



Comprehensive disaster planning: Prepare, respond, recover

Refinery and chemical plant managers have disaster plans in place but, thankfully, they are not frequently implemented. This creates a management challenge since, to be effective, plans must be regularly rehearsed and tested. Each disaster is unique and requires an appropriate response, but the plan must cover every contingency.

Typically disaster plans concentrate on the initial response phase. Most Clean Harbors clients use the Incident Command System (ICS) model for planning, notification and response. However, since business continuity is the ultimate goal, they view disaster response as a multiphase program that includes preparedness and response, as well as recovery.

Preparedness

Since refineries and chemical plants are dynamic environments with constantly changing production, storage and equipment, disaster response tests and reviews should be standard operating procedure. The reviews provide the opportunity to evaluate the effects of equipment and production changes to the response plan. Here are a few samples of changes that

affect disaster response that are occasionally overlooked:

- New processes introduced since the plan was developed. Do they require specialized responses, personnel or procedures?
- Periodic testing of all response equipment.
- Changes in staff's personal situations that affect an individual's ability to respond to a disaster (residential moves or changes in family situations).
- Updating contact information for all first responders, production and staff employees.
- Reviewing staff reductions and turnover to ensure that they don't compromise disaster response.
- Ensuring that all new staff are familiar with the plan and have rehearsed their roles.
- Querying vendors and agencies on equipment/staff/services availability and making sure that their current management is familiar with the plan.

Response

At this stage the response operates against the plan. In the case of a predicted weather event, sumps are pumped down and tanks are

pressed up, and the thousands of site preparation steps necessary to increase safety, ensure containment and minimize damage are implemented. Vendors and agencies are put on standby. Plant, vendor and rented equipment are pre-staged. First responder employees are put on notice and staff accommodations are prepared.

A well-constructed plan anticipates most of the issues, giving staff and service vendors the flexibility to respond to unanticipated situations. As the initial response progresses and begins to wind down, there will be an evaluation step that prioritizes the most critical idled or damaged processes and assets in order to bring them back to production as soon as possible.

Under ICS, the entire organization — human resources, safety, operations, executive management — must be involved to make decisions and implement the extraordinary procedures that will mitigate damage.

Recovery

Recovery often requires complex project management and the coordination of several service organizations. For major projects

a pre-contracted restoration, remediation and reconstruction services firm is hired to oversee the project. Depending on the nature of the disaster, the team will include other service providers, such as tank specialists, construction contractors, roofers, HVAC and trades specialists, surface oil and soil remediation specialists, mold mitigation specialists, cleaners, medical personnel, even exterminators.

After assessment, phased restarts of undamaged production processes are scheduled. While the specialists focus on recovery, production personnel concentrate on bringing processes back on line. The recovery phase requires a constant redeployment of resources as the recovery progresses.

Disaster response starts with a comprehensive plan, but its effectiveness is based on implementation. Assuming the plan adequately addresses the potential disruption and damage, the difference between an acceptable and an outstanding outcome is the effective implementation of all three phases of the disaster program.

For more information, visit www.cleanharbors.com or call (800) OIL-TANK [645-8265]. ●

NEWS UPDATE

Total, TDS partner in refinery Deep Conversion Project

PORT ARTHUR, Texas — Total is partnering with Training & Development Systems (TDS) in a \$2.2 billion project at its Port Arthur, Texas, refinery. Total is constructing a 50,000-barrel-per-day coker, a desulfurization unit, a vacuum distillation unit and other related units. These new units will increase the facility's deep-conversion capacity and expand its ability to process heavy and sour crude oil.

TDS is developing training materials for these new units that will provide information such as safety items, process descriptions, process control details and equipment overviews. The materials will also include a training guide for the operator that details learning objectives and a learning sequence for the operator to follow. In addition, the guide will outline what evaluations the operator will have to undergo to become a qualified operator.

The procedures being developed for these units are for operators to use when starting up, shutting down or normally

operating the unit.

"I believe the Total project is going great. We have developed an excellent relationship with Total," said Ken Davenport, TDS project manager. "We have a very open line of communication — not just between me and the client representative but also between our developers and Total's subject matter experts. It is my hope that the exceptional quality and design of our material will provide us with an opportunity to extend our partnership with Total beyond this project and beyond Port Arthur."

"TDS is providing a significant contribution to our training efforts for this project and we are glad to have them on board," said Pat Avery, Total Port Arthur spokesperson.

For more information on TDS, visit www.tdshou.com or call (281) 488-1128.

For more information on Total, visit www.totalpetrochemicalsusa.com or call (713) 483-5000. ●

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