

When an Accident Happens

Even the most safety-conscious company can end up having a hazmat incident. Fortunately, CHEMTREC has the experience to assist.

Most companies that manufacture, distribute or handle hazardous materials or dangerous goods are extremely committed to the safe handling and transport of their products. CHEMTREC interacts with thousands of hazmat shippers that dedicate an extraordinary amount of time and resources into the safe handling and transport of their products within the supply chain.

According to the American Chemistry Council (ACC) Responsible Care® fact sheet, the US chemical industry invested more than \$13.3bn in environmental, health, safety and security (EHS&S) programmes in 2015. For those companies that participate in the Responsible Care programme, the safety statistics are especially compelling:

- Responsible Care companies have a worker safety rate that is five times better than the US manufacturing sector as a whole and three times better than the total chemical sector
- Responsible Care companies reduced hazardous releases to the air, land and water by 74 per cent between 1988 and 2014
- Since 1995, Responsible Care companies have achieved a 62 per cent reduction in incidents in the distribution chain.

Many organisations have joined and actively participate in the search for better safety in hazmat transportation – including the Dangerous Goods



Advisory Council (DGAC), the Council on Safe Transportation of Hazardous Articles (COSTHA), the National Association of Chemical Distributors (NACD) and many other very dedicated industry groups. More companies are also providing training on the safe handling, packaging and transport of hazardous materials and dangerous goods.

HELP IS AT HAND

Still, despite those companies' best efforts to eliminate hazardous materials spills, leaks, fire and exposures, things can still sometimes go wrong. According to the US Department of Transportation (DOT) Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), which provides a summary of incident reports, there were approximately 18,260 reportable hazmat incidents in 2016. Those incidents caused more than \$75m in damages and killed nine people.

On a daily basis, CHEMTREC receives many calls to report a spill, leak, fire or exposure related to hazardous materials. Even the safest company can experience issues such as a punctured container, a defective valve, a chemical reaction resulting from a road accident involving a less-than-truckload shipment, or a multiple tank car derailment. Then there are exposures in the home from everyday products that have hazardous properties.

Businesses that lack a plan to respond quickly and effectively to a hazmat incidents can expose



themselves to very unpleasant outcomes. These include supply chain disruptions, dissatisfied customers, fines and other penalties imposed by the regulatory authorities, lawsuits, negative media attention, injuries and fatalities.

It is imperative that companies that manufacture, distribute or handle hazardous materials plan to deal with a potential incident. For many such companies, an Emergency Response Information Provider (ERIP) such as CHEMTREC is an important part of a larger and more comprehensive corporate safety or emergency response plan.

CHEMTREC's critical role in this process includes:

- Provision of immediate 24/7 information to the caller to help mitigate an accident
- Immediate connection to a medical professional service when an incident involves medical exposure
- Collection of detailed caller, carrier and incident details, and provision of immediate notification to the customer

Those companies that make the move to have a comprehensive safety or emergency response plan in place are better able to respond to emergencies when they happen – which could be any time at all.