

Emergency Response Requires Constant Planning, Review, Practice and Critique

Here in Sarnia we are accustomed to the fact that the Chemical Valley Industries and the Municipalities of Sarnia, Point Edward and St.Clair Township do and practice the principles outlined above. CVECO has been a leader in mutual aid planning and practice for over 50 years and like the believers in extraterrestrial life are fond of saying "We are not alone"!

The Lambton Kent and St.Clair Catholic District School Boards, (both members of CAER) like industry and municipalities, are working together to ensure the safety of our children and grandchildren attending their schools. Just as in the Petrochemical Industry, there are no restrictions on sharing Health & Safety information and procedures. These Boards are also very much aware that the hazards they face are far broader than just the potential of a Chemical Valley Incident.

All schools have had some sort of emergency plan but there has been little continuity between them and in an era where the workforce can be transient, this does little to maintain knowledge of plan details.

In 2002, a meeting was held with the CAER Administrator, St.Clair Township Fire dept. and both School Boards to discuss the need for a common plan of action. This meeting was just the start of a still evolving, but sound emergency plan.

Lambton Kent School Board shared their comprehensive plan with the St. Clair Catholic School Board Safety Professional Chris Powell who took this plan and others and developed not just an Emergency Plan, but most importantly a stakeholder committee to review and have input to the most important aspect which is an implementation program. This involved Teacher Unions, CUPE, Principals and Senior Administration.

Each school is uniquely different from each other and these differences must be incorporated into the plan. A computer application was required to allow each school to deal with these differences yet maintain strict adherence to the base plan.

The training of not only teachers and staff, but most importantly the children required training aids. It was here that Chris turned to the children themselves and as he says "I was not surprised by their enthusiasm nor their talents". He worked with the students from St. Christopher Secondary School to develop a comic character for younger students; Tommy the Traffic Light with his three colors relating to the level of emergency. When it came time to produce a training video Chris enlisted the help of a former student , Jason Sticklely who mentored the



Grade 12 media technology class at St Christopher to produce a top quality product with the help of student cameramen and actors.

Students directed, produced and acted in the production under Jason's leadership and talent. The process was rewarding for the students who volunteered their time outside of regular classes to complete the project.

A complete package is given to every school which includes the computer program, training aids, video, quick reference guides and posters. The school then forms it's own Emergency Response Team who have training in first aid, CPR, crisis intervention and emergency response procedures.

The program is currently piloting in six schools. They are; St.Joseph Tilbury, George P.Vanier Chatham, St.Joseph Corunna, Gregory Hogan Sarnia, St. Patrick High School Sarnia and St. Christopher Secondary Sarnia.

Lambton Kent School Board not only provided the base plan but is now embarking on a similar implementation plan. One thing you can be sure of in this whole process is that both Boards are working together to protect our future; the Children in our school system.

PEOPLE WHO CAER



Gwen Hess has joined CAER as Administrative Assistant. Gwen is new to the city of Sarnia but not to the business environment having run her own Vacation Home real-estate service in British Columbia. She is looking forward to meeting all of our members while attending CAER/CVECO meetings. She will be working five days a week and looks forward to assisting our membership in the organizations efforts.

Brian Hatfield will assist Gwen and commence work on a special project for CVECO. He will, in the near future be working two days a week and is looking forward to pursuing his woodworking and garden railroading hobbies.

To Stay Safe.....

In the unlikely event of an emergency that could threaten your safety, here are some safety tips to consider:

- Seek an enclosed shelter
- Close doors and windows
- Don't operate your furnace, clothes dryer, bathroom or kitchen fans, fireplace or other appliances that might draw air into your shelter
- Remain inside until advised by proper authorities that it is safe to leave.

Tune to a local radio station for further information. CHOK (1070 AM), K106.3 FM, The Fox (99.9 FM). Our local Emergency Alert Radio System can break into any Radio Sarnia Lambton station at night, with an immediate alert. Cogeco cable TV can interrupt all channels with emergency news, if you are a subscriber.

CAER Community Report is published three times per year by the Community Awareness and Emergency Response Organization. If you have any comments on information in this issue, or questions regarding your industrial neighbours, please call CAER at (519)336-3656.

Web Site: <http://www.caer.ca> Email: bhatfield@caer.ca

Spring 2003 Edition CAER Community Report

Keeping YOU informed on what local industries and community leaders are doing to ensure the safety of everyone living in Sarnia-Lambton



On Sunday, October 26th at 8:35 in the morning a car attempting to pass a tank truck in the eastbound lanes of the Bluewater Bridge, lost control and slammed into the tanker, sliding under the tank frame and trapping the two occupants of the car. The tanker was loaded with styrene monomer, a highly flammable substance with a low flash point. Fortunately, the tank did not leak as a result of the collision, however the very nature of this substance created potential problems for emergency response personnel.



