



<http://www.epa.gov/tri/triprogram/whatis.htm>

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## Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) Program

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# What is the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) Program

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In 1984, a deadly cloud of methyl isocyanate killed thousands of people in Bhopal, India. Shortly thereafter, there was a serious chemical release at a sister plant in West Virginia. These incidents underscored demands by industrial workers and communities in several states for information on hazardous materials. Public interest and environmental organizations around the country accelerated demands for information on toxic chemicals being released "beyond the fence line" -- outside of the facility. Against this background, the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) was enacted in 1986.

EPCRA's primary purpose is to inform communities and citizens of chemical hazards in their areas. Sections 311 and 312 of EPCRA require businesses to report the locations and quantities of chemicals stored on-site to state and local governments in order to help communities prepare to respond to chemical spills and similar emergencies. EPCRA Section 313 requires EPA and the States to annually collect data on releases and transfers of certain toxic chemicals from industrial facilities, and make the data available to the public in the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI). In 1990 Congress passed the Pollution Prevention Act which required that additional data on waste management and source reduction activities be reported under TRI. The goal of TRI is to empower citizens, through information, to hold companies and local governments accountable in terms of how toxic chemicals are managed.

EPA compiles the TRI data each year and makes it available through several data access tools, including the TRI Explorer and Envirofacts. There are other organizations which also make the data available to the public through their own data access tools, including Unison Institute which puts out a tool called "RTKNet" and Environmental Defense which has developed a tool called "Scorecard."

The TRI program has expanded significantly since its inception in 1987. The Agency has issued rules to roughly double the number of chemicals included in the TRI to approximately 650. Seven new industry sectors have been added to expand coverage significantly beyond the original covered industries, i.e. manufacturing industries. Most recently, the Agency has reduced the reporting thresholds for certain persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic (PBT) chemicals in order to be able to provide additional information to the public on these chemicals.

Armed with TRI data, communities have more power to hold companies accountable and make

### TRI Links

- EPA's analysis of the most recent TRI data
- Reporting software to help facilities submit their data
- Do your own analysis of TRI data
- Envirofacts-single point of access to EPA data
- Additional information on toxic chemicals from the National Library of Medicine [EXIT Disclaimer](#)
- TRI Program Fact Sheet
- Frequent Questions

informed decisions about how toxic chemicals are to be managed. The data often spurs companies to focus on their chemical management practices since they are being measured and made public. In addition, the data serves as a rough indicator of environmental progress over time.