

Responsible Care Programme for Chemical Industries: At A Glance



1. What is Responsible Care®?

Responsible Care® (RC) is a global voluntary initiative of the chemical industry to excel and continually improve health, safety and environmental performance. RC represents self imposed ethical commitment for better safety performance and responsible management of chemicals throughout their life cycle.

RC addresses community concerns about chemicals, their impact on people and environment during processing, transportation & use. By leveraging on transparent working culture, industry eventually aims at building trust and confidence between industry and stake holders i.e. employees, community, customers, suppliers, contractors and the Government.

2. When and where is the genesis of RC?

In 1985, Canadian Chemical Producers Association (CCPA) introduced 'Responsible Care Programme', to gain public confidence, which was at its least, due to accidents and safety incidents in chemical industries, in early 80's. The three fundamental principles of this movement includes following::

- i) Doing the right thing (*commitment to do the right thing, whether or not laws and regulations existed in a specific area*);
- ii) Caring about products from cradle to grave; and
- iii) Being open and responsive to public concerns.

3. Does RC logo has international recognition?

International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA) has taken-up the Responsible Care Programme for implementation through its member countries. In India, Indian Chemical Council has been the designated nodal agency by ICCA, for award of RC logo to the industries. Therefore, Responsible Care® (RC) is a global voluntary initiative through ICCA and hence is recognized in more than 60 member countries of ICCA including USA and EU.

A due process is followed for award of RC logo in India, therefore, is a symbol of commitment towards EHS excellence by the chemical industries, a move towards sustainability.

4. What are RC guiding principles?

The ten RC guiding principles are as follow:

1. To recognize and respond to community concerns about chemicals and industrial operations;
2. To develop and produce chemicals that can be manufactured, transported, used and disposed of safely;
3. To make health, safety and environmental considerations a priority in planning for all existing & new products and processes;
4. To report promptly to officials, employees, customers and public, information on chemical related health hazards and to recommend protective measures;
5. To counsel customers on the safe use, transportation and disposal of chemical products;
6. To operate industries and facilities in a manner that protects the environment, health and safety of employees and public;
7. To extend knowledge by conducting or supporting research on health, safety and environmental effects of products, processes and waste materials;
8. To work with others to resolve problems created by past handling and disposal of hazardous substances;
9. To participate with government and others in creating responsible laws, regulations and standards to safeguard the community workplace and environment; and
10. To promote principles and practices of Responsible Care® by sharing experiences and offering assistance to others, who produce, handle, use, transport or dispose chemicals.

5. What are the Codes of Management Practice that RC seeks?

Currently, following 6 codes of management practice are being implemented under RC programme:

- Process Safety Code;
- Employee Health & Safety Code;
- Pollution Prevention Code;
- Emergency Response and communication Code;
- Distribution Code; and
- Product Stewardship Code.

ICC is scheduled to implement 7th Code on 'Security' by the end of 2018.

6. What are the steps involved in obtaining RC logo?

RC logo is only awarded to chemical industries, which are members of ICC. A sequence of steps is followed for award of Responsible Care® logo, which includes following:

1. Introducing RC programme to senior industry management;
2. Signing commitment for RC guiding principles;
3. Issuing check-list for self assessment;
4. ICC audit (gap assessment, if requested);
5. Implementation of codes of management practice;
6. Standard review and decision making process for award of RC logo; and
7. Submission of key performance indicators (KPIs), annually.

7. How many industries committed for RC and obtained RC logo in India?

Compliance to six codes of management practice takes reasonable time, as it requires considerable knowledge, skill sets, mobilization of resources, documentation etc. as logo is awarded for the business vertical, as a whole, but not for individual manufacturing/operational premises.

Today, 40 enlightened business verticals could get RC logo, out of more than 45000 chemical industries in India. Therefore, to achieve sound management of chemicals in their entire life cycle, in India, it is imperative to drive industry towards adoption of RC management practice. Another 125 industries have submitted their signed commitment for implementation of RC and are at various stages of implementation, to get RC logo.

Reasonable level of compliance to RC Codes of management practice, could get RC logo use for limited period, but as the level of compliance to RC Codes increases, renewed for increased tenure upto 3 years. But, at the end of each tenure, verification audit is arranged by ICC, for renewal.

8. Whether ICC and Government recognizes performance of industries?

ICC recognizes best performers and awards are issued annually, which include:

- Responsible Care® Code-specific awards;
- Aditya Birla award for best Responsible Care® Industry for overall performance of all 6 Codes; and
- Many more awards instituted including for best energy efficient industry, best water management and best waste management industry, which are issued annually.

The Gujarat Pollution Control Board is currently offering 2 years additional period of consent validity besides fast-track mechanism for clearances to RC logo holding industries. The Tamilnadu Pollution Control Board announced to extend similar incentives.

9. What are direct and tangible benefits of RC logo?

Direct benefits include:

- People sense a new pride in their industry
- Employees see an increasing match between their own and organizational values.
- Builds public trust and confidence on chemicals and industries implementing Responsible Care®.
- Reduces pollution, improves energy efficiency and use of renewable energy, reduces water consumption
- Promotes safe management of chemicals throughout the Globe
- Helps build informed, protected society and sustainable future for everyone. Supports compliance with chemical regulations and beyond.
- Helps meet expectations of external stakeholders e.g. corporate social responsibility and sustainable development commitments
- No clean up/remediation costs etc.

There are many tangible benefits in respect of insurance; financing rates; legal liabilities; pollution prevention; voluntary approaches; process safety; innovation vs. compliance; faster permitting; crisis management; risk based policies vs. product bans; marketing advantage; workers compensation costs; management system improvements; product development; information exchange; costs of ill repute; supporting company growth; rational priority setting; efficient training; making better informed decisions; ongoing channels of communication etc.

10. What are changes in ethics due to RC influence?

Old Ethic	New Ethic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do the minimum the law requires ▪ Low profile ▪ Limit product obligations ▪ Downplay public concerns ▪ Assumption of product "innocence" ▪ Hazard information, only if necessary ▪ Defensive approach to new regulations ▪ Every company for themselves ▪ Ignore or fight advocates ▪ Bottom line & laws alone guide decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do the right thing ▪ Be seen to do the right thing ▪ Life cycle stewardship ▪ Seek and address public concerns ▪ Risk-based precautionary principle ▪ 'Public & employee' right to know all risks ▪ Lead in public policy process ▪ Mutual aid & peer pressure ▪ Seek advocates inputs ▪ Integrates all the above into decisions

ICC is committed to take its programme forward by availing international cooperation and assistance besides government bodies, and other stake-holders, for the benefit of Indian chemical industry, community and environment.

Responsible Care is no more a choice ..., but an imperative for sustained business growth.

For further information and guidance, please feel free to reach us at :

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