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To Safety Directors

Date 1/24

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Another Reminder of OSHA's
Special Emphasis Program for
the chemical industry. Once
again the emphasis is to be on
safety systems to "prevent
Bhopal-type accidents".

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cc RDC

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SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH DIVISION

EMPLOYEE
RELATIONS
DEPARTMENT
WILMINGTON,
DELAWARE

Bulletin No. 135
Issued: January 10, 1986

TO ALL SITE MANAGERS

OSHA PILOT SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAM

U.S. Secretary of Labor, William E. Brock, announced that OSHA will launch a special inspection program in the chemical industry to help "prevent Bhopal-type accidents." In making the announcement, Secretary Brock said that the program, which he characterized as a "pilot program," differs from the Agency's routine health compliance effort in that inspectors will focus specifically on the prevention of and response to potential catastrophies.

In commenting on the program, OSHA indicated that fires, explosions, reactions, releases, and other chemical accidents are best prevented by effective safety systems. Under the special emphasis program, OSHA inspectors will examine a plant's safety procedures and will conduct a walk-around to make sure they are effectively implemented. In addition, inspectors will review the firm's emergency response procedures, including back-up systems for controlling spills and releases and evacuation of personnel.

The program began in December 1985 at eight OSHA area offices, in Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Houston, Avenel (New Jersey), Charleston (West Virginia), Cleveland, and Baton Rouge. Each office will target for inspection ten manufacturers in the area that process the most toxic and reactive chemicals. The program will be evaluated at the end of the fiscal year 1986 and, if successful, will be expanded.

In conducting the inspections, the OSHA inspectors will focus on: plant management, personnel matters, physical systems, and the plant's ability to respond to emergencies. The inspectors will review the written emergency plan; control and coordination of responsibilities and personnel during an emergency; emergency procedures; training; evacuation plans; and procedures for re-entry and clean-up.

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