Traffic was immediately stopped on the bridges and a CVECO code 8 was sounded by the Bluewater Bridge Authority, who are a CVECO member. First response was from the Point Edward Fire Dept. who became the Incident Command authority because it was in their region. Upon arriving the Pt Edward platoon chief upgraded the CVECO code to a 5 which brought Sarnia & Port Huron and CVECO industrial brigades (if required) into the situation.

As with any emergency situation, unforeseen problems can occur. In this case identification of the trucks contents, normally done by sighting the hazard placard could not be achieved either through the bridge cameras or by the use of binoculars because of vehicles stopped in front of the truck, and sightings from the side were difficult because of the location high above grade level. This aspect of the response is critical in order to avoid putting emergency responders at undue risk. A sighting was achieved from the ground with binoculars and the Platoon Chief and crew then proceeded slowly up the bridge to the curve where the fire fighting began.

Just prior to proceeding up the bridge, Sarnia FD were dispatched to the "dry hydrant" at ground level which allows a pumper to suction water from the river and pump it up one of several standpipes to the road level of the bridge. Meanwhile, Port Huron FD pumper proceeded cautiously from the US side in order to connect to the standpipe and be able to provide water if required. This situation was compounded by the fact that different hose thread couplings are used in the US. Fortunately Port Huron, as well as Sarnia carry adapter fittings for just such a situation. From the beginning of the incident, a command post was established in the office of the Bluewater Bridge Operations Manager. The Operations manager and the Pt. Edward Fire Chief became what CVECO refers to as "Unified Command." This office is equipped for this purpose with TV monitors and radio communications. This command post became the center

SADS 2003

Sarnia Area Disaster Simulation

for communications in a situation involving many agencies operating on various frequencies. In this incident alone there were the following agencies: Point Edward Fire & Rescue, Port Huron Fire Dept., Sarnia Fire & Rescue, Lambton EMS, Port Huron Tri Hospitals, Bluewater Bridge Authority, CVECO, Ontario Provincial Police and Preferred Towing.

The fire was extinguished by Point Edward volunteers and rescue of the victims began using extrication equipment. Waiting to remove and transport the victims to hospital were both Lambton EMS and if required Port Huron Tri Hospitals vehicles and personnel. As this was a simulation, newer members of Lambton EMS staff were utilized to provide training.

Upon removal of the victims, the tanker truck was driven to the containment compound on the Canadian side of the bridge. This area is equipped with a drainage containment system in the event of spills. At this point the truck driver approached the truck in order to check all valves. In doing so he inadvertently opened a valve and was splashed with the contents. Sarnia Fire Departments newly formed HazMet team was called into action to provide decontamination for the driver. At this point, in an attempt to provide a dyke to contain the spill, six other fire fighters became contaminated and also required decontamination.

Upon completion of the exercise, the agencies Chiefs and a number of trained observers and evaluators met at the Point Edward Fire Hall to do an initial evaluation. After this session, each Chief was to return to their halls and utilizing the experiences of their team members, critique their own operation. When this is done, a meeting of the participants and their lessons learned will be held and a final report constructed.

In summary, it was a very detailed and realistic scenario involving many agencies and it met its objective of fire extinguishment, rescue and spill containment while at all times preventing ignition of the trucks cargo and preventing injuries to emergency personnel.



Lessons Learned

- Adjustments to cameras needed to facilitate placard identification.
- Drops in lake levels since construction of the bridge have left the intake line for the "dry hydrant" in too shallow a position. A vortex forms which jeopardizes pumping volume.
- The bridge fire water standpipes work as designed and pumping capacity of FD pumper is more than adequate to supply water over 100' up to the bridge.
- Adapters for different standard hose lines do work and are carried at all times on emergency vehicles.
- The Command post for the bridge is well equipped to handle a situation of this magnitude.
- Improvements required in communications between agency chiefs and the strict adherence to the protocols outlined in the CVECO unified command manual.
- Better staffing of the mobile command post vehicle (in the containment area of the compound) by sector chiefs needs improvement.
- Newly formed Hazmet team of the Sarnia FD performed well at their first call out. Minor improvements to equipment required.
- Media personnel were successfully transported to the scene and controlled for their own safety.
- Bluewater Bridge Authority were efficient in stopping traffic and facilitating two way traffic in under 20 minutes.



Visit CAER on the internet to learn more

<http://www.caer.ca>



There will no doubt be additions to this list when agency self critiques are completed. These will be both positive and negative, however one overriding fact remains, the areas emergency responders are well trained and have the necessary equipment and organization to deal successfully with complicated situations. Each group consistently performs simulations by themselves and once a year a Sarnia Area Disaster Simulation is carried out to confirm the areas readiness to protect lives and the community.

Special Thanks this year to the many well trained volunteers from Point Edward Fire & Rescue who designed the scenario, took command and successfully rescued and contained a dangerous situation.

