

Safety

Supporting the oil industry's commitment to safe operation

In an industry that deals with inflammable and potentially explosive products, safety considerations have to be paramount.

Since the mid 1990s CONCAWE, with the input of its member companies, has been compiling personal incident statistics of downstream oil industry workers and publishing these in a yearly report. These statistics bear witness to the oil industry's commitment to safety, demonstrating a marked improvement since the early 1990s (Figure 1). Thanks to its efforts, the oil industry can report much lower incident rates than industry at large. It is intended to extend this incident monitoring to include hydrocarbon spills and fires. Through regular meetings of safety experts within CONCAWE, member companies also have the opportunity to exchange valuable information on actual incidents, and to share the lessons to be learned more generally on a range of safety management issues.

Over the years CONCAWE has also published a number of reports and guidance documents on specific subjects such as risk assessment techniques and the auditing of barge operation.

The CONCAWE structure provides a convenient and efficient channel through which the oil industry can put forward its opinions and comments during the legislation development process. CONCAWE has been involved in all major European legislative issues related to safety, particularly the **Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Directive** or so-called '**Seveso' Directive**.

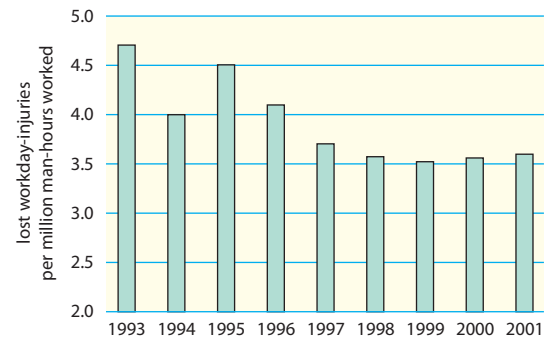
The Seveso accident in 1976 led to a complete reappraisal of the way industrial sites are regulated and controlled in Europe. The 'Seveso' Directive and its subsequent updates provided a new regulatory framework with which the oil refineries, depots and terminals had to comply, particularly with respect to information, permitting and operating requirements. To support the industry's involvement in the legislative debate, CONCAWE has published a

Figure 1

The downstream oil industry has improved its performance since the mid-1990s and reports much lower incident rates than other industry sectors:

- *Upstream oil industry (2001, source: OGP):*
 - Europe: 2.5
 - World: 1.6
- *European chemical industry: 9.9 (2000, source: CEFIC)*
- *European industry: 22.9 (1999, source: EU)*

Personal incident statistics relating to the European downstream oil industry



number of reports on Safety Management Systems and has been representing industry on a number of the Technical Working Groups set up by the EU to support the implementation of the **Seveso Directive**.

One of the issues addressed in the Directive was the use of land around industrial sites. A set of European guidelines was published at the end of the 90's but these did not require changes to the legislation in place in the Member States. Following the recent major industrial accidents in Enschede and Toulouse, this issue of land-use planning is once again on the agenda at the European level, with a call for harmonisation of EU legislation. The EU Commission has set up an expert group structure in which CONCAWE participates. One of the essential prerequisites when determining the level of risk associated with an industrial installation is to define credible accident scenarios and model their potential consequences. Through CONCAWE the industry is bringing its long experience and historical records into the debate, to help ensure that the legislation addresses the real issues without imposing an unwarranted burden on the industry.