

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE

The following guidance concerning public affairs is from *Model Spill Plans for U.S. Army Materiel Command Installations*, September 1992.

Although prompt action is essential in coping with any accident or incident, the potential impact on public health and the public's perceptions of spills of hazardous substances magnify this importance. Specific guidance regarding release of information concerning chemical material and accidents resulting in casualty is in AR 360-5. Release of information regarding spills of hazardous will be conducted in accordance with the following guidelines:

- 1) The public is entitled to all unclassified information concerning a spill of a hazardous substance. Furnishing such information in a timely, positive manner that assures accuracy and reflects consideration of the public welfare is in the national interest and is a function of the command.
- 2) In the event that a spill of a hazardous substance poses an imminent threat to the public health or welfare, or to the environment, the installation commander has the authority to approve the release of information.
- 3) Information proposed for release will be coordinated with the Chief Environmental Division at Red River Army Depot before release.
- 4) For spills that are contained within the installation boundaries and pose no threat to the public health and welfare, or the environment in the surrounding community, release of information will be made at the discretion of the installation commander. However, prompt release of factual information is encouraged. Even if no information is formally disseminated to the public, any unclassified information that may be obtained under the Freedom of Information Act should be made readily available to any person who requests it.
- 5) The responsible official who releases information about the spill should ensure that such releases of information will be prepared to:
  - a) Ensure public safety.
  - b) Prevent or reduce widespread public alarm.
  - c) Ensure public understanding of the extent and nature of the public hazard resulting from the spill.