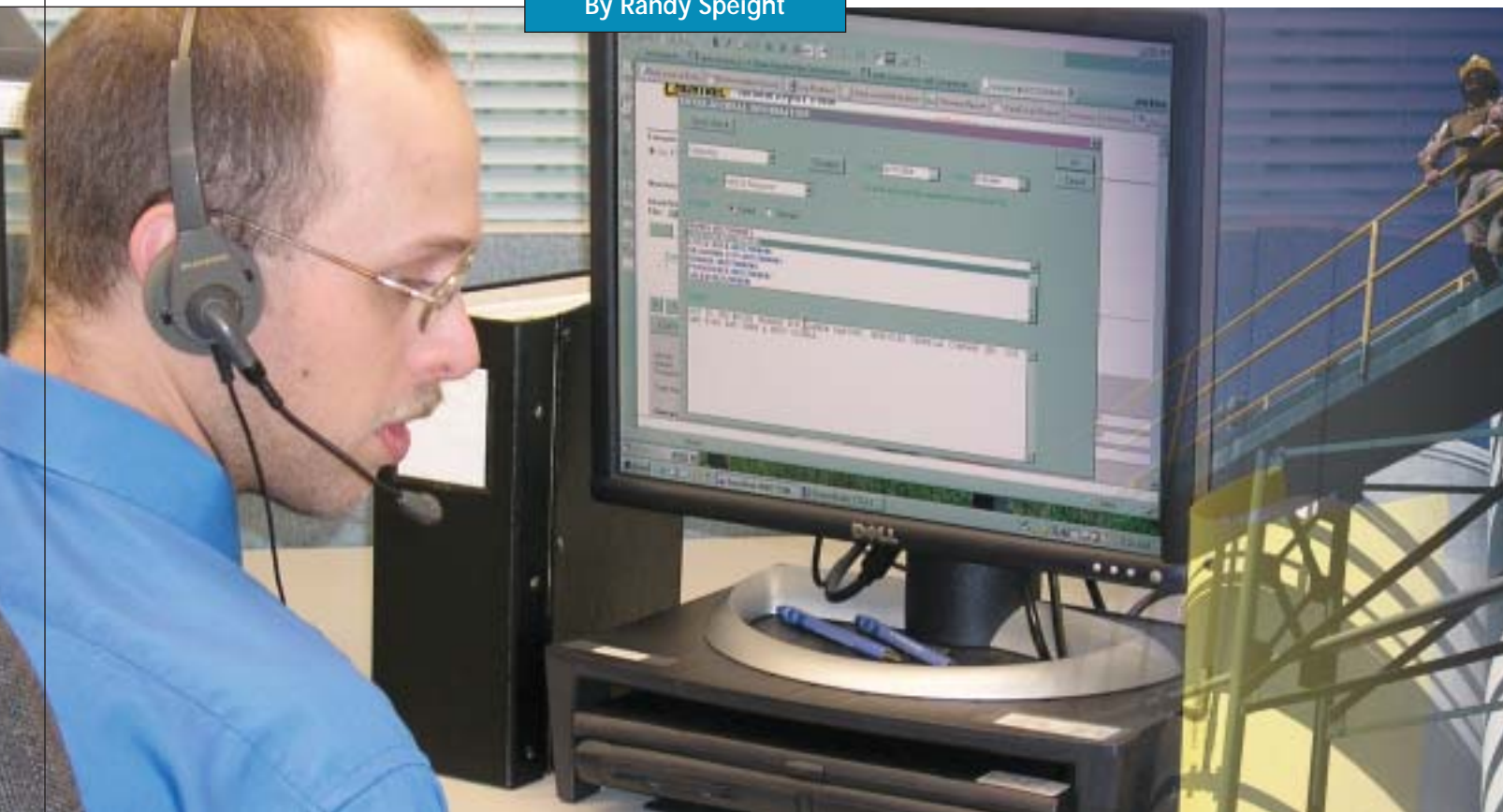


CHEMTREC®:

Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

By Randy Speight



"This is CHEMTREC, do you have an emergency?"

This question is asked nearly 300 times a day! CHEMTREC has handled over one million emergencies since its founding in 1971. Here's how it all began, what happens when the answer to the question is YES, and what CHEMTREC is doing to ensure that it's there to help in the future.

Yesterday

The seeds of CHEMTREC were sown in 1918, when the Manufacturing Chemists Association (MCA), an organization that later became the American Chemistry Council (ACC), formed a committee devoted to the improvement of containers used in shipping liquid chemicals. The need for an industry-wide effort had been highlighted by a series of railway accidents involving shipments of corrosive liquids vital to the WW I war effort. Over the years, the

Association's involvement in the safe movement of chemicals continued as a key area of emphasis.

In 1969, as a result of a number of transportation related hazardous materials incidents in the late '60s, the US Department of Transportation (DOT) called on MCA for help in determining the best approach to a reporting and response system in emergency situations involving chemicals in transit. In 1970, the Association's Board of

Directors authorized the establishment of CHEMTREC (CHEMical TRansportation Emergency Center), a system that would provide chemical-specific information to emergency responders around-the-clock.

In September 1971, CHEMTREC opened for business, creating a lasting and constructive interface between the chemical industry and the emergency response community. By 1972 CHEMTREC was operating according to its established procedures. On receipt of a call, CHEMTREC recorded:



- Caller's name and phone number;
- Location of the emergency and description of the area;
- Products and equipment involved;
- Injuries;
- If there was a fire and;
- The carrier's and shipper's names and the name of the consignee.

CHEMTREC then supplied the caller with information on potential hazards related to the chemicals involved while

recommending appropriate fire-fighting and other control measures when appropriate. The caller was also advised to stand by the telephone for further word from the shipper and/or manufacturer who was contacted immediately by CHEMTREC and told of the emergency situation. After these criteria were met, the notified firm then took over, handling problems as necessary.

Where applicable, CHEMTREC notified the nearest pre-established contact in the event of an emergency covered by mutual aid agreements between shippers. In addition, concerned trade associations with emergency-handling programs for specific products were also informed.

In March, 1980, the Administrator of DOT's Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) formally recognized CHEMTREC as an *approved source of information and advice relating to chemical and other hazardous materials incidents*. The DOT further stated that CHEMTREC, in conjunction with the DOT's National Response Center (NRC) would establish a system and data center in accordance with federal statute 49 U.S.C. 1808(d)(2).

In February of 1989, the United States Department of Defense (DOD) and CHEMTREC executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) stipulating that CHEMTREC would assist the DOD in responding as quickly as possible to an incident or accident involving DOD munitions or explosives.

Again, in August of 1995, the United States Army Biological Defense Command (CBDCOM) and CHEMTREC executed an MOU stipulating that CHEMTREC would assist CBDCOM in responding as quickly as possible to an incident or accident involving "hazardous industrial chemicals."

Today

Today, CHEMTREC is equipped and qualified to support responders involved in a wide array of hazardous materials incidents. CHEMTREC's highly trained Emergency Service Specialists provide expertise in emergency response and the safe handling of hazardous materials as well as skill in working directly with emergency responders. CHEMTREC Emergency Service Specialists can offer information on a wide variety of hazardous substances, including radioactive materials, infectious substances, bio-hazards and hazardous waste.

CHEMTREC staff use a number of authoritative sources to supplement their knowledge and experience. These include over 5 million Material Safety Data Sheets



(MSDSs) obtained directly from the manufacturing and shipper organizations, collected in CHEMTREC's computerized document storage and retrieval system, and indexed for rapid retrieval. In addition, a considerable

library of CD-ROM based and hardcopy reference material is immediately available to the Emergency Service Specialist.

Further, CHEMTREC is linked to the largest network of chemical and hazardous material experts in the world including chemists and response specialists within the ACC membership, and response specialists within the carrier community, public emergency services, and private contractor community. As Retired Chicago Fire Department Chief John Eversole said, "CHEMTREC has one of the best 'black books' in the business." When necessary, CHEMTREC staff can establish direct communications between these experts, CHEMTREC personnel and the responders at the scene of an incident.

In those cases where an emergency call is received from someone whose primary language is other than English, CHEMTREC can access its 24/7 language translation service and communicate effectively with the caller.

How a call to the Center is handled:

- A qualified CHEMTREC Emergency Service Specialist answers all calls immediately.
- The Emergency Service Specialist asks for critical information about the incident, conditions at the scene, the product(s) involved, the shipper and the carrier.
- The responders then receive data and helpful information on handling the substance(s) involved. This may involve such things as requirements for protective clothing, evacuation suggestions, mitigation and containment procedures and other pertinent information. If additional information is needed on the

product, the Emergency Service Specialist will retrieve the necessary MSDS from CHEMTREC's library and forward the information either telephonically, by fax, or electronically by e-mail to the scene. Information from other computer based and hardcopy resources can also be forwarded to the scene as required.

- If there are on-site injuries or exposures, CHEMTREC is prepared to assist. Through its MEDTREC program, CHEMTREC maintains 24/7 access to physicians and toxicologists who can provide critical information to emergency medical technicians and physicians treating patients exposed to hazardous materials. These physicians and toxicologists can be connected to the incident scene or treating facility via CHEMTREC's conferencing system.
- Details of the incident are relayed to the shipper or manufacturer's 24-hour emergency contact, who can be linked to the scene via the Center's communications system. This facilitates having the shipper or manufacturer provide emergency instructions directly to those managing the incident scene.
- In certain special situations, CHEMTREC Staff can contact pre-established mutual aid networks or additional Emergency Response personnel who can bring further expertise to the situation.
- CHEMTREC staff then document the incident for subsequent reporting to the manufacturer or shipper. CHEMTREC's computer based tracking system, coupled with CHEMTREC's "911" type telephone recording and monitoring system provide detailed "after-action" data for subsequent analysis.

CHEMTREC uses high-speed internet, fax, or telephone systems to deliver information to emergency responders. Additionally, multiple layers of redundancy exist not only for CHEMTREC systems, but also for the facility. Back-up electrical systems, three-level redundancy in the phone systems, and facility back-up at 2 Washington regional locations and 1 remote North-East location provide CHEMTREC with a high-level of disaster recovery capability.

Over the years, CHEMTREC's capabilities expanded to meet the changing needs of ACC members and the emergency response community. Those needs changed once again with the tragic events that occurred on September 11, 2001, and CHEMTREC's role and capabilities changed with them. In support of 9/11 rescue efforts, CHEMTREC provided critical information to the New York City Police Hazardous Materials Team as they

evaluated the potential effect of chemicals contained in the collapse of the World Trade Towers and to the responding teams at the Pentagon.

When the Chemical Sector Information and Analysis Center (ISAC) was created in April 2002 through an agreement between the FBI's National Infrastructure Protection Center and the American Chemistry Council, CHEMTREC was the obvious choice to operate it. Using CHEMTREC's 24/7 Operations Center, the Chemical Sector ISAC facilitates the flow of critical threat information between federal government intelligence organizations and the companies that comprise this critical sector of the U.S. economy.

Tomorrow

History has shown that as the business of chemistry evolves, so do the needs of the emergency response community and the companies that manufacture, ship, transport and store chemical products. CHEMTREC must continue to look to the future to ensure that it is prepared to meet those changing needs.

As this article is being written, CHEMTREC is in the process of revamping its information technology systems and processes. The new systems will enable CHEMTREC's Emergency Service Specialists even faster access to information that can be relayed to emergency responders through still faster electronic transmissions. The new systems will also allow greater ease of updating emergency contact information and MSDSs for the nearly 30,000 companies registered with CHEMTREC. These new systems will be fully implemented by the end of 2005, with portions of the system live by the end of 2004.

CHEMTREC is also aware of the changing demographics of the business of chemistry, and has begun an initiative to expand its international relationships. CHEMTREC's longstanding relationships with SETIQ (Sistema de Emergencias en Transporte para la Industria Quimica), the Mexican version of CHEMTREC, and CANUTEC, Canada's government-operated version of CHEMTREC, have proven extremely successful in assisting with incidents involving shipments either to or from those countries.

As chemical industry operations expand along the Pacific Rim, CHEMTREC customers are asking that CHEMTREC enhance its reach in those areas. Over the next year, CHEMTREC will reach out to companies and organizations involved in the business of chemistry to determine what resources are available and how CHEMTREC can better serve its customers in those regions.

CHEMTREC is also exploring partnerships with "best of breed" companies that can provide additional services to CHEMTREC customers, services that complement and will be integrated with the existing CHEMTREC emergency communication services. These additional services will be made available to CHEMTREC customers at less cost than companies would otherwise be able to obtain independ-

- CHEMTREC's Emergency Center staff have over a quarter of a century of combined hands-on experience in handling hazardous materials and that each of CHEMTREC's Emergency Service Specialists receive annual hazmat certification training each year regardless of their prior experience?
- CHEMTREC assisted responders during recovery operations following the Columbia Space Shuttle disaster? CHEMTREC was also contacted by the United Nations for information on the environmental consequences resulting from the Ryongchon, North Korea train explosion and by the FBI and US Post Offices regarding Sarin precursors and the effects of Ricin.
- CHEMTREC is a self-supporting business unit within ACC?
- CHEMTREC receives nearly 300 calls a day and, on average, 125 of those are emergency calls?
- CHEMTREC has handled over 1 million emergencies since its founding in 1971.

Did you know that

ently. Additionally, the opportunity will be provided for customers to enter into agreements with CHEMTREC to provide non-traditional services that can take advantage of and leverage CHEMTREC's 24/7 infrastructure. Revenues generated from these additional services can then be used to further enhance CHEMTREC's contribution to the world of emergency response.

As CHEMTREC celebrates 33 years of service to ACC members and the emergency response community, CHEMTREC staff can stand with pride at what has been accomplished and can look ahead with excitement about what it can and will become.

To use a phrase once used by Ernie Deavenport, former Chairman of ACC's Board of Directors, in a speech about Responsible Care®: "We aren't what we were and we aren't yet what we will be." **C B**

Randy Speight is the Managing Director of CHEMTREC. Randy joined ACC in 1991 following a 20+ year career as a United States Coast Guard Officer. Randy has led the CHEMTREC organization since 1998.