

TOLEDO MUTUAL AID ASSOCIATION



Overview

The Toledo Mutual Aid Association (TMAA) is an industry cooperative effort that parallels area contingency planning and Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) activities. It is an effort by industry to identify and coordinate individual crisis management responsibilities and capabilities. This, in part, is intended to provide improved coordination and cooperation with government agencies in an emergency. Government participation in TMAA activities is strongly encouraged as is TMAA participation in LEPC and area committee planning activities. The following are a few of the TMAA’s successful features:

- An industry “Area Contingency Plan”;
- “First Response” team for each participating corporation; and
- Proactive industry participation in TMAA, area committee, and LEPC activities.

Background

The TMAA responds to emergencies that fall within the Port and City of Toledo. The geographic area covered by the TMAA includes portions of the Maumee River, Maumee Bay, and Lake Erie. The waters around Toledo support major traffic from oil tankers, grain carriers, and other organic material carriers. The waterfront is home not only to major industry but also to residential areas and parks.

The City of Toledo and its port are major industrial areas. The need for an emergency response plan was recognized both for maintaining a healthy waterway and supporting major industrial activity. Even a minor incident could have major implications in the port, the surrounding community, and on Canadian waters. The TMAA includes most of the industrial facilities on the waterfront, including major refineries such as BP Oil, Sun Oil, and SE Johnson Wax. The TMAA facilitates effective response in an emergency situation because it stresses proactive industry participation in critical planning activities.



Planning Committee Profile

- An industry organization committed to improving coordination and communication for response planning
- Led by industry with federal, state, and local response agencies participating.
- Participating Members include:
 - BP Oil
 - Sun Oil
 - Clark Oil & Refinery
 - SE Johnson Wax
 - U.S. Coast Guard
 - Local fire departments

Coordinated Planning Activities

The success of the plan in protecting the Port of Toledo from a major incident depends on the involvement of all members of the response community, and assistance from major local industry. Committee members are chosen from industry sponsors through nominations and elections. The TMAA not only works with the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Coast Guard, but also relies on a very proactive industrial base and close contact with LEPCs. The Committee meets formally every three months, and individual members communicate frequently.

Partnering. Each member company has its own emergency response unit for incidents occurring on its facilities. In the spirit of community cooperation, these units are made available to provide assistance to other companies and the community in the event of a major incident, regardless of location. The major oil refineries share resources liberally. For example, fire fighters and hazardous material response teams employed by the refineries also respond to emergencies within the community. In the event of a major disaster, all emergency response teams work together to provide an effective response. In addition, resources and equipment are shared during training exercises. This prevents conflicts over jurisdiction in an emergency and provides the individual response teams with opportunities to communicate with each other.

Training & Exercises

Exercises. Preventative exercises are conducted year-round, while large-scale exercises are typically based on and conducted after a particular incident. Exercises usually include the U.S. Coast Guard, the Toledo Fire Department, and one or more industry partners. The goal of these training exercises is to build cooperation and communication between several different organizations. An excellent example of improved response through training exercises is the International Park training exercise on the M/V WILLS B. BOYER, conducted on July 18, 1996. This exercise, which received significant media attention, highlighted the cooperative involvement and diversity of the response community. The U.S. Coast Guard, local fire fighters, and industry were on hand to participate. The exercise simulated a major marine fire with an oil spill and loss of life. The drill helped establish a familiarity between industry and the government.

Planning Committee Activities

- TMAA Committee members meet once every three months
- Plan updated and revised at every meeting
- Committee communicates through letters, telephone calls, and facsimiles
- Subcommittee responsible for the revising and distributing the TMAA Plan

Outreach. Industry members take responsibility for educating the community on local emergency planning and response activities. Most companies hold safety awareness seminars to help educate and involve the local communities.

Incident. On August 5, 1996, crude oil from an oil processing unit leaked into a steam system and was vented into the air. An oily mist rained down over a twelve-mile radius, covering houses, cars, boats, and pets in an oily slick.

Response. The responsible company enlisted the help of surrounding refineries and the U.S. Coast Guard to assist in the cleanup of the oil. The U.S. Coast Guard closed a section of the Maumee River,

and the oil company dispatched three boats with absorbent booms to assist in the cleanup. The company's quick response led to an efficient containment and cleanup of the spilled oil.

Lesson Learned. Following the incident, the responsible party drafted an after action report outlining the incident and critiquing the response. Although the response to the oil mist was effective, shortcomings of the plan were identified. One lesson learned was that lack of training of facility personnel and equipment maintenance problems were the direct causes of the accident. The company has since changed its company policy to compensate for this lack of training.

Point of Contact

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