

Organisational Learning – Industry and Authorities

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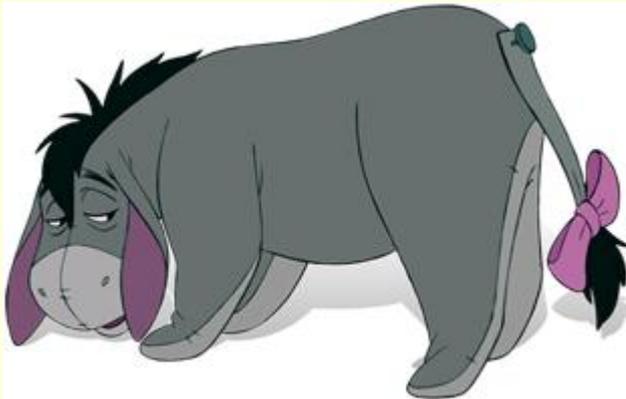
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