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CERCA Member Directory

“Amateurs train until they get it right. Professionals train until they can’t get it wrong.”
THE CREATION OF THE CANADIAN EMERGENCY
Response Contractors Alliance (or CERCA) has given
shippers and carriers a tool by which to find qualified
emergency response contractors and gauge their
effectiveness.

“We needed independent contractors to clean up spills;
it was just too expensive for in-house company crews
to do the job,” explains Louis Laferrière, senior
manager of logistics with the Canadian Chemical
Producers’ Association (CCPA). “Starting in the 1990’s
instead of a trained company crew of a dozen people,
we could hire an ER contractor at a fraction of the cost
of an in-house cleanup crew. But contractors had to
accurately describe the processes they had in place to
get the job done, so we developed a way to identify ER
contractors and verify their capabilities.”

You can now visit one Web site, identify most ER
contractors in Canada, review what they claim they can
do, and see what has been verified in terms of ER
response capability and equipment. To consult the
Canadian Emergency Response Contractors Guide, visit

“One of the primary reasons for CERCA is to identify
the contractors and promote them well in advance of
when they might be needed,” Laferrière observes. “An incident is not the time to find out about an ER
contractor’s credibility factor, operational skills,
equipment and other resources. Contractors provide us
with a series of documents identifying a claimed
capability. CERCA has standards for manpower,
equipment and training. Using industry (shippers and
carriers) as verifiers, CERCA verifiers go in and make
sure the ER contractors can back up their claims to be
able to handle specific emergencies.”

A more rigorous verification process is now being
developed. However, verification is a two-way street.
“Not only are we checking the contractors, but the contractors then have the option to feedback to us
what they thought of the verification,” Laferrière points
out. “Was it effective or a waste of time? Were we
asking the right question? That’s why we have verification
programs every two years to ensure consistency across the board.” ER contractors are checked every three years.

Other organizations are following a similar approach.
The Canadian Petroleum Products Institute (CPPPI),
through the Eastern Canada Response Corporation
(which offers marine oil spill response), is now
working on landspill. CPPPI has its own standards for contractors to meet for their TDG Class 3 product line
(oil and petroleum). If the contractors meet the standards, they get the business.

As CERCA is a virtual organization made up of industry
personnel from across Canada who communicate electronically, a nationwide network of verifiers is
available on short notice.

“We have standardized forms that a contractor fills in,” Laferrière explains. “We ask about the various
dangerous goods commodities they can respond to
(Class 1 explosives or Class 3 flammable liquids or
Class 8 corrosives), their means of containment
(package, cylinder, tank truck and tank car, drum) and
the capability that they provide (stability [immediate
spill containment], mitigation [transfer of spill to safe
container] and remediation [clean-up of site to remove
environmental contamination]. We are most interested
in stability and mitigation – the immediate response
that causes the incident to de-escalate.”

Laferrière sees the CERCA verification process as a model
that can be adopted by other countries. “Our counterparts in the United States are impressed by how
well this model works, without the legal system interfering with it. We don’t encounter any of the concerns with favoritism that you would in the U.S. If you meet the standards, you get the business. It’s as simple as that. We aren’t concerned by the threat of any legal challenges. Australia has also looked at our model and been quite impressed.”

CERCA is strongly endorsed by chemical and
transportation industry spokespersons: Cathy
Campbell, managing director of the Canadian
Association of Chemical Distributors (CACD) writes:
“CACD’s member-companies feel confident in the
service and use of emergency responders who have
successfully been verified by CERCA. Thank you for
this valuable program.”

Andy Ash, manager of dangerous goods for the Railway
Association of Canada (RAC), writes: “The railway
industry understands the value of CERCA and its
verification process. This is demonstrated by RAC,
which represents 58 railways in Canada, sitting as an
active member on the CERCA operating committee.
Even though the rail industry has an impressive safety
record, we must maintain our readiness to respond to
accidents. That is why as an industry, the railways in
Canada depend on the quality work that can be
provided by the CERCA-member emergency response
contractors. With the verification process, we can gain
valuable information about an ER contractor for our
emergency planning efforts.”
CERCA CONTINUES EVOLVING WITH expanding membership, strong alliances and more professional development. There are currently over 25 members within CERCA who participate in public, government and industry functions in addition to operating their business efficiently.

