



**MARY KAY O'CONNOR
PROCESS SAFETY CENTER**
TEXAS A&M ENGINEERING EXPERIMENT STATION

20th Annual International Symposium
October 24-26, 2017 • College Station, Texas

**Re-Energizing Industry Risk Management and Coordination and
Communication**

Steve Arendt
Vice President
Global Oil, Gas, and Chemicals Sector
ABS Group

EPA promulgated its risk management program (RMP) rule in the mid-90s when many companies invested a lot of effort in compliance with the rule, coordinating with local emergency planners and responders, and communicating RMP information to the public. After 9/11, national priorities refocused onto security matters; community outreach activity and investment (nationwide) took a backset and appeared to decline over the next decade.

Since then, various regulatory enforcement initiatives and CSB accident investigations have highlighted industry PSM compliance and emergency planning and response effectiveness issues. Plus, there has been a “generational change” in people - most stakeholder groups, communities and industry – “memories” have lapsed regarding all the chemical accident prevention and emergency response preparations that industry has done.

There have been significant improvements in process safety activities and metrics, largely driven/re-started by the BP Texas City refinery accident in March 2005 and various subsequent investigations (e.g., Baker Panel). However, no commensurate progress has occurred in emergency and public risk communication. Various chemical accidents led to EO 13650, subsequent OSHA PSM and EPA RMP rulemakings, and increasing inquisitive non-industry entities seek information about industry risks and performance (e.g., Houston Chronicle “*Chemical Breakdown*” series).

Industry and its stakeholders are not in as good a position to address these issues due to factors including:

- Uncertain knowledge of the status of the effectiveness of our LEPCs and emergency response organizations with respect to planning and public communication
- The “relational bank account” of industry with its communities has declined due to many “withdrawals”, lack of sufficient re-investment”, and “generational” change

This presentation will provide suggestions on how industry can revitalize its efforts to coordinate process safety risk management with its stakeholders:

- Helping companies, industry groups and stakeholders prepare for RMP changes and associated public risk communication needs
- Renew partnership efforts with LEPCs and local emergency response organizations
- Invest in outreach-area focused public risk communication efforts based on a revised communications strategy taking into account the expansion of social media
- Re-energize company participation in coordinated local stakeholder outreach efforts to rebuild member relational bank accounts to prepare for certain, future demands