CCPS CENTER FOR CHEMICAL PROCESS SAFETY
An AIChE Industry Technology Alliance

Process Safety Beacon

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Messages for Manufacturing Personnel

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Mr. Potato Head is Down!

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A local community celebration featured the ascension of several hot air balloons. Some of the balloons drifted over a chemical plant and got caught in a strong downward air current. They were unable to remain aloft and several came down inside the plant! The situation was potentially dangerous because hot air balloons use open flame gas burners to heat the air, and the plant handled flammable materials. There were also a number of power lines that the balloonists had to avoid as they made emergency landings. Fortunately the plant operators and emergency response team members were very well trained and experienced. While their training and practice had never anticipated an event like this, they were able to use their knowledge and emergency response training to safely and effectively deal with the situation. All of the balloons were safely retrieved, and there were no injuries or significant damage.

Do you know?

• Good emergency response training, practice, and drills can help you be prepared to deal with many emergency situations, even those which are difficult to anticipate. The specific events we use for drills may never happen, but something similar might. One important reason for drills is to learn how to react to emergency situations and to be able to think in an emergency.

What You Can Do

• Know the emergency response plans for your facility, and participate in training, drills, and practice sessions so you will be ready in case of a real emergency.

•Be aware of local special events, how they might impact your plant, and how your plant might impact the event. For example, in a plant in China, the plant manager said that he had to be prepared for the possibility that burning embers from fireworks would land in the plant during Chinese New Year celebrations in a nearby residential area.

•Are you located near a sports stadium, a fairground or park, a convention center, or a major highway which can have heavy traffic during major community events? How could external events impact your plant? Can emergency responders get to your plant quickly during high traffic events?

Be prepared – for anything!

The Beacon is usually available in Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, English, French, German, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, and Thai.