There is enthusiasm on the part of all CERCA members. The reason for this is because we feel we are shaping excellence for emergency response services in Canada to the point where provincial governments and organizations outside of the country are taking notice. Another reason is because, as emergency responders, we are trained and accustomed to working as an effective team. Even though most of us compete in the same market, we understand the importance of working together to develop and maintain a sound emergency response network in Canada. Together, we have and will continue to set benchmarks for professional development within this growing industry. That’s teamwork, and that’s what CERCA is all about.

If you have interest in any aspect of the emergency response industry in Canada, join CERCA! Help us set the pace and continue to improve.

I know this publication will provide you with some insight as to what CERCA is all about and will inspire you to join our dynamic team.

Lyle Clouatre, Editor

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Editorial Information
The CERCA Communiqué is published by the Canadian Emergency Response Contractors’ Alliance (CERCA). The purpose of this publication is to communicate CERCA activities to dangerous goods manufacturers, shippers, carriers and response groups in both the public and private sectors throughout Canada. Opinions expressed by the authors and contributors to the CERCA Communiqué are not necessarily those of CERCA or its members.

Material submitted should be of current interest to the dangerous goods emergency response industry within Canada and aimed at achieving the newsletter’s purpose.

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Advertising Information: Advertising opportunities are available in the CERCA Communiqué. Please contact the Editor for advertising rates and details.

Cover photo courtesy of Envirotec Services Incorporated
THE CERCA OPERATING COMMITTEE MET TWICE in 2007. The Spring / Summer meeting, hosted by Jean-Claude Morin of MD-UN Inc., was held in Montreal. The Fall / Winter meeting, hosted by Drain-All and Echelon Response & Training, was scheduled in Ottawa so that it coincided with the TDG Congress, sponsored in part by CERCA. Most of the Operating Committee members attended the TDG Congress, which was said to be of tremendous benefit.

Montreal – May 15 & 16, 2007:

An executive committee election was held. Mark Jasper (Quantum Emergency Response / Echelon Training) was elected as Chair, David Elsie (Drain-All Ltd.) was elected as Vice-Chair, and Ross Edwards (Hulcher Services) was elected as Secretary. The Operating Committee wishes to thank Bob Goodfellow (Nevalta) and Patrick Knight (CEDA Emergency Response) for their prior commitments to the Executive Committee.

Andy Ash (RAC) provided an update on RAC Week, an initiative to train CERCA members on Canadian emergency response techniques for rail. The training was conducted at the Emergency Response Training Center (ERTC) in Pueblo, Colorado on April 16-20, 2007. The program was said to be a tremendous success.

Eve Poirer (Transport Canada) was in attendance to provide an update on the CERCA verification process as it relates to emergency response contractors. CATHLEEN CORRIVIAU (Transport Canada) provided an update on the CBRN initiative.

Ottawa – October 23 & 24, 2007:

Louis Laferriere (CCPA) and Al Reid (Transport Canada / CPPP) provided an update on the TDG Congress which was held in Ottawa October 15 & 16, 2007. The TDG Congress was well attended by delegates from not only Canada and the United States, but from around the world. CERCA was represented at the congress through the efforts of Quantum Emergency Response / Echelon Training.

Louis presented information on MACTDG (Multi-Association Council on TDG) and the Ministers' Advisory Council. Louis also provided an update on the TEAP III initiative. Louis advised the committee on the working group mandate which included development of standards for emergency response contractors and an assessment protocol. CERCA's current verification process was used as a baseline of the assessment protocol. CERCA agreed to work in concert with CCPA and TEAP to ensure congruency amongst both assessment protocols.

Greg Ayres (Sodrox / CACD) discussed his involvement in TEAP III, including his involvement in the Service Providers Committee. Greg provided an update on his committee’s efforts to outline a standard for emergency response contractors providing a service under TEAP III. Greg’s committee has been meeting throughout Canada to develop the standard.

