



Good practice in emergency preparedness and response



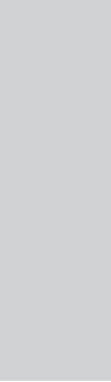
Good practice in emergency preparedness and response

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*'Prevention is not only more humane
than cure; it is also much cheaper.
Above all let us not forget that disaster
prevention is a moral imperative,
no less than reducing the risks of war'.*

United Nations Secretary-General
Kofi Annan, July 1999.



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Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at Local Level (APELL) is a tool for bringing people, principally company staff, community representatives and local authorities, together to allow effective communication about risks and planning for emergency response. Successful mining and metals operations require the support of the communities in which they operate, and experience has shown that open and informed communication between emergency response partners about potential risks results in better organised emergency response.

This publication acts as a companion to UNEP's APELL for Mining (2001). That document was prepared to assist mining companies to apply UNEP's APELL process, which had previously largely been used in the chemicals industry. In 2003, ICMM considered that it was necessary to take the APELL process further by analysing emergency preparedness and response capabilities within both its corporate and association membership. With UNEP's guidance and input, we questioned members on their performance and systems in this critical area. Our analysis showed that, while ICMM members' technical preparations for emergencies are good, more effort is required in working with neighbouring communities.

As part of their Sustainable Development Framework, ICMM members have committed themselves to implementing ten principles and measuring their performance against them. The fourth principle refers to the need to "inform potentially affected parties of significant risks from mining, minerals and metals operations and of the measures that will be taken to manage the potential risks effectively" and to "develop, maintain and test effective emergency response procedures in collaboration with potentially affected parties". The fifth principle is a commitment to "seek continual improvement of our health and safety performance", and the tenth principle includes a commitment to "engage with and respond to stakeholders through open consultation processes". This report provides guidance on meeting these commitments by effective use of the APELL framework.

Thoroughly implementing the model plan described in chapter 2 is no easy task. However, the examples provided by the case studies in chapter 3 and the reference material in the appendices provides both inspiration and information to achieve this important assignment.

It should be stressed that emergency planning, like most management challenges, is a process of continuous improvement. We would welcome comments on the report as feedback from readers will help us continue to provide focused guidance as further experience is gained.

Paul Mitchell
Secretary General

Chapter 1. Introduction

Almost 40 years ago a mountain of coal waste slid down a hillside in Wales and a generation of children in one village were smothered in a sea of slime and mud. In the years since, there have been many other disasters that have blighted the mining and metals industry's otherwise excellent progress in the areas of social and environmental responsibility. (For example, there have been 49 tailings dam failures in the last 25 years.¹) Between them, they have resulted in accidental releases to the environment, threats to human health and livelihoods, fatalities in adjacent communities and physical damage to property and farmland. Several of these incidents have had heavy financial consequences for the companies involved. All have seriously damaged the reputation of the industry as a whole.

The horrific consequences of disaster remain in the public memory for a long time. Given the size and scale of the industry and many of its operations, the number of major incidents is small, however, although most people would regard even one incident as being too many. Nor is there any basis for suggesting that the mining and metals industry has been the only source of major disasters in recent years (witness Valdez, Bhopal and Seveso, to name but three).

It would be equally wrong to suggest that no progress has been made in the prevention, preparation for and management of disasters. Throughout the 1990s, the mining and metals industry – like others – took on board the need to think ahead in order to anticipate the effects of major incidents.

The Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at the Local Level (APELL) programme for mining is just one such step on that pathway. In May 2000 the International Council for Metals in the Environment (ICME), the predecessor of the International Council for Mining & Metals (ICMM), joined with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to begin the process of providing guidelines for improving the status of emergency preparedness in this industry. ICME and UNEP were particularly concerned with how this preparedness relates to and engages with potentially affected parties who live alongside the industry's operations. The work produced *APFII for Mining* a set of 10 steps for the successful completion

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