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**Incident Reporting Systems Module**

**Reporting Systems**



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Safety Talks

Incident Reporting Systems Module

Reporting Systems Support Material

**Script**

PR: Until September 1998 Melbourne, the second largest city in Australia, had all of its gas supplied by one plant, the Esso gas plant at Longford in South Eastern Victoria. It consisted of three gas plants which process gas from wells in Bass Strait, as well as a plant which processes crude oil from other Bass Strait wells. On the 25th of September 1998 Gas Plant One at Longford exploded, causing the death of two operators and injuries to eight others. For two weeks after the blast, Victorians were without gas causing financial hardship for small and large businesses alike, and disrupting the lives of all of Melbourne’s residents. The cost of the crisis was estimated to be $A1.3 billion.

There had been a warning about a month prior to the accident that things were amiss, that there was something wrong in this part of the plant. The warm oil pumps shut down for some reason. A heat exchanger got very cold. It wasn’t operating anywhere near full capacity but it got very cold, ice formed on the exterior, leaks were occurring and operators were mystified. They didn’t understand what was going on but they got the warm oil pumps restarted before the vessel had become brittle cold.

AH: This incident was not entered into Esso’s incident reporting system. And nothing was done about it. Had it been reported it would have been analysed, the problem in this part of the plant would have been recognised and something would have been done about it. The failure to respond to this warning was really a very crucial contributing factor to this accident. Why was it ignored? Well, the reason it was ignored was that Esso’s reporting systems was basically used to report lost time injuries or things which might cause a lost time injury.

**Suggested Discussion Questions and Answers**

1. What specific warning signs have currently been identified for entry into the reporting system?
* Group discussion
* For major hazards, (such as fire, explosion and toxic release) identify likely warnings such as leaks, safety critical procedures not being followed, safety critical alarms being muted etc.
1. What process is used for escalating reports?
* Group discussion
* Level of escalation assigned to each warning sign
* Time frame allocated for response from assignee
* Regular review of escalation reports
* Responsibility allocated to senior manager