



CHEMICAL EMERGENCY PREVENTION & PLANNING

Newsletter



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US EPA Region 10

Inside This Issue

Accident Prevention
Mechanical Integrity
Worker Safety

EPCRA
Update
Fine

RMP
Leasing Issues
Railcar Inventory

New Feature!
Best Practices

CHEMICAL EMERGENCY
PREVENTION & PLANNING
Newsletter

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Mechanical Integrity

What can you do to prevent accidents?

([CCPS Beacon](#) May 2009)

- Look at vessels, piping, and other equipment as you walk through your plant, and report anything which appears to be corroded or improperly maintained. Include visual inspection of piping, vessels, compressed gas cylinders, and other equipment in routine safety inspections. Follow up and make sure that problems are corrected.
- Understand the equipment inspection and maintenance program in your plant, and understand your role in ensuring that all activities are completed as required.
- When you do mechanical work that requires removal of insulation from equipment, take the opportunity to look at the condition of the equipment and report any corrosion or other problems that you observe. Corrosion under insulation may be hidden, but mechanical work which requires removal of the insulation provides an opportunity to observe problems.
- Make sure that all welds and other repairs follow all required standards, and meet the original design specifications for the equipment.
- Assure that all pressure vessels in your plant, including portable tanks and tanks which are a part of "packaged systems" (for example, compressors, refrigeration units, compressed air systems, etc.), are included in the plant mechanical integrity inspection program and are being inspected by qualified pressure vessel inspectors. This may include inspection for internal corrosion at an appropriate frequency.
- Make sure that compressed air tanks and other portable compressed gas cylinders are stored in dry locations to prevent external rust and corrosion.



Tank failure due to corrosion and improper weld repair

Accident Prevention - Worker Safety

Learning From Industry Mistakes

“Your workers are dying on the job and it has to stop.” These were the words of Jordan Barab, OSHA’s Deputy Assist Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health, in a speech to the National Petrochemical and Refiners Association. He pointed out that refiners learned too few lessons from the BP Texas City explosion in 2005. Since that incident, over 20 serious incidents have occurred in refineries across the country. Barab described a few of the recent incidents:

Last year, OSHA completed an investigation of naphtha piping failure and release, in which the resulting explosion and fire seriously injured three workers; two other workers, died. Within the unit where this rupture occurred, OSHA discovered multiple pipes that were operating below their retirement wall thickness. In fact, the very line that ruptured had previously ruptured and had to be replaced a decade earlier. As this tragedy makes clear, this type of breakdown maintenance is simply unacceptable. Good mechanical integrity programs are absolutely essential to safe refinery operation.

In 2007, water freezing in liquid propane piping resulted in a jet fire and a rapid evacuation of the entire refinery. Three workers were seriously burned and hospitalized. Investigators found that a Process Hazard Analysis team had recommended installing remotely operable shut-off valves, yet the recommendation was improperly closed as “complete” by the previous owner. In fact, the valves had not been installed at all. The lack of these shut-off valves impeded workers’ ability to control the propane release before it ignited. The refinery learned a hard lesson: It is essential to rigorously follow up on PHA findings to ensure that hazards are adequately controlled. Failure to abate serious hazards can have deadly consequences.

In 2008, at another facility, an explosion in a hydrocracking unit blew the head off a process water filter. The debris struck and killed a foreman. OSHA’s investigation revealed that an inadequate start-up procedure had allowed hydrogen gas and air to accumulate in the top of the filter where it was likely ignited by pyrophoric deposits. OSHA learned that some operators had recognized the hazard and used an undocumented alternate approach that was actually safer, but the procedure had never been updated to incorporate the safer practice. The result of following the faulty procedure was a violent explosion and the needless death of a refinery worker—and a reminder that having safe, complete, and accurate operating procedures is essential to safe operations in process units.

Barab proposed three concepts to save more workers’ lives:

- Effective process safety programs and strong workplace health and safety culture are critical for success in preventing catastrophic events
- Industry needs to learn from its mistakes. We know the major causes and we know the remedies. Systemic reform is needed now; and
- Numbers don’t tell the whole story. Focusing on low DART (injury/illness) rates alone won’t protect you from disaster. New metrics are needed.

For Barab’s recommendations on implementing each of these comments, see the [full text](#) of his presentation.

EPCRA Fine

Failure to report ammonia release costs Washington fruit processor close to \$107,000 in EPA penalties and plant improvements.

In addition to penalty, Company agrees to spend \$85,000 to install ammonia detection system

(Seattle – Sept. 15, 2010) Tree Top, Inc. has agreed to pay a \$21,000 EPA penalty and complete an \$85,000 upgrade to its Selah, Washington plant for failing to immediately report a release of ammonia at its fruit processing plant.

In addition to the penalty, Tree Top will update its computer hardware and install an advanced ammonia detection system that will make future releases less likely.

On July 10, 2009, Tree Top had an estimated 1,000 lb. ammonia release at their fruit processing center, according to the EPA settlement. Tree Top, Inc. uses large quantities of anhydrous ammonia at the plant as a refrigerant.

"When toxic gases like ammonia get released, every second counts," said Edward Kowalski, Director of EPA's Office of Compliance and Enforcement in Seattle. "Immediate reporting protects workers, emergency responders and the community."

According to case documents, EPA alleges that Tree Top, Inc. failed to immediately notify emergency response authorities after the ammonia release occurred and also failed to submit the required reporting documents.

The leak occurred when a high pressure relief valve tripped and failed to reseal properly. While no injuries were reported at the time of the accident, ammonia is a pungent, toxic gas that attacks skin, eyes, throat, and lungs and can cause serious injury and death.

EPA's Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA) requires that all releases of hazardous substances (above certain thresholds) be immediately reported to federal, state and local emergency responders.

For information on EPA's Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act, visit: [EPCRA Statute, Regulations & Enforcement](#)

Contact: Suzanne Powers, EPA Emergency Response Program, (360) 753-9475, powers.suzanne@epa.gov

EPA Updates EPCRA Guidance

EPA has developed updated guidance on various reporting options that States and local agencies may choose in implementing Sections 311 and 312 of the EPCRA of 1986. In addition, the agency has also provided some new interpretations and revised some existing ones to help facilities comply with certain of the requirements under the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA).

The new guidance became effective on July 13, 2010, and covers the following topics:

- Use of UST forms to fulfill Tier I reporting requirements
- Electronic submittal of Tier 2 reports
- Electronic access to MSDSs
- Emergency release notification
- Reporting exemptions for solids
- Link to the new guidance: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-07-13/pdf/2010-17031.pdf>

Guidance and contacts for each state (Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Alaska) for reporting releases under Section 304 of EPCRA and Section 103A of CERCLA has been updated by Region 10. These are now available on the updated Region 10 EPCRA webpage. Find information and links to the state sites at: [Region 10 EPCRA webpage](#)

New Feature – Starting in 2011

Best Practices from the Field

Through RMP training and inspections we meet many talented people with innovative ideas. This new feature in the CEPP Newsletter “Best practices from the field” will feature the know-how and best practice methods from facilities with excellent safety programs.

Look for it next issue –
January/February 2011

*U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 10*

**Visit us at the
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Portland, Oregon

Booth # 223

**Risk Management Program (RMP)
&
Emergency Planning and Community
Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA)**

RMP - Leased Property Issues

There have been a number of inquiries about the responsibility of facilities operating on leased property and their responsibility under Risk Management Program (RMP) regulations. There are many different types of leasing arrangements and the facts at each site tend to be different. However, as RMP regulation apply to both owners and operators of stationary sources, all parties to leasing arrangements have an interest in ensuring that sites they own or operate remain in full compliance with the rule.

In the case of multiple facilities on a leased land site, each company is responsible for filing an Risk Management Plan for any operations that they own or operate. And, in the situation where a landowner operates on part of their property and leases the rest, if both companies have covered processes, each is considered a separate stationary source and must file separate Risk Management Plans even if they have contractual relationships, such as supplying product to each other or sharing emergency response functions.

If you and another company jointly own a site, but have separate operations at the site, you each must file separate RMPs for your covered processes. Ownership of the land is not relevant; a stationary source consists of covered processes located on the same property and controlled by the same person (or persons under common control).

You and another company may jointly own covered processes. In this case, the legal entity you have established to operate these processes should file the Risk Management Plan. If you consider this entity a subsidiary, you should be listed as the parent company in the Risk Management Plan.

