



A Division of The Society of The Plastics Industry, Inc.

BY FACSIMILE

Total of 5 pages

February 7, 1994

TO: VI Executive Board - Full Members*

RE: Plant Crisis Preparedness

The following document prepared by Edward Howard & Co. as an update to an earlier memo to you might be of interest in light of recent developments, i.e., the Greenpeace action against Geon's Australian facility. A document containing the types of questions posed to Geon and some industry responses to be considered for use is being developed and will be forwarded shortly.

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Public Relations Counsel
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TO: As Listed*

DATE: February 7, 1994

FROM: Dan Stanowick

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SUBJECT: Plant Crisis Preparedness

* VI Board
Issues Management Committee

I. Preparation

- ▶ Alert your plant security to be watchful for unusual events or activities outside the plant. Double check all plant access points – front gates, rail lines, etc. – to be certain they are secure. Be especially mindful of security at night, too, when demonstrators can unobtrusively scale fences or otherwise gain access to your facility to paint signs or hang banners that will become visible with daylight.
- ▶ Inform your employees about what you are doing and why. Ask for their assistance and cooperation. Ask them to serve as your eyes and ears in the community. Also instruct them that in the event they meet with a demonstration as they arrive for or leave work on any given day, they should not be confrontational.
- ▶ Assuming you have already established positive long-term relationships with key influentials in your community (public officials, safety forces, leaders from business and academia, heads of key local groups and organizations, media), you may want to consider briefing selected, trusted individuals on these latest developments.
- ▶ For the purposes of projecting a positive image for television and print media cameras, be especially mindful of the appearance of your plant and of the plant grounds. Make certain all things look orderly and neat. Park trailers and store drums or other containers out of sight, etc.

Offices in: Cleveland, Akron, Columbus and Dayton

- ▶ Make certain your lists of internal and external plant contacts are current. These should include plant management, company management, local safety officials, local opinion leaders, local media, etc. Include phone numbers and, especially for external contacts, mailing addresses.
- ▶ Determine, now, who will have responsibility for contacting and communicating with the above. An internal telephone tree always helps in this regard.
- ▶ Designate, now, your primary plant spokesperson. Let employees know that all inquiries from media and others should be directed to this person.
- ▶ If you do suspect a demonstration of some sort is imminent, consider curtailing product shipments or other known deliveries to reduce truck and/or rail traffic into and out of your plant.
- ▶ For use under the most extreme conditions, designate, now, an off-site location from which plant management will manage the situation and disseminate information should the need arise. Develop a list of what will be needed to effectively operate from the site, including phones, fax, copier, television and radio, etc.
- ▶ Update or develop basic background materials about the plant, what it does, what it makes and why its products are important.
- ▶ Update or develop specific information about your plant's commitment to protecting human health and safety and the environment. Include achievements, training, investment, safeguards, etc.

II Action

- ▶ In the event of a demonstration or other action outside your plant, more than anything else, keep your cool. Maintain control and, whatever happens, maintain your composure. Don't overreact or become confrontational. At the same time, don't be intimidated. Be strong and assertive.
- ▶ Depending upon the circumstances, *consider* inviting a few of the demonstrators into the plant to meet, especially if local residents are involved. This can diffuse the situation. This can also demonstrate that you have nothing to hide and that you are willing to listen and to engage in serious dialogue. Do this, however, only after the demonstrators have agreed to end their protest, and do so without media present.
- ▶ If demonstrators have come onto plant property without invitation, ask them firmly but politely to leave. Defer to the police for additional action at that point.

- ▶ In addition to or in lieu of the above, distribute to the media and other audiences as appropriate the various statements and background materials prepared in advance by the plant, the Vinyl Institute and other sources.
- ▶ Develop not more than two or three key messages that will drive virtually all communication about the situation. Find ways to keep coming back to the messages in all official statements and responses to questions from the media and others. Here are a few examples:
 - We take great pride in what we do and what we make here. We are equally proud of our commitment to protect human health and safety and the environment.
 - Our doors are always open to the community. We have nothing to hide here. If people have questions or want information, they don't need to go to these extremes. All they need to do is call. My number is . . .
 - The people leading this demonstration are outsiders (assuming this is true). They are paid, professional agitators. They are extremists and obstructionists who prefer confrontation to meaningful dialogue. They give serious environmentalists a bad name. We want them to go away. They are doing harm to us, to our business, to our reputation. And this, in turn, has the potential to harm the entire community.

Note: messages specific to Greenpeace's latest activities have been developed by CMA/CCC and the VI. As the situation evolves, additional material will be distributed to all VI members.

- ▶ Keep a record of all inquiries about the event from media and others. Respond as above. Keep a record, too, of who responded and how.
- ▶ Monitor media coverage, both print and broadcast. Set the record straight on inaccurate or misleading stories.

III. Follow-up

- ▶ Continue to track and respond to all inquiries. Check to see if there are changes in their nature or scope. If so, this may indicate new areas of concern which, in turn, will need to be addressed.
- ▶ Continue to monitor and respond to media coverage as above.
- ▶ Talk with community leaders. Ask them what they are hearing or have heard from others about the situation. Ask them how they think the plant's and the company's reputation has been affected, for better or worse.

- ▶ Once things are back in order, revisit the situation. Ask yourself what was done well and what wasn't. What could or should have been done differently. What lessons were learned that might be applicable to similar situations in the future, at your plant or at other plants as well.
- ▶ Maintain whatever dialogue and relationships were established during the crisis. Proactively communicate with key influentials in the community about significant developments at the plant in terms of investment, training, improvements in environmental protection, etc.

We would be happy to answer any questions you might have or to otherwise be of assistance to you on this. Please let us know.

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