

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Work with your Local Fire Department to Enhance Community Safety:

The Cary Company

The Chemical Safety Network is designed to share successful practices in implementation, risk communication, and data use. The projects detailed in the Chemical Safety Network are easily reproducible, low cost and promote partnership-building in the community. This factsheet 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.

Project Overview

The Cary Company stores and distributes chemicals and other products to facilities that use or make paint and coatings, printing ink, plastics, and rubber. Some of the chemicals stored onsite include resins, driers, liquid latex, pigments and extenders. The company has 45 employees and has not had any previous chemical incidents.

When the Cary Company decided to add a 140,000 square foot building at their Addison, Illinois, warehousing facility, company officials immediately turned to the local fire department for help. The partnership was beneficial to both groups: the Addison Fire Department learned more about warehouse operations, which helps them prepare to respond should an accident occur; and the Cary Company would benefit as fire codes would be strictly adhered to during the design and building phases of the project. The project was beneficial to the town of 32,000 individuals through the enhancement of fire safety.

Challenges

National Fire Protection Association code allows various options when designing a chemical distribution warehouse. However the designer must make certain that the design conforms to the applicable standards. There were many issues that factored into the design of the Hazardous Materials room. The HAZMAT room was designed to safely store hazardous and flammable materials. This was done correctly through steady coordination between

designers, the Cary Company and the fire department. In the HAZMAT room there are two sprinkler systems, a foam suppression system and an early suppression system which is designed to spray twice the amount of water a normal fire protection sprinkler yields. In addition to the sprinkler systems the HAZMAT room was constructed with a dyke to contain any spills within the room.

The Cary Company had to be sure they met their own needs while following the NFPA code in the design, to ensure the highest level of safety.

When the Cary Company built their new facility much of the equipment was designed to exceed fire code requirements to insure protection for personnel and property. The warehouse is equipped with heat sensors, 11 hose stations, 54 fire extinguishers, and a fire protection room. The fire protection room is self-contained with a dedicated alarm, phone line and electrical circuits.

The Addison Fire Department keeps a key to the fire protection room so emergency responders have 24-hour access to: Material Safety Data sheets, maps showing electrical power switches and emergency contact phone numbers. Although, the Cary Company has not had any previous accidents the company still considers that this project has reduced the likelihood of accidents. The company's main concern is safety. Accidents may happen, but the design of this HAZMAT room allows any accidental releases or fires to be dealt with quickly, thereby reducing the potential for any injuries or off-site releases.

Continuing Partnerships

The partnership between the facility and the local fire department has continued to enhance community safety and improve fire service training activities. New fire service recruits visit the warehousing operation routinely to learn about the chemicals that are stored, see what protection measures are in place, and familiarize themselves about the hazards of warehouse operations.

The Cary Company donated \$2,000 to the fire department to buy a special hazardous materials cart. The HAZMAT cart has communications equipment and is equipped to repair holes in storage containers, decontaminate and remediate.

Company employees participate in fire department training to learn more about the safe handling of hazardous materials. The facility is also working with other local businesses that are planning building additions to educate them about fire codes and other fire safety issues.

Cost Savings

The partnership helped to trim the company's bottom line by tackling design flaws early on. Company officials estimate that \$100,000 was saved by forming this partnership.

Tips

Companies should support and cooperate with the local fire department to ensure compliance with fire codes and fire safety programs. Companies should share emergency response needs with the fire department to build consensus, prepare firefighters, and ensure the company's and community's safety.

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