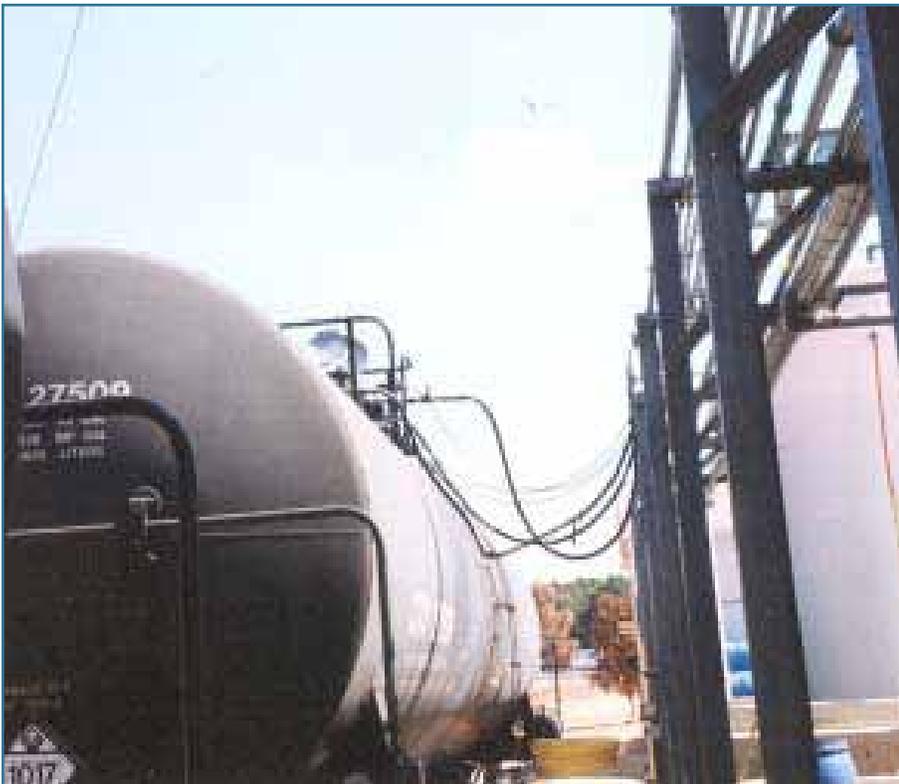
For more information: [RMP Guidance](#)

RMP - Railcar Inventory Issues

40 CFR Part 68 lists 140 different regulated substances with associated threshold quantities ranging from 500 to 20,000 pounds. If a 'stationary source' has more than a threshold quantity of a regulated substance in a process, that process is regulated under the rule. However, under Part 68, the term stationary source does not apply to transportation, including storage incident to transportation. Several facilities have asked whether they can remain under the regulatory threshold by storing chemicals in rail cars and deeming them "in transit," and not including this storage as part of their process inventory.

According to Part 68, transportation containers used for storage not incident to transportation and transportation containers connected to equipment at a stationary source are considered part of the stationary source. Transportation containers that have been unhooked from the motive power that delivered them to the site (e.g., truck or locomotive) and left on your site for short-term or long-term storage are part of your stationary source. Also, if you have railcars on a private rail siding that you use as storage tanks until you are ready to hook them to your process, these railcars should be considered to be part of your stationary source.

For more information: [RMP Guidance](#)



Where Do I Go For More Information?

<http://www.epa.gov/emergencies/rmp> will be updated as new information becomes available.

EPA maintains numerous listservs to keep the public, state and local officials, and industry up to date, including several that pertain to emergency management. You can sign up for our list serve to receive periodic updates: https://lists.epa.gov/read/all_forums/subscribe?name=callcenter_oswer

EPA Region 10 RMP Coordinator:
Javier Morales 206-553-1255

EPA Region 10 RMP Website:
<http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/CLEANUP.NSF/sites/rmp>

Superfund, TRI, EPCRA, RMP & Oil Information Center

The Information Center can also answer questions related to Clean Air Act section 112(r) and RMP reporting requirements. (800) 424-9346 or TDD (800) 553-7672 (703) 412-9810 or TDD (703) 412-3323 in the Washington, D.C. area

Normal Hours of Operation:
Monday - Thursday 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time
Extended Hours of Operation (May, June, and July):
Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time
Closed Federal Holidays

<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/contacts/infocenter/>

Risk Management Program (RMP) Reporting Center

The Reporting Center can answer questions about software or installation problems. The RMP Reporting Center is available from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, for questions on the Risk Management Plan program. (703) 227-7650 (phone) RMPRC@epa.cdx.net (e-mail)

This newsletter provides information on the EPA Risk Management Program, EPCRA, SPCC/FRP and other issues relating to Accidental Release Prevention Requirements. The information should be used as a reference tool, not as a definitive source of compliance information. Compliance regulations are published in 40 CFR Part 68 for CAA section 112(r) Risk Management Program, 40 CFR Part 355/370 for EPCRA, and 40 CFR Part 112.2 for SPCC/FRP.