



COMPENDIUM OF CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS

Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

SUBJECT CATEGORY:

Chemicals & Wastes

TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:

Multilateral

FORM:

Legally-binding treaty

STATUS:

- **Canada has not ratified this agreement and therefore it is not in force in Canada.**
- Signed by Canada March 18, 1992
- In force internationally April 19, 2000
- Amended on December 15, 2015

LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:

Lead: Environment and Climate Change Canada

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**Web Links:**

- [UNECE Secretariat Industrial Accidents Website](#)
- Text of the [Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents](#)

Contacts:

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

COMPENDIUM EDITION:

January 2020

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

The Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents supports the prevention of and response to industrial accidents that can affect the population and the environment of another country (i.e., transboundary effects) by outlining requirements to prepare for and respond to accidents, if they occur. The Convention assists countries to establish better industrial safety policies, and promotes active international cooperation between countries, before, during and after an industrial accident.

Canada has signed but not ratified this Convention. Canada does however, have a plan in place with the United States (Canada-United States Joint Inland Pollution Contingency Plan) to support coordinated response efforts to accidental releases that may have transboundary impacts along the inland border shared between the two countries.

OBJECTIVE

The aim of the *Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents* is to help Parties to prevent industrial accidents that can have transboundary effects, to prepare for them and to respond to them. The Convention also encourages Parties to help each other in the event of such an accident, to cooperate on research and development, and to share information and technology.

KEY ELEMENTS

This convention covers four main elements related to Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents: prevention, preparedness, response, and notification.

Prevention: Parties should identify the hazardous operations that take place within their borders but could have an effect abroad if an accident were to occur.

Preparedness: The Convention also outlines how Parties can maintain a high level of preparedness to respond to an industrial accident, especially if its effects spill over into another country. Hazardous operations must have on-site and off-site contingency plans. The local residents should be informed about what is going on. The public should also have a say in the setting-up of prevention and preparedness measures and have

access to administrative and judicial proceedings if its views are disregarded.

Response: If an industrial accident does occur, the Convention expects the Parties to take effective steps to minimize its effects, including those of a transboundary nature. If several countries are affected by the accident, they should work together to ease its effects. They should also help one another if asked to do so.

Notification: To respond effectively and in a coordinated way to an industrial accident, Parties must be informed as soon as possible, since time is of the essence. The Convention consequently calls on Parties to set up special notification systems. It includes forms for giving early warning, providing information and requesting assistance. This system makes it easier for a country where an industrial accident has taken place to notify all the others that could be affected and to give them the information they need to fight its possible effects.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The 1992 *Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents* is designed to protect people and the environment against industrial accidents. The Convention aims to prevent accidents from occurring or reduce their frequency and severity and mitigate their effects, if required. The Convention also promotes active international cooperation between countries before, during, and after an industrial accident.

CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

Although Canada is not party to this convention, its objectives are consistent with *Canadian Environmental*

Protection Act (CEPA) Part 8. Environment and Climate Change Canada implements a pollution incident notification system as polluters are required to notify authorities when a spill of hazardous substances occurs in contravention of CEPA or the *Fisheries Act*. Environment and Climate Change Canada collaborates with federal, provincial, territorial, and sometimes international emergency 24/7 call centres to enable rapid sharing of information so that authorities are alerted when environmental emergencies occur and take all reasonable measures to protect the environment and public safety.

RESULTS / PROGRESS

Activities

Environment and Climate Change Canada collaborates with many of its international counterparts. As an example, the Canada–United-States Joint Inland Pollution Contingency Plan (Inland Plan) is an agreement between Environment and Climate Change Canada and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) that sets forth cooperative measures for dealing with a release of a pollutant along the inland boundary of a magnitude that causes, or may cause, damage to the environment or constitutes a threat to public safety, security, health, welfare, or property. It may also facilitate the provision of assistance in the event that only one country is affected but the polluting incident is of sufficient magnitude to justify a request for assistance from the other country.

Reports

Not applicable as Canada is not party to this convention.