



Case Study: HAZMAT Incident

May 2024

Teutopolis, Illinois

- Sept. 29, 2023, a Friday evening at approx. 8:40pm a semi tanker carrying close to 4,000 gallons of anhydrous ammonia overturned on a highway in rural Illinois
- Anhydrous ammonia is a clear, colorless gas that is toxic; effects range from nausea to respiratory tract irritation
- Typically, anhydrous ammonia is used in farming as a nitrogen fertilizer
- Officials believe that someone tried to pass the tanker, causing the accident and the tanker then jackknifed and hit the hitch of a utility trailer parked just off the highway puncturing a six-inch hole into the chemical container
- The crash spilled about half of the truck's 7,500-gallon load
- Five people killed, including a father and his two children (both under 12), and two other motorists from out of state
- Five other people were airlifted, their conditions unknown
- Of the seven injured, four were teenagers and two were admitted to the hospital
- Preliminary investigation indicates the deaths were due to ammonia exposure at the crash site
- Private and federal environmental contractors worked to clean up the crash site
- The crash left a "large plume cloud of anhydrous ammonia on the roadway that caused terribly dangerous air conditions, forcing responders to wait to clean up
- Shifting wind overnight also made cleanup difficult
- In addition to a commercial driver's license, drivers of toxic substances also need to pass a test for hazardous material endorsement

Impacts:

- MCI event
- Potential evacuation
- Potential medical surge of contaminated patients
- Possible burn surge
- Rural responders may lack experience with chemical incidents
- Decontamination needs
- Potential pediatric surge
- Air flight with hazardous material considerations
- Potential activation of CHEMPACK, depending on fertilizer

Preparedness:

- HAZMAT training
- Strong partner relationships (HAZMAT)

- Public information and warning
- Evacuation planning
- MCI planning to include burn and pediatric

Sources:

- [5 Killed in Illinois Tanker Truck Crash](#)
- [5 People Died from Ammonia Exposure After Illinois Crash, Coroner Says](#)
- [Attempt to Pass a Tanker May Have Led to the Deadly Chemical Crash in Illinois, Official Says](#)

Resources:

- ASPR TRACIE: [CBRN Resources](#)
- CDC: [HAZMAT Emergency Preparedness Training and Tools for First Responders](#)