

THE PHILIPPINE CHEMICALS AND HAZARDOUS WASTES EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (CHWEMP)

*A CASE STUDY FOR DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING AN EFFECTIVE CHEMICAL
PARTNERSHIP PROJECT THROUGH COLLABORATION OF GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY,
PUBLIC INTEREST AND LABOR ORGANIZATION*

Jose S. Embang Jr

Chief, Special Rescue Unit Bureau of Fire Protection
Department of Interior and Local Government, Republic of the Philippines

Background information:

Rapid industrialization and sustainable development in the Philippines has increased the volume of chemicals used and the amount of waste generated that may potentially expose the public to health hazards and environmental degradation. As of December 2004, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has registered 3,801 hazardous waste generators which reportedly generated 226 million tons of hazardous wastes annually. Per record, more than 100,000 chemicals and chemical substances are being used, manufactured and imported into the Philippines.

In recent years, occurrences of explosions, spills and chemical fires have dramatically increased as a result of improper management of chemicals and hazardous wastes. The Special Rescue Unit of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) alone has responded to a total of ten (10) chemical emergency situations in the whole Philippines ranging from accidents to suspected terrorism.

To respond to incidents and emergencies related to the use, storage, handling, and disposal of chemicals and hazardous wastes, the DILG, DENR, together with other government agencies and stakeholders like the Department of Health and Department of Labor and Employment, industry associations, have collaborated to develop the proposal for the Philippine Chemical and Hazardous Waste Emergency Management Program (CHWEMP). Its full implementation is dependent on the final approval by the National Disaster Coordinating Council of the Department of National Defence upon endorsement of DILG and DENR.

Objectives of the CHWEMP

The main objective of the PCHWEMP is to establish a national framework for concerted action by the government, industry, academe and community to address incidents involving chemical and hazardous wastes

In the process of program implementation, the PCHWEMP hopes to promote the following:

1. Capacity building
 - a. To build capacity and competency levels of responders to respond and manage chemicals and hazardous waste incidents and emergencies
 - b. To create a nationwide holistic emergency management program jointly by government agencies, private entities, NGOs, and the community.

- c. To establish an Emergency Response Teams (ERT) for chemical incidents and emergencies from the national level down to community level to support the implementation of the CHWEMP
2. Information sharing
3. Training
 - a. To develop different levels of trainings for the ERTs in responding to chemical and hazardous wastes incidents and emergencies
 - b. To develop training for relevant individuals within the life cycle of chemical that may be important in the face of chemical and hazardous waste incidents and emergencies

The Legal Framework for CHWEMP:

The legal framework for this project proposal emanates from the following:

RA 6969, "Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Control Act of 1990"

PD 1185, "Fire Code of the Philippines"

PD 1586, "Environmental Impact System"

PD 1566, "Disaster Management System"

RA 7160, "Local Government Code of 1991"

As a framework, the Program fleshes out the major elements of a chemical and hazardous waste emergency plan such as:

- Organization and personnel responsibilities
- Planning, hazard analysis, and plan updating
- Training
- Drills and exercises
- Facilities, supplies, and equipment
- Detection, alarm, and notification procedures
- Response functions
- Containment and clean up
- Documentation and investigative follow up

While it establishes the critical and major plan elements, the Program assigns to local planning committees the adaptation of the elements to suit actual local conditions. Hence, the program is a guide for the formulation of local emergency management plans. The local plan will depend on the hazards existing in the area, i.e., types of chemicals and hazardous wastes, local geography and climate, time variables, particular characteristics, of chemical and wastes facilities and transportation routes, and the capabilities of local industry, government, and community.

As presented, the CHWEMP encompasses the different phases of Disaster Management; however, to make the approach holistic, **risk identification** which is normally treated as part of preparedness is **segregated as a major initiative**. Hence, five basic steps to be undertaken at the local level where the facilities and transport routes of hazardous materials are located include the following:

1. Review of all existing emergency plans
2. Risk identification
3. Assessment of preparedness, prevention, and response capabilities
4. Completion of hazardous materials planning to identify the personnel equipment and formulate the procedures to be used during a hazardous material incident
5. Development of an ongoing local program for plan implementation and maintenance, training and exercises that are consistent with this program

The program will address the following incidents that involve chemicals and hazardous waste namely releases transportation incidents, fires and explosion.

At present, training programs for various key players and relevant stakeholders have been initiated in preparation for the program implementation while waiting for the necessary approval from the concerned government agency.

In the process of its implementation, the country hopes to develop a system for sound management of chemicals that will prevent or minimize mortality and morbidity from chemicals through a collaborative partnership between government, industry, academe, the community and others relevant stakeholders.

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