Randy Badiuk (Harold Marcus) presented Drive Wise Canada, which is a computerized training aide used for interactive testing of drivers and showed the relationship for training in emergency response.

Rick Lefebvre (Drain-All) asked representatives of the insurance-provider community to attend the CERCA meeting to provide information on insurance as it relates to emergency response contractors.

CERCA's new website was introduced to CERCA by Lyle Clouatre (Envirotec Services Incorporated). The website was changed to allow for better orientation for users and more current information.

Fred Scaffidi (Transport Canada) was in attendance to provide an update on the most recent Remedial Measures Specialist (RMS) meeting, held in Mont Tremblant, QP on October 18, 2007. CERCA representative attended the RMS Meeting to provide input. CERCA wishes to thank Fred for his taking the time to attend the CERCA meeting.

Retirement Notice

After 27 years in the emergency response business, Pierre Richard officially retired on February 1, 2008, from Veolia, Montreal. Pierre started in emergency response in 1981, Montreal, and holds the proud memory of establishing the Sanivan ER SWAT Team in the early years of TDG regulatory development. He thereafter worked for Sani Mobile which eventually became Onyx then Veolia. Pierre's “most challenging project” memory is of the late 1980’s and the PCB decontamination after a fire at the Hydro-Quebec Research Laboratory, Varennes, Quebec. Pierre most fondly remembers the first CERCA Meeting (then known as the “ER Contractor Task Force”) with other participants Chris Furlonger, now retired from Dow Chemical Canada, and Louis Laferriere, then with ICI and now with CCPA. He will miss his pleasant demeanour and business integrity. Pierre will be resuming his lost hobbies of oil painting (he's started classes already), photography, genealogy as well enjoying some travel with his lady friend and companion of many years and leisure time with his daughter and two granddaughters.
Without CCPA Membership how do I?

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Why? Why Not?

I believe that the key to true learning comes from the word “WHY?” It also happens to be one of the most threatening words in many of our chosen fields. Why do we fear this word as an absolute challenge to our authority? As a father of three young children, I am constantly bombarded with “WHY?”. And, although I am saying it less and less often, I am as guilty as most fathers in occasionally using the all-purpose, time-tested response “Don’t ask questions, just do it.” How many of us are guilty of doing this same thing with the personnel who are looking to us for guidance and information when it comes to their jobs? I cannot tell you how little respect I have for the supervisor who says “Your job is not to ask questions, your job is to do what I say!” We should be telling everyone, “Your PRIMARY job is to ask questions!” How else can we improve if we are not challenging the status quo? “WHY” almost always is the lead-in for ANY educational and/or training experience and we should embrace that question, not attempt to eliminate it from our vocabularies. THIS is the essence of education and the root of all industry advancements, innovations, and our ultimate success as individuals and organizations.

An indisputable fact of emergency response is that quite often, we are forced to “think on the fly” or “wing it” based on unforeseen circumstances or events. I am reminded of an interesting conversation a friend of mine who was former Deputy Fire Chief at Vandenberg Air Force Base and I would have when discussing the term “experience”. He would say that he would always question whether someone had twenty years of experience, or whether they had simply repeated one year of experience twenty times. Too often, we get caught up in doing one thing, one way; because that is the way we’ve always done it. There is an old military saying: “Even the best battle plan only lasts until the moment the first shot is fired.” This could not be more true in emergency response. Learning how to do one thing only one way is just begging for trouble when it’s Showtime and you realize that the one way you know how to do something is just not applicable now. This is where the “why” aspect of what we do becomes indispensable.

Developing the powers of reasoning and judgment in our responders is every bit as important, if not more so, than anything else we will ever provide for them. If we understand WHY we are doing Plan A, it makes it exponentially easier to come up with Plan B for obtaining similar outcomes. This leads us into the dreaded “T”-word:

Training. The word conjures up different images for different people. For some, it entails a few coma-inducing hours or days sitting in a room listening to someone read (verbatim) endless slide projections consisting of bullet point after bullet point. For many, it means reading manuals again, watching a video, or running a program on a computer or online. In my limited experience, no incident I’ve ever responded to (or heard of others responding to) ever actually involved simply responding to a projection slide, manual, or computer program. For the fortunate few, training involves full-scale hands-on evolutions of each of the skills required to successfully execute our given tasks. This style, of course, is the most effective, but also takes the most preparation, resources, and time to implement, and is unfortunately the least-often used because of its challenges.
The following memo has been issued to Canadian Chemical Producers' Association (CCPA) members as well as other trade associations:

While the CCPA is working with Transport Canada* who are supportive of our TEAP III initiative, recent Responsible Care® Partners' comments and Transport Canada reviews of Emergency Response Assistance Plans (ERAP's) suggest a critical review of the nuances of the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act and Regulations.

An "offeror" holding an ERAP must ensure, in advance of an incident, that in-house, mutual aid and contracted or sub-contracted emergency response service(s) has sufficient capability such as:

- Adequate manpower - appropriately trained and experienced, equipment, and capacity such as a sufficient number of ER team members to provide the depth and length of on-scene service, geographical coverage, etc. that may be required for on-scene attendance and activities.

An annual and thorough check of your ERAP capability and capacity is recommended. Further, any change to your ERAP must be reported promptly to Transport Canada. Change includes but is not limited to:

- alteration of shipping routes
- means of containment
- authorized personnel, in-house, mutual aid or contracted ER service provider(s), and
- associated capability/capacity, etc.

Other items to heed are: Some offerors indicate ERAP plan numbers and activation telephone numbers on their shipping documents without distinguishing which commodities are under the ERAP. This practice although seemingly setting a higher standard of safety implies on-scene response capability for all items listed. Unfortunately, this can be misleading to carriers and First Responders and is contrary to the TDG ERAP requirements. That is, indicating an ERAP is available for non-ERAP shipments or commodities implies ER approval by Transport Canada for such shipments which is not the case. Further, placards in some cases are also linked to ERAP's and should be visible and properly secured. Consignors/offerors are reminded it is their responsibility to ensure appropriate and visible placards are provided/used where applicable. Finally, all companies are cautioned that there is a difference between ERAP's and shipping description requirements in that a consignor is who you say it is (as per TDG Regulations) but an ERAP is held by an "offeror" (as per TDG Act) who may or may not be the consignor.

For a general review of the legal requirements and assistance in interpretation, see an excellent article in Transport Canada's TDG Newsletter, Volume 25, Number 1, Spring 2005, pages 6 to 8. Copies can be obtained from: http://www.tc.gc.ca/tdg/newsletter/spring2005.pdf

Also, Transport Canada has some fairly extensive ERAP information and guidance at: http://www.tc.gc.ca/tdg/erap/menu.htm

*Advance Notice: CCPA and Transport Canada are now in discussion about holding an ERAP Workshop in the first quarter 2008. For further information, contact Louis Laferriere, llaferriere@ccpa.ca
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Is it any wonder that, for too many, the very thought of training days makes us cringe and just hope it passes quickly and painlessly? It doesn’t have to, nor should it ever, be that way.

Train with the WHY in mind! Training should be relevant, training should be valuable, training should be consistent, and training should be INCLUSIVE, not EXCLUSIVE. What this means is that too many of us put exclusive responsibility of training on whomever our training coordinator is. That person is expected to find all of the weaknesses, then find training that addresses those weaknesses, then oftentimes be directly responsible for delivering that training. Training is not an exclusive process headed up by a singular entity. If you want to know what training your personnel need, ASK THEM what they want and why! Then do everything in your power to provide them with what they asked for! AND MAKE IT RELEVANT AND VALUABLE. How do we do that? Decide what the end results should be and build your training program backwards from that ultimate vision. Ask your personnel what THEIR vision is. Ask others what their vision is. Remember, there are no experts, only information sources! Find them and utilize them! This is the key to excellence -- probably not knowing all the answers, but knowing where to direct the questions!

Ask why you’ve done things certain ways in the past. Ask why you should or should not change the way you do things now. Intentionally try different things that might provoke more “WHY” questions! When the “why’s” start flying, the wise start flying!

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