HEALTH ASPECTS OF CHEMICAL ACCIDENTS

The OECD has published a 147-page document called "Health Aspects of Chemical Accidents". It is the result of a project carried out as part of the OECD Chemical Accidents Programme, and in collaboration with three other international organisations:

- the International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS);
- the United Nations Environment Programme - Industry and Environment Programme Activity Centre (UNEP IE/PAC); and
- the World Health Organization - European Centre for Environment and Health (WHO-ECEH).

"Health Aspects of Chemical Accidents" contains three guidance documents. They were prepared on the basis of a Workshop on Health Aspects of Chemical Accidents held at Utrecht, the Netherlands, 13-16 April 1993, and hosted for the four collaborating organisations by several Dutch institutions and ministries. Approximately 100 professionals attended from more than 25 countries, including eleven OECD Member countries, and from five international organisations. Workshop participants reached a general consensus on the contents of each guidance document.

The three guidance documents

A General Guidance Document is designed to assist managers and other decision-makers in developing appropriate policies for chemical accident prevention, preparedness and response. It is primarily directed to decision-makers in the health field, including officials in ministries of health, labour and industry; local and regional health authorities; hospitals; poisons information centres (PICs); and occupational health centres. It is also directed to those in public authorities, industry, civil defence and rescue services, who take part in chemical accident contingency planning.
A second document, the **Practical Guides**, treats health aspects of chemical accident prevention, preparedness and response in a more detailed and technical way. It covers:

- health-related information and communications needs;
- the organisation and planning of health-related response to chemical accidents;
- health aspects of chemical accident response - including treatment at the accident site, transport of victims, treatment at hospitals and other facilities, and rehabilitation and follow-up of victims; and
- health-related training and education.

The Practical Guides will be of use to health professionals responsible for the care of chemical accident victims, as well as to anyone at the operational level in, for example, public authorities, hospitals and other treatment facilities, civil defence and rescue services, specialised information centres, and industry with responsibilities for chemical accident contingency planning.

Finally, there is a **Checklist for Action** to assist those with overall managerial responsibility for chemical accident contingency planning, and for liaison with other responsible parties in various areas.

"Health Aspects of Chemical Accidents" is OECD Environment Monograph No. 81. It also appears as No. 19 in the UNEP IE/PAC Technical Report Series. This publication is available, in English and French, from any of the four collaborating international organisations in limited quantities at no charge.

Copies of this and other OECD Chemical Accidents Programme publications can be obtained from: OECD Environmental Health and Safety Division, 2 rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France. Fax: (33) (1) 45.24.16.75.