

## **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENT**

### **GENERAL SITUATION**

A hazardous material is defined by the California Health and Safety Code as a substance or waste that, because of physical or chemical properties, quantity, concentration, or other characteristics, may either (1) cause an increase in mortality or an increase in serious, irreversible, or incapacitating, illness; or (2) pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or environment when improperly treated, stored, transported or disposed of. The production and use of these hazardous materials is a part of our society over which local governments have little control.

Hazardous material incidents differ from other emergency response situations because of the wide diversity of causative factors and the pervasiveness of the potential threat. Circumstances such as the prevailing wind and geographic features in the vicinity of emergency incidents are relevant factors that may greatly increase the hazardous chemical dangers. Incidents may occur at fixed facilities where, most likely, the occupants have filed site specific emergency response contingency and evacuation plans. However incidents may also occur at any place along any land, water or air transportation routes, and (in event of vessel mishaps, aircraft accidents, misuse of agricultural chemicals and illegal dumping) may occur in unpredictable areas, relatively inaccessible by ground transportation.

In Oxnard the vast majority of hazardous material incidents are handled prior to their becoming a major disaster. Nevertheless, the emergency organization needs to be flexible and evolutionary in its response to a developing incident.

The increasing volume and variety of hazardous materials that are generated, stored, or transported within the city of Oxnard and the County of Ventura is a problem of great concern to public officials and the community. A major hazmat accident and/or spill could endanger the health and safety of anybody who may be within the affected area of the accident scene. A number of freight trains cross through the area hauling various types of hazardous and explosive materials including chlorine gas and LPG natural gas. Several fixed site industrial firms require potentially hazardous materials to operate their businesses. In addition, there are numerous underground pipelines which carry flammable and hazardous liquids. Finally, aircraft operations create the potential for injuries to people and damage to property caused by the hazardous materials found in jet fuel. Ventura County is served by the Oxnard Airport, Camarillo Airport and the Point Mugu Naval Air Station.

### **SPECIFIC SITUATION**

The Oxnard Fire Department responds to all hazardous materials calls within the city of Oxnard. The Oxnard Fire Department Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) administers the Hazardous Materials/Hazardous Waste program and monitors the storage and generation of hazardous materials and hazardous wastes in the city. The CUPA has identified as many as 800 businesses that handle, store or generate hazardous materials/hazardous waste in the City.

**Transportation**

The greatest probability of a major hazmat incident is from a transportation accident on U.S. Route 101. Historically, hazardous material incidents frequently occur on the heaviest traveled streets and at major intersections and freeway interchanges.

In addition to the U.S. Route 101 threat, the City of Oxnard has designated certain roadways as truck routes to accommodate the heavy volume of truck traffic generated by the Port.

There are many schools within one mile of U.S. Route 101, the railroad, or designated truck routes. These schools have a higher risk to hazardous materials incidents.

The area around the city is served by Amtrak, Ventura County Railway and the Union Pacific Railroad. Although the odds of occurrence are less for a railroad hazmat incident, the severity is greater because of the numerous rail tanker cars involved and the potential for chemicals and explosive substances being mixed together.

**Pipelines**

There are two major natural gas transmission pipelines located in the Oxnard Area. The Ormond Beach Power Plant (Southern California Edison) has a 34" product line and Mandalay Power Plant (Southern California Edison) has a 20" product line. For security purposes these lines are not included in this plan.

**Fixed Facility**

The second most likely serious hazmat threat exists from an accidental spill and/or incident at a facility that manufactures stores and/or generates hazardous waste materials within close proximity to residential, business and school facilities. There are between 775-800 businesses in the area that handle, store or use hazardous materials. Flammable liquids comprise the largest amount of hazardous materials that are stored on a regular basis, not including fuel storage. Other hazardous materials that are stored in substantial amounts include corrosives, compressed gases and agricultural chemicals. The Oxnard Fire CUPA inspects these facilities within the city of Oxnard to make sure these facilities are in compliance with current laws and regulations.