



Chlorine gas leak in Mumbai Harbour

Date Of Incident: 14.07.10

Location : Mumbai harbour

Description of the accident:

The Bhopal gas tragedy of 25 years ago still haunts the country. It was a nightmare, thus, when a part of south Mumbai woke up to the news that toxic Chlorine gas had leaked from a cylinder kept at the Mumbai Port Trust at 3.15 in the morning. The leak was contained six hours later, at 9 amAs many as 103 people fell sick early today after inhaling chlorine gas leaking from a cylinder stored in the Mumbai Port Trust (MPT) premises at Sewri. People are recuperating, of which eight are in the Critical Care Unit due to respiratory problems and 14 in the Medical Intensive Unit due to throat problems.

No. of persons Injured:

There was no causality.

Potential Root Cause:

The gas caused acute respiratory distress.

Other possible news about the incident:

For more than six hours, firefighters tried to neutralise the gas, filling the air with sodium hydroxide sprays. The major fear: that there are more than a 100 cylinders similar to the one that caused this morning's disaster in the same warehouse.

The condition of eight persons admitted at JJ Hospital was said to be critical.

As a precautionary measure, people residing in and around the area have been evacuated and have been asked not to return till further notice.

To ensure that the leak did not spread to other areas, the firemen made a "water curtain" and pushed it towards the sea.

About Chlorine:

Chlorine gas is a respiratory irritant. It causes eye irritation as well as nausea, vomiting, dizziness and headache.

If exposed a long period of time and in strong concentration, it may lead to excess salivation, loss of consciousness and possibly death.

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In case of chlorine exposure prompt action is essential.

Two Boys save 600 students

The chlorine leak at Bombay Port Trust's Haji Bunder early Wednesday morning could have sent about 2,000 people to the hospital. But two heroes from the Lal Bahadur Shastri College for Marines Engineering saved the day. They knew their theory, applied it efficiently and threw in some managerial skills as well.

While fire brigade officials at BPT were fumbling from lack of know-how and equipment, Deepam Rastogi, 22, and Narsik Imam, 22, were thinking on their feet.



The second-year students were burning the midnight oil for an examination when they smelled something in the air. It did not take them long to identify the gas as chlorine – it was after all part of their curriculum and laboratory experience.

When they realised what was happening – they were feeling uneasy themselves – Rastogi and Imam reacted with poise. They called down a couple of their classmates and huddled together in an emergency meet. They decided it was critical to evacuate the building. Between the four of them, they divided up the floors and woke up all the students – room by room.

They were aware of a few chemical disaster management facts – avoid the lift because it is an enclosed space, cover your mouth with a wet handkerchief, and drink lots of water. They spread the word around. They knew the building had no water for the past three days and so went to the canteen and took water from there.

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Deepam Rastogi and Narsik Imam

In the meantime, they had also called the hostel warden and the college principal, who in turn had alerted everybody else and called the ambulances.

By waking everyone up, they saved many lives – 600 students in the two hostel buildings and around 1,400 others on the campus. They were aware that the chemical could have caused a lot more damage had the people on the college premises continued to sleep.

Chest physician Dr Khusrav Bajan, Hinduja Hospital, Mahim, said, “It’s very important to be awake and conscious as people tend to inhale more air if they are asleep. The gas can severely damage the neuro-muscular system and this could even lead to paralysis. Those who develop acute respiratory distress syndrome need oxygen support for a long time,” he said.

A total of 92 students were admitted to the hospitals on Wednesday. Of these, 15 were in the intensive care unit. All of them were asleep when the gas leaked.

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The students' hostel is a mere six metres away from the site of the leak

Sheldon D'Mello, one of students who was discharged from J J Hospital in the evening, said, "By the time I heard the boys shouting and woke up, I was having severe problem breathing. My head was throbbing unbearably and I felt like vomiting. The smell in the room was very strong." D'Mello added he was very grateful to Rastogi and Imam for saving his and other students' lives.

Rastogi said, "Some students have just joined the hostel. We were worried for them because they would not have known what to do. There is no public announcement system in the college. So we decided to go to all the floors and wake everybody."

Warden of the hostel M S Singh said, "These students saved us all by their quick-thinking."

Quick-thinking 22-yr-olds saved the day

SEED salutes these two youngsters who involved in evacuation of 600 students and save the life of them.

Thanks: Mumbai Mirror

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