ABSTRACT

Reactive chemical accidents do not have the same severity. However, each accident is often reported with equal weight regardless of its actual and/or potential impact on a company’s business operations. Sometimes an attempt is made to identify accidents involving a significant injury and/or result in a financial impact greater than $50M. This general lack of discrimination in the reporting could give rise to the impression that an increasing number of reported incidents is due to a decreasing awareness of the company’s process safety program.

There is much positive about encouraging folks to report incidents and accidents, including minor excursions from planned operations. Consequently, the absolute number of reported events is expected to increase. This increased reporting activity could also be construed as a worsening in process safety program compliance, whereas the overall severity of accidents reported may well be decreasing due to an actual increase in awareness of process safety issues.

The Accident Severity Index project addresses this paradox of an increased number of accidents actually being a sign of a healthy and active program with folks paying attention to the Reactive Chemicals aspect of their work and activities. It is the goal of this project to provide a tracking and evaluation system for process safety incidents and accidents. In order to accomplish this it is very necessary to assess the actual and potential severity of an accident, in an objective manner, using the information obtained from an incident investigation.

This presentation will describe a prototype database and assessment system