

**Most accidents  
are never reported.**

A few big ones make the news.



Toulouse, France ~ 2001



Baia Mare, Romania ~ 2000



Mozambique Floods ~ 2000



Mont Blanc Tunnel, France ~ 1999



Bhopal, India ~ 1984



**UNEP DTIE**

**Division of Technology, Industry and Economics**

# Explaining APELL

Background to

## **Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at the Local Level**

Each accident seen at left had serious impacts on the public, or the environment. Public awareness of hazards can do much to reduce the consequences of major accidents or other catastrophes.

This brochure describes how APELL can help to implement public security initiatives concerning technological and natural disasters.

## APELL – What preparedness means in practice.

Many local entities need to prepare for potential hazards.

The **community** should:

- know alarm signals
- follow evacuation plans
- know what to do in an accident
- have adapted buildings
- connect to appropriate news services in a crisis

**Rescue services** need:

- equipment and training
- local hazard maps
- to be linked with private rescue services
- arrangements for traffic management
- communication channels with public during crisis

**Industry** must arrange for:

- sharing of results of risk and consequence analysis
- implementation of risk reduction measures
- linking its rescue services
- public communication in a crisis
- establishing buffer zones

**Government** authorities should take steps for:

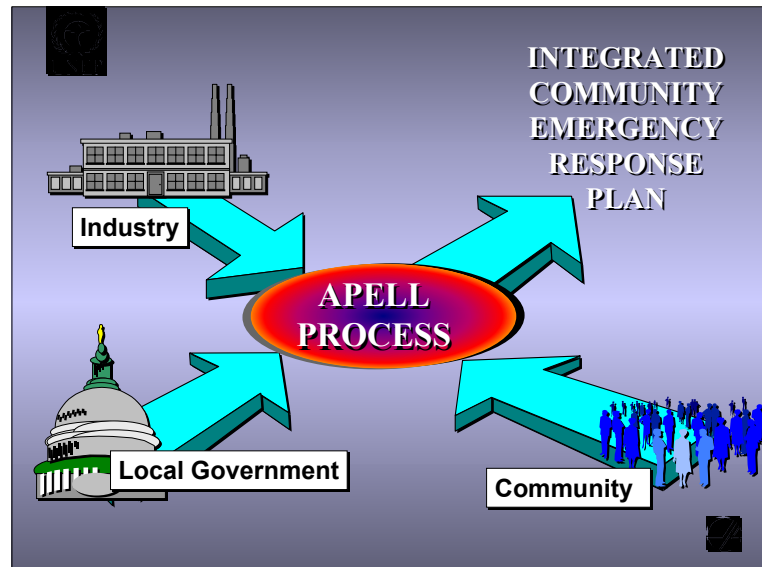
- safe land-use planning
- safe chemical transport
- legislation on risky procedures and processes
- making public information available on risks
- creating emergency services
- having medical services ready for a crisis

**National authorities** may also contribute to local preparedness by linking with national programmes on disaster management.

## How does the APELL process work?

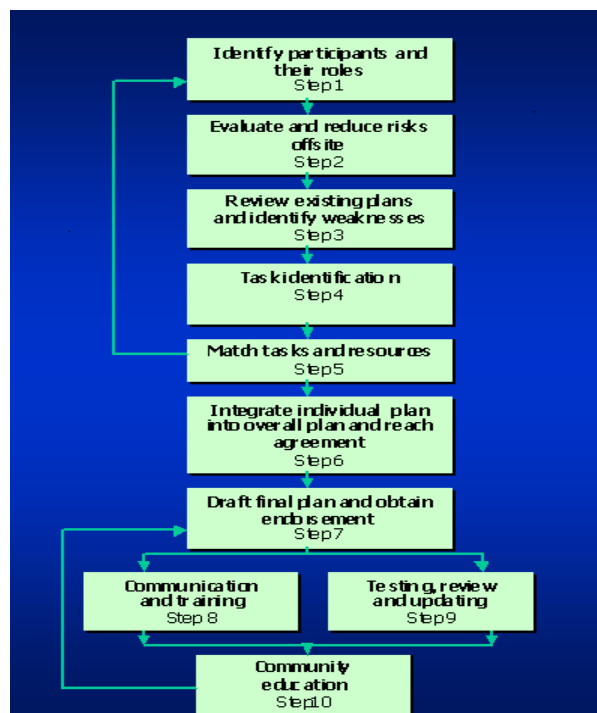
APELL gives local people the information and decision-making structure to address the hazards in their community.

Where a potential risk is believed to exist, either industry or the local authorities establishes a **Co-ordinating Group** that includes all key stakeholders that could be concerned.



The Co-ordinating Group arranges an initial identification of local hazards, and establishes a 10-point plan of action. The Group works through existing agencies and executive structures which should be all members of the Group.

### The ten step process:



**APELL is not a regulation. APELL is a process that helps to implement regulations and voluntary codes.**

## APELL is both a *process* and a *programme*.

APELL is a **local process** of hazard communication and co-ordination 'owned' by the community and its rescue services.

UNEP and national and international bodies have **programmes** to promote and facilitate this local level process.



### What are the outcomes of an APELL process?

1. **local people** are aware of possible hazards and the consequences in their community, and prepared to respond appropriately if something should happen, and
2. **emergency services** are adequately prepared for potential disasters, and have co-ordination and information systems in place.

## Information for the APELL process

These outcomes are only achieved under an open exchange of information on hazards and responses ahead of any potential disaster. It's too late to educate people in a crisis.

Information that is needed includes:

- local hazard identification and evaluation
- access to high-level risk data
- emergency response and evacuation plans
- emergency information centres and numbers

## Links to national safety programmes

Regulations often prescribe planning and industrial operations by setting standards and procedures for industry. They may also require sharing of risk information, but often do not prescribe how this should be achieved.

APELL is based on open communication and sharing of risk information and response options. The APELL process can be used to help implement statutory requirements and Directives such as SEVESO.

## UNEP and APELL

UNEP developed APELL in 1988 assisted by an international group and guided by decisions of its Governing Council.

An APELL Handbook and technical guidelines were published for worldwide use.

Technical assistance is given to national authorities and industries that wish to start APELL in their communities.

UNEP promotes APELL as a means of implementing other international/national disaster management programmes.

Periodic APELL meetings are held to allow all stakeholders to share experience and contribute to the further development of APELL

UNEP relies on co-operation and assistance from many partners in government, industry and institutions. Several centres have started regional APELL initiatives.

Information and publications can be found on:

[www.uneptie.org/pc/apell](http://www.uneptie.org/pc/apell)



Information on the Toulouse accident can be found at: <http://www.uneptie.org/pc/apell/disasters/toulouse/home.html>

## What has APELL achieved?

The survey published by UNEP in “APELL Worldwide”, shows that many countries and industries have used APELL and APELL-like processes to address local hazards. In India, extensive training on transport safety has been undertaken by the National Safety Council. ABIQUIM, the national chemical industry body in Brazil, has promoted APELL to companies to reduce accidents and increase preparedness. APELL principles are being used in some industrial estates in Thailand. Several international organisations are now looking to APELL as a way of helping to implement their programmes.

But recent accidents show a need to still spread APELL to other industries, and other countries. Following dramatic tailings spills, the mining industry has sponsored the preparation of ‘APELL for Mining’. A review is now underway by UNEP and the international fertiliser industry to study the application also in this sector.

## APELL partners

Many organisations and individuals have contributed to make APELL function. The assistance of the International Council of Chemicals Associations (ICCA) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been vital to promote the programme in many countries around the world. The Swedish Rescue Services Agency was instrumental in helping to produce several key APELL guideline documents. Other organisations who contributed can be found on the APELL website.

## Further information from:



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### About UNEP DTIE...

The mission of UNEP DTIE is to encourage decision makers in government, industry and business to develop and adopt policies, strategies and practices that are cleaner and safer, make efficient use of natural resources that incorporate environmental costs, ensure environmentally sound management of chemicals, reduce pollution and risks for human and beings and the environment, enable implementation of conventions.

## Key APELL publications

