



Responsible Care 2019

Responsible conduct in the chemical trade and distribution

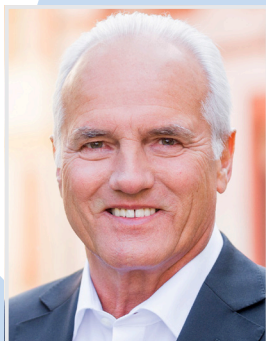


Christian Westphal
President
Verband Chemiehandel

The current annual report provides information on the aspects which are relevant for the safe handling of chemicals. In this way, chemical trading fulfils a key requirement of its programme „Responsible Care – responsible activity in chemical trading“. This VCH programme is unique across the EU and beyond, because from the beginning, in 1996, it stipulated that the participants must have their activities and endeavours towards sustainable trading verified regularly by an independent third party expert.

Here, in the following, two accredited experts of the VCH report on their current experiences. In the second part of this report, again, exemplary information is provided on the values which were determined for the previous year.

The auditing of companies using a management system or standards is always a sensitive matter. The auditor or technical expert has to verify whether the requirements of such a standard have been fulfilled – in spite of all the remaining options of multiplicity. Currently, in chemical trading, a large number of different standards are used to improve ones own performance and document this for the outside world. An exemplary combination is a certification according to various ISO norms, according to SQAS/ESAD, coupled with voluntary self-commitment according to Responsible Care. According to my experience as an accredited expert for the Responsible Care programme of the VCH, this combination has proved its great value in our industry sector, because the various requirements complement each other in an ideal manner. The core element of Responsible Care is the three year plan with concrete measures to remedy existing deficits. Here, repeatedly, it was quite clear that the application and realisation of the stipulations of the Programme, depending on the company, obviously had to have different focusses - resulting in different degrees of performance.



Michael Snella
Third party expert of the
VCH for Responsible Care

With the start of participation in the Responsible Care programme, a self-evaluation is carried out by the company and confirmed by the third party expert. Here, the participants first of all set their own benchmarks tailored to their individual situation. Thanks to my annual control of the three years plan and the subsequent updating, it is guaranteed that only current situations are depicted and no repeated assertions are made. The vital factor here is the necessary commitment of all parties – including also management and leadership – to

reaching the specified objectives and, if necessary, depicting the risks involved by taking this path. The three years plan is then for all employees the guiding instrument and guideline for achieving the self-imposed targets within the scope of Responsible Care. This means that the company has a seal of quality at its disposal, which – with the correct application and realisation - enables the possibility of documenting to the outside world that, in all aspects of its business activity, the company is satisfying the requirements of responsible activity in trading chemicals.

Of increasing importance, throughout all sectors of the economy and society, are questions dealing with the subject of “sustainability”. In chemical trading, companies affirm their commitment to sustainability by their voluntary obligations in the „Responsible Care initiative – responsible activity in chemical trading“. During my auditing of this initiative in the companies, on their premises, as well as on the basis of the updated annual plans presented to me every year, I experienced, in nearly all cases, that sustainable activity is integrated as part and parcel of daily work. Particularly in those chemical trading enterprises which joined Responsible Care already at the start of the initiative in the VCH in 1997, the “continual improvement process” included in the programme is very clearly recognisable in the planning targets and measures.



Raimon Markowski
Third party expert of the
VCH for Responsible Care

Also, the importance of the trademark „Responsible Care“, was and is, always recognisable, in that it serves as a component and benchmark of the safety and quality assessment system SQAS of CEFIC, the European Chemical Industry Association, for the evaluation of performance in the logistics and distribution of chemicals. As an accredited expert for the Responsible Care programme of the VCH, as an SQAS assessor of the EU-European industry association CEFIC, in Brussels, as well as the lead-auditor for various standards of the TÜV Rheinland, I have a highly diversified insight into chemical trading companies and other service providers in the logistics chain, such as e.g., shipping companies, haulage operators and tank cleaning installations. The application and further development of the sustainability philosophy are often much clearly recognisable in the Responsible Care programme in chemical trading companies than in the logistics chain. Further improvements could be achieved here if chemical traders encouraged their partners to adopt the Responsible Care contents. Many partners already have one or more – also certified – management system standards. Here, with the realisation of the Responsible Care philosophy, these standards could in future be markedly further developed without significant additional effort.



The VCH, the German chemical traders association, through its member companies, represents the production-linking chemicals trade in Germany, with its defining characteristics of stock holding distribution trading, export/import and speciality trading. With the „Guidelines of Chemical Trading for the safe handling of chemicals ...“ ,dating from 1995, and subsequently through the connection to the worldwide Responsible Care initiative, this sector of industry also recognises the targets of the 1992 United Nations action programme in Agenda 21 for sustainable development. Via „Responsible Care“ the chemical traders and chemical industry wish to make a contribution towards solving the global (environmental) problems in those areas which are in their responsibility and sphere of influence. These areas also also the subject of the 17 goals of the new UN Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, which, since 2016, replaces the UN programme from 1992.

Using selected examples, in continuation of the reporting of previous years, here the sector again provides an account of the Responsible Care elements „product responsibility“, „plant safety“, „hazard prevention“ „working safety“, „environmental protection“, „transport safety“ and „dialogue“. As in the past years, the results of the last year could not necessarily be directly compared with previous years, (operational changes / outsourcing etc.). Nevertheless, the data do again provide a compressed overview of the developments in the sector.

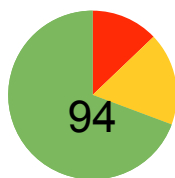


In June 2019, 74 companies participated in the programme. The questionnaire covered 145 operational sites, which, on the basis of their participation declaration, were already bound into the initiative since January 2018 or earlier. 53 of these locations

had warehouse facilities with their own filling installations, 8 locations had a warehouse without filling. The other operational sites were sales/distribution offices without their own warehouse. 13 companies were mainly focused on import/export. A total of 7,169 employees in the participating companies in 2018 generated a domestic revenue of 7.6 billion euros (about 76% of the industrial sector). 65 % of the employees in the operational units surveyed are commercial or administrative staff, the remaining workers are employed in the warehouse or as drivers or in QM/QC , laboratory, technology and manufacturing.

Last year, at the 53 operational sites with their own warehouse, own filling plant and own staff, 2,297 million tons of chemicals were traded (of these 1,633 million tons were liquids). Here, at their works or at the customer, there were 90 incidents/accidents. This also includes the re-

lease of very small amounts. There were no cases of ground or water pollution.



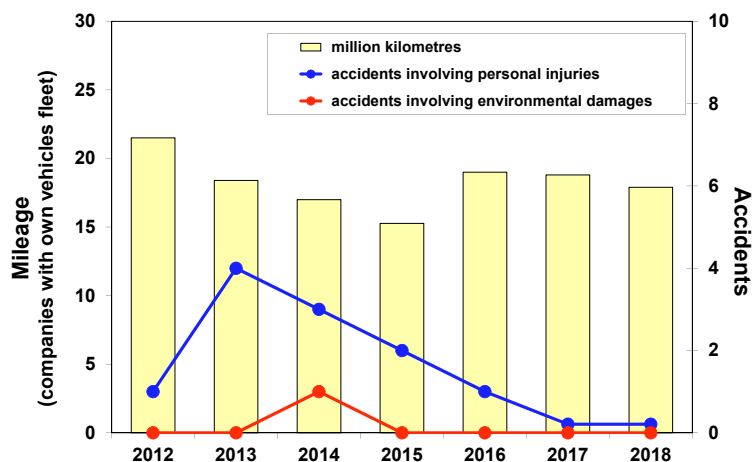
reportable occupational accidents 2018

- Accidents involving chemical interaction
- Accidents en route
- Accidents caused by mechanical influences

Regarding the 94 reported of accidents at work subject to compulsory reporting, (incidents at work causing damage to health resulting in sick leave of at least three days), only 13 had an industry sector-specific connection, or were caused by chemicals. The „LTIR“-value („Lost Time Injury Rate“ – international Indicator for accidents at work), which

is calculated by the number of days lost, as a result of injuries subject to mandatory reporting in relation to hours worked by all employees, was 6.25 for last year, (in comparison, for the trade and goods distribution sector in 2017 it was 14.79).

Of the 25 companies who run their own fleet of vehicles (with a total of 314 HGV) there were 28 traffic accidents during the reporting period, of which all involved only damage to property. Only one of the incidents was subject to the obligation to report a hazardous goods accident in the sense of the ADR, and no accident involved personal injury or environmental damage. For a total distance of the HGVs of about 17.9 million km, this corresponds to an accident for every 639,285 km.



As well as the selection of values shown above as examples, a thorough description with the results of all indicators, and also the reports of previous years are available under www.vch-online.de →Responsible Care→Jahresbericht. Your chemical trader will be pleased to inform you about details – contact the Responsible Care Representative at the company in question.

Your Chemical Trading Company:

