



Hands-on in Louisiana ... Snakes and Ammonia

North American E/R Personnel Get a Refresher Course

What do snakes, alligators, humidity, emergency responders and simulated distribution chemical spills all have in common? Louisiana.

Twice this past year, all North American distribution emergency response personnel from Dow went to the Louisiana State Police Hazardous Material Training Center in Holden, Louisiana. Not for the wildlife, but rather to hone their skills on effectively handling chemical distribution emergencies.

Training was split into two separate sessions, May and September. This enabled all the responders for Dow in Canada and the U.S. to attend without having them all gone from their sites at the same time.

This simulated training occurs every other year and in different locations each time, including the Dow locations in Canada. However, this is not your average sit-in-the-classroom training. It's all hands-on. The only classroom instruction they receive is on safety issues that deal specifically with the training site itself.

"We had four hours of classroom training to learn the safety when it comes to the snakes, alligators and insects on the site. The rest of the time we were doing hands-on training," says Gil Rider, Distribution Emergency Response coordinator. "In no way was personal safety bypassed during training, including making sure responders were healthy enough to go into a fully encapsulated suit."

In Dow's continual effort to efficiently handle spills that may occur on the road or rail lines, this type of training becomes very effective and brings the expertise skill level of the emergency responders up to a

nationally recognized level. When his or her training is completed, each participant has achieved technician status, as defined by the Hazardous Waste Operations Emergency Response (Hazwoper) 1910.120 code under OSHA law.

Participants faced ten rail cars with both water and air piped to them to simulate the leaks, which are set up so that one individual can control all the various simulated leaks occurring at the site. Participants are trained to stop leaks as well as to safely transfer product from a tipped rail car or tanker truck to another one.

Something Out of the Ordinary

During the training, responders not only have a chance to build their skills on tipped tank trucks and rail cars but also encounter something out of the ordinary as well.

"Every year we do this we try to create one situation that is out of the ordinary for these people," Gill adds. "This year it was releasing live ammonia."

The Ammonia Manufacturers Association has provided a structure at the Louisiana training site. The structure, which is completely encapsulated in a water fog, encompasses a cylinder containing 100 pounds of ammonia. The ammonia is released from a four-inch flange and the participants are required to go into the fog with a Level A suit (fully encompasses a person) and stop the leak.

Over the course of two days, the entire cylinder was not depleted. The ammonia released was captured by the water and sold to local farmers for use as a fertilizer.

Having ammonia released in this type of training is unique to



Louisiana. Other types of "out-of-the-ordinary" training usually involve a smokehouse where a leak must be found and stopped.

More Than Response Training

But, the responders get more than response training. They also get to build the relationships between North American responders who do not get to see their counterparts very often.

"Each of the Dow sites takes a turn at hosting these training events," Gil says. "We don't get to see these people that often, so knowing them through training really helps us if we have to respond to an event together."

Equipment from the site hosting the training is used, too. Doing this gives everyone an opportunity to become familiar with equipment at a particular site. Knowing the equipment and the people enhance Dow's overall ability to respond to distribution emergencies.

The training lasts for three days, with a low cost to Dow — approximately \$100 per person. The instructors for the two events are Dow employees. ◆

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