

Are You Prepared for a Natural Disaster?

Earthquakes, hurricanes and typhoons, tornadoes, tsunamis, wildfires, floods – these and other types of natural disasters have been in the news in recent years. All of these catastrophes cause terrible damage directly. They can also cause additional damage due to the impact they can have on hazardous material storage and processing facilities. Do you know what kind of natural disasters might happen at your plant? Do you know what to do to prepare for these disasters, and how to recover after a disaster?

► Fire at an oil refinery in Japan after the March 11, 2011 Tōhoku earthquake



▲ A tornado in Oklahoma



▲ A wildfire in California



▲ Damage to the Fukushima nuclear power plant after the March 2011 earthquake

Did You Know?

In a 2010 report “Flirting with Natural Disasters,” FM Global, one of the world’s largest commercial property insurance companies, discussed some of the reasons why organizations fail to prepare for natural disasters. Some of the findings include:

- People underestimate the risk of natural disaster – they think “it won’t happen here.”
- As more time passes without a disaster, people find it easier to deny its likelihood.
- Companies overestimate how well prepared they are for dealing with a natural disaster.
- Many companies focus on recovery from disaster rather than proactive activities to minimize damage.

What Can You Do?

- Understand the direct impact that a natural disaster can have on your plant, and also the impact of utility interruptions caused by the disaster.
- Review your plant’s emergency plans for disaster. Be sure that the plans make sense – can you actually perform the tasks required with the available time and resources? If you see problems, inform your management of your concerns.
- Make sure that all equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to prepare for, and to respond to, a natural disaster and its aftermath is available, properly maintained, and ready for use.
- Participate in natural disaster preparation and response drills, take them seriously, and report any problems you see during drills.
- Download and read the FM Global report from www.fmglobal.com/disaster.

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” - Benjamin Franklin

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