

## Protecting First Responders and The Public

# INACCURATE INFORMATION IN DATA BASES COULD COST FIRST RESPONDER LIVES - DELAY OUT-OF-AREA ASSISTANCE

By Michael Jacoby

Our writer is on a dual mission to accurately identify hazardous sites and encourage uses of audible warning devices to alert first responders and the public to the potential hazards in the area. We are publishing this article to inform first responders that there is, in fact, a national data base of hazardous sites. Some information is accurate some is not, some is incomplete, reportedly some locations may be wrong. We urge you to go online and become aware of what is posted in your area and correct any inaccurate or incomplete information you may be able to. Places to check, EPA EnviroMapper for Envirofacts and [www.epa.gov/OEM/content/vzis.htm](http://www.epa.gov/OEM/content/vzis.htm)

Protecting First Responders with Information (GCA) Locational Data is a sound principle but it is flawed by several realities. First the information in the database appears to be inadequate and many first responders are not aware of the information available and therefore do not check it out and correct misinformation in their first response areas.

As President Reagan said "Trust, but Verify"!

Many gut feelings were correct! Something was wrong! So I took his advice.

The unthinkable was happening right underneath your nose!

This is just one part of a much larger problem that I introduced to you in last December's issue of the PA FIREMAN which is information (Data) that is essential for the protection of the health and safety of First Responders and the general public.

The deficiencies that were originally brought to government officials attention in the past were again re-introduced in 2008 but this time these detailed reports were sent directly to the White House and others in Washington within who's domain of responsibility this topic falls showing them firsthand a multitude of deficiencies/inaccuracies that can be easily seen... recorded in our federal databases that are being used by others, which is essential for protecting the health and safety of millions of families across our nation.

As others reviewed these issues, they too... recognized the fact... that... these issues have merit!

### Locational Data (information)

Remember the following 4-words "EPA EnviroMapper for Envirofacts"

As a First Responder when was the last time you checked your area to make sure your information



### Map Key

- |                         |                    |  |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--|
| <b>Regulated sites</b>  |                    |  |
| ■ Multi-Activities      | ■ Water Discharges |  |
| ■ Superfund             | ■ Air Emissions    |  |
| ■ Toxic Releases        | ■ Hazardous waste  |  |
| <b>Water features</b>   |                    |  |
| — Impaired water bodies |                    |  |
| ~ Impaired streams      |                    |  |
| ~ Streams               |                    |  |

Sample of EPA EnviroMapper for Envirofacts for greater Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. If you bring the map up for your area it will show you the various sites for the area selected. You can then click on individual sites and get the detailed information. Unfortunately as the article explains the information is often incomplete, wrong or not listed or listed at wrong location. The goal is to get emergency services to first be aware of this system and second to increase its content and improve its accuracy.

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