

Background Information :

The accident prevention, preparedness and mitigation has always been an area of grave concern to all of us. Showing concern the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF), Govt. of India (GoI) has set up a Central Crisis Group Alert System with a Central Crisis Group positioned at New Delhi. On the same lines, the GoI sanctioned the setting up of Emergency Response Centres (ERC) in four States, viz. one each at Thane, Belapur (M.S.), Manali (T.N.), Vadodara (Gujarat) and Bhopal (M.P.). This is a voluntary scheme and has been instituted in the larger interest of environment.

The ERC at Bhopal is in operation since 1993 and was setup on a mutual cost sharing basis (equity participation scheme) with 40% from the Central Government, 40% from the State and 20% from the beneficiary or member units in the commencing year. The equity share from the Central Government was one time only during the commencement year and now this Centre is operating with the support of State Govt and the member industries. Any industry intending to become member of this voluntary scheme can obtain its membership by remitting nominal fee @ Rs. 1.50 per Lac of investment. This fee amount is utilized in maintaining technical information support and extend required assistance to the industries in times of need. In Madhya Pradesh the ERC has been set up at Bhopal and the M.P. Pollution Control Board has been entrusted with the responsibilities to meet the set objectives and achieve the desired aims of ERC. The ERC in the State is successfully operating with the active participation of industrial units and keen interest shown by them in the objectives of ERC.

Aims of E.R.C. :

The primary aim of E.R.C. is to form a link between industries and experts crisis groups at the time of chemical accidents. This centre, which is also a nodal agency in the State for dissemination of technical/scientific information, specially relating to chemical hazards, prepares the target groups in advance to tackle chemical emergency situation.

Objectives of E.R.C. :

The basic objective of setting up of E.R.C. is to minimize any possible adverse impact of accidents on people, environment and property by providing adequate technical information to the member industries relevant authorities and the common citizens at the time of chemical mishap.

Basic Elements of E.R.C. :

- (i) Incident Reporting : To gear up the target groups through awareness programmes to prevent the chemical accident and, if not prevented, contain it before it turns into a disaster. It also aims at smooth and timely flow of information to the concerned.
- (ii) Information Search : The ERC with its computer facilities and advanced features would be able to quickly retrieve information, relevant to the accident, and make it quickly available to the authorities. ERC also has a library, with relevant books, to access the information manually.
- (iii) Field Assistance : An emergency response van containing equipment and personnel would be available round the clock which could penetrate the contaminated area, maintain link and information flow and provide information regarding antidotes. ERC does not involve in physical tackling of an emergency.

Functions of E.R.C.:

- The centre should have a comprehensive database on chemicals and hazardous material to provide prompt guidance to the caller.
- The centre should have information regarding first aid, Medical information, antidotes of chemicals and precautions to be observed in the event of an emergency.
- To predict chemical accident scenario for any given case.
- To disseminate technical and scientific information to the target groups and authorities to prevent/mitigate chemical hazards.
- To organise training and awareness programmes for the benefit of people, in the interest of environment, through publications, workshops, seminars, and 'Query Response Service'.
- To coordinate with district administration, law & order authorities, State Crisis Group, District Crisis Groups and other authorities dealing with chemical emergencies.
- To inventorize chemicals being used in the State.
- To identify priority of chemicals and industrial processes in the State.
- To decide routes and movement of hazardous material.
- To keep records of regions, maps, topographical

features, etc.

- Work as Central Agency in the State for dissemination of information.
- To compile database on chemicals and Hazardous Material.
- Centre to be manned/operated round the clock.

Present Status and Activities during 2011-12:

The E.R.C. in Madhya Pradesh is located at Bhopal and is administratively controlled by M.P. Pollution Control Board. The Centre is equipped with advanced facilities for quick search and dissemination of information.

- The E.R.C. is the nodal agency in the State to provide technical support and assistance, pertaining to chemicals, to other departments/agencies.
- The industrial sector has shown keen interest in the activities of E.R.C. and 277 industrial units in M.P. have already become its member till March 2012.
- The E.R.C. is also ensuring proper implementation of MSIHC Rules 1989 and Chemical Accidents (EPPR) Rules, 1996 in the State and is coordinating with the State Crisis Group and other emergency authorities.
- Technical information about all the regulated chemicals, including chemical safety data sheets, is available with this centre.
- Monographs of nearly 200 poisonous substances, technical data information sheet for over 75 pesticides, MSDS of about 150 hazardous microorganisms and NIOSH analytical methods for nearly 500 chemical substances are available with ERC.
- Services of ERC are not confined to the M.P. State but it extends support to other States also. Support was extended to Orissa State during super cyclone in 1999. Assistance was given to the Gujarat State during major oil spill incidence which severely affected Arabian Sea coast and marine national park at Vadinar near Salaya and during severe earthquake that shook the entire Gujarat State and devastated some areas in January 2001. During Tsunami devastation the ERC actively coordinated with National Disaster Management Agencies at centre and the Crisis Groups in the Tsunami affected southern regions and provided requisite technical inputs. Other help lines were also extended through the web-site.

- The ERC extended technical support to the district administration and other concerned authorities during the past period. Apart from industries the ERC has also assisted academic institutions, research scholars, other government agencies etc. depending on their queries and need.
- ERC has extended technical support to the MoEF, CPCB, National Chemical Laboratory, Pune in the issues of National interest.
- The ERC also maintains information about warfare chemicals, also used during terrorist activities, which is quite useful for defense and civil authorities and even for common citizens.
- ERC is equipped with facility to guide about safe distance from accident site for protective action and initial isolation of people from the chemical accident site and rehabilitate them to the safer places.
- ERC contributed in the preparation of M.P.State Action Plan for Chemical (Industrial) Disaster Management.
- ERC has made its contribution in formulating National chemical Policy and MoEF sponsored project for making National Chemical Management Profile for the country.
- Series of training-cum-awareness workshops were conducted across the State at various industrial locations, viz. district Dewas, Malanpur industrial area in district Gwalior, Pithampur in district Dhar, Singrauli, Nagda in district Ujjain, Mandideep in district Raisen and Borgaon in district Chhindwara, to create awareness among the industry people, govt. officials, first responders and other target groups related with handling and management of chemicals and the associated safety aspects. The subject experts, local administration, first responders, industry people and other concerned were brought to one platform to develop better understanding and cooperation. Over 800 people were benefitted of these programmes.
- The chemical accidents during the year 2011-12 at M/s BHEL's water treatment plant, Bhopal, basic drug unit of M/s IPCA laboratory, Ratlam, M/s Mandu Distillery, Dhar, M/s Special Blast Pvt. Ltd., Waidhan and chemical accidents during transportation were all attended timely and technical support was extended to the concerned on case specific basis.
- The ERC actively participated in State-wide off-site mock-drills conducted at 21 sensitive major accident hazard districts in the State on 03.12.2011 to assess the preparedness, safety arrangements, response activities, strengths and weakness etc. of the system.

Regional offices located in the State

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Jabalpur	4042780	4042780	9424317778
Rewa	230605	230605	9424974459
Satna	237273	233758	9826143565
Sagar	263774	263774	9425452150
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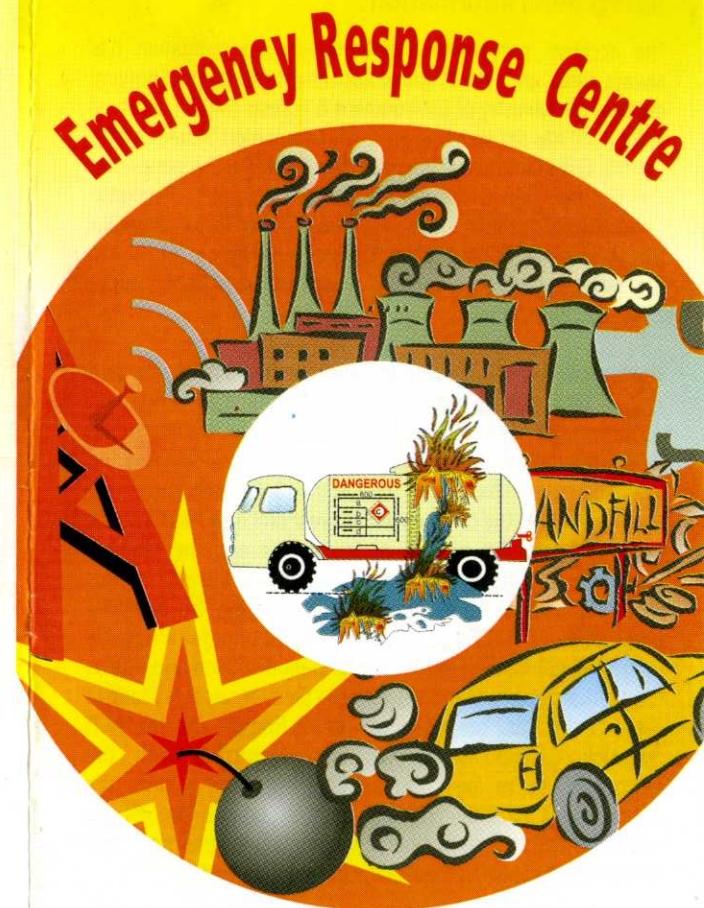
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