Hazardous Substances Emergency Events Associated with the Manufacturing of Chemicals and Allied Products

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ABSTRACT

Since 1990, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry has maintained the Hazardous Substances Emergency Events Surveillance (HSEES) system, which collects data about the acute releases of hazardous substances and subsequent public health outcomes. HSEES data include the industries and services, coded according to the 1990 Industrial Classification System of the U.S. Bureau of the Census, associated with recorded events. This paper will describe the frequency and potential public health impacts of hazardous substances releases associated with the Manufacturing of Chemicals and Allied Products (codes 180-plastics, synthetics, and resins; 181-drugs; 182-soaps and cosmetics; 190-paints, varnishes, and related products; 191-agricultural chemicals; and 192-industrial and miscellaneous chemicals). Descriptive analyses of industries and services involved with hazardous substances releases during 1993-2000 from 16 participating states are provided. The Manufacturing of Chemicals and Allied Products was the most frequently reported industry category, it also accounted for the most injured persons in a single industrial category recorded in the surveillance system. This paper will summarize over 12,000 hazardous substances events with more than 2700 injured persons that occurred in this industry during this time. The discussion will focus on chemicals involved, causes of and contributing factors to events, types of injuries, evacuations, and decontamination activities. The data will illustrate the potential public health impacts of releases of hazardous substances occurring in this industry category. The information provided by HSEES data can be used for employee education, training, and prevention activities.