for chemical accidents through reductions in the use of hazardous chemicals. Examples include: substitutions of a hazardous chemical with a less hazardous chemical or reductions in chemical use. Entries are judged primarily on elimination of or reduction in accident scenario vulnerability zones around the facility. Chemical substitutions are favored over storage reductions that may increase deliveries.
- **Emergency Preparedness** - improvements to accident response preparations that minimize risks to communities if a chemical accident occurs. Examples include: installation of community warning systems, well-executed emergency drills or table-top exercises and safety inspections by local emergency responders and LEPC members.
- **Community Outreach** - productive and innovative efforts that inform the public about chemical accident risks and respond to public suggestions about reducing those risks. Examples include: significant achievements by community advisory panels or facilitating public access to information such as RMPs, TRI reports, or emergency response plans. Achievements will be judged by the amount of public participation generated and whether the project surpassed regulatory requirements or simple public relations techniques.

For more information, contact ...

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