

COMMUNITY-WIDE RESPONSE STRATEGIES: IDENTIFY SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM ACTIONS FOR HAZARD REDUCTION

Examining the hazard reduction opportunities at particular facilities inevitably leads back to larger issues of public policy—local, statewide and even national policies. Ultimately, effective public policies and enforcement at every level of government will be necessary to curtail chemical vulnerabilities. Just as reliance on voluntary measures proved inadequate to prevent airlines from cutting corners in passenger screening and airplane design, it is unrealistic to expect facilities storing and using chemicals to redesign operations and facilities on their own. Government and concerned citizens will need to play a proactive role in providing the incentives, education and enforcement to encourage effective study and implementation of hazard reduction measures by facility owners and operators.

In your work at the community level, you need to realize that the hazards posed by chemical sites have developed over many years. It may take many years to bring the risks down to an appropriate level in your hometown. Concerned citizens and officials should develop a plan with short and long term elements. As suggested by this guide, on the following pages we set forth examples of the measures that communities can take.

SAFE HOMETOWNS ACTION LIST

SHORT TERM

- ▶ Examine maps and data for local facilities, to identify specific locations vulnerable to chemical accidents and terrorist attacks.
- ▶ Identify priority facilities for immediate action.
- ▶ Identify which local officials (Board of Health, Fire Department, LEPC) will promote hazard reduction for facilities in the community.
- ▶ Ensure the commitment of those officials to follow the checklist of this guide (see table of contents), and the recommended hierarchy of hazard reduction options.
- ▶ Maintain and defend public rights to know about facility hazards; expand public rights to know regarding inherent safety assessment- i.e. the right to know what is being done to fix the problem and when it will be done.
- ▶ Establish a process for implementing a hazard reduction reassessment.
- ▶ In view of the tragedy of September 11, 2001, assess and apply immediate options for inherent safety at priority facilities, such as “drop in” chemical substitutes or inventory reductions at chemical storage sites.
- ▶ Conduct local educational forums to discuss opportunities for enhancing inherent safety at local industries, and establishing longer term processes to explore and apply the safer alternatives.
- ▶ Implement immediate measures by facilities to bolster site security, staff training, etc. While this may not preclude a successful attack by a determined terrorist, this baseline of community protection is clearly a necessity, at least until safer design options can be assessed and implemented.
- ▶ Secure fair transitions of any workers whose jobs may be changed or eliminated as a result of new safeguards, including immediate full income and education support for displaced workers.
- ▶ Immediately evaluate practices at all facilities storing large amounts of hazardous materials of hiring contractors for maintenance and construction. Prevent the use of transient contractors who are not well screened and/or trained.
- ▶ Facilities should avoid relocation of storage units where security is enhanced while safety is undermined (e.g. increasing workforce hazards or chain reaction risks by concentrating materials at center of facilities).
- ▶ End transport of high hazard cargos through urban and populous areas. Utilize enforcement of environmental impact and haz-mat transport laws to bar transport of materials such as liquefied natural gas and phosgene in populous areas. Expand public and government rights to know regarding materials transportation.
- ▶ End the practice of keeping tank cars full of extremely hazardous materials in unguarded areas.

SAFE HOMETOWNS ACTION LIST

LONG TERM

- ▶ Engage in an in-depth process of assessment of inherent safety options for priority facilities, including research and development, third party audits, review of the array of options available, and implementation of the best options.
- ▶ Create an ongoing reassessment of security, secondary prevention, land use and buffering issues.
- ▶ Require chemical storage and transporter organizations to pay the costs of added community policing associated with their operations.
- ▶ Expand the use of third party experts for review of opportunities for facilities to improve inherent safety and site security.
- ▶ Reassess emergency planning. Offsite consequence analyses for storage and transport facilities should be required to explicitly detail the distance of locations in which people may be expected to be harmfully exposed to a release from the facility *prior to receiving timely warnings* allowing sheltering or evacuation. This area should be calculated by delineation of the amount of time it might take, in adverse wind conditions, for a release to reach those areas, and the amount of time it may take for decisions to be triggered to provide notice.
- ▶ Establish local policies for notification to the public regarding design changes planned at facilities that may affect the inherent vulnerability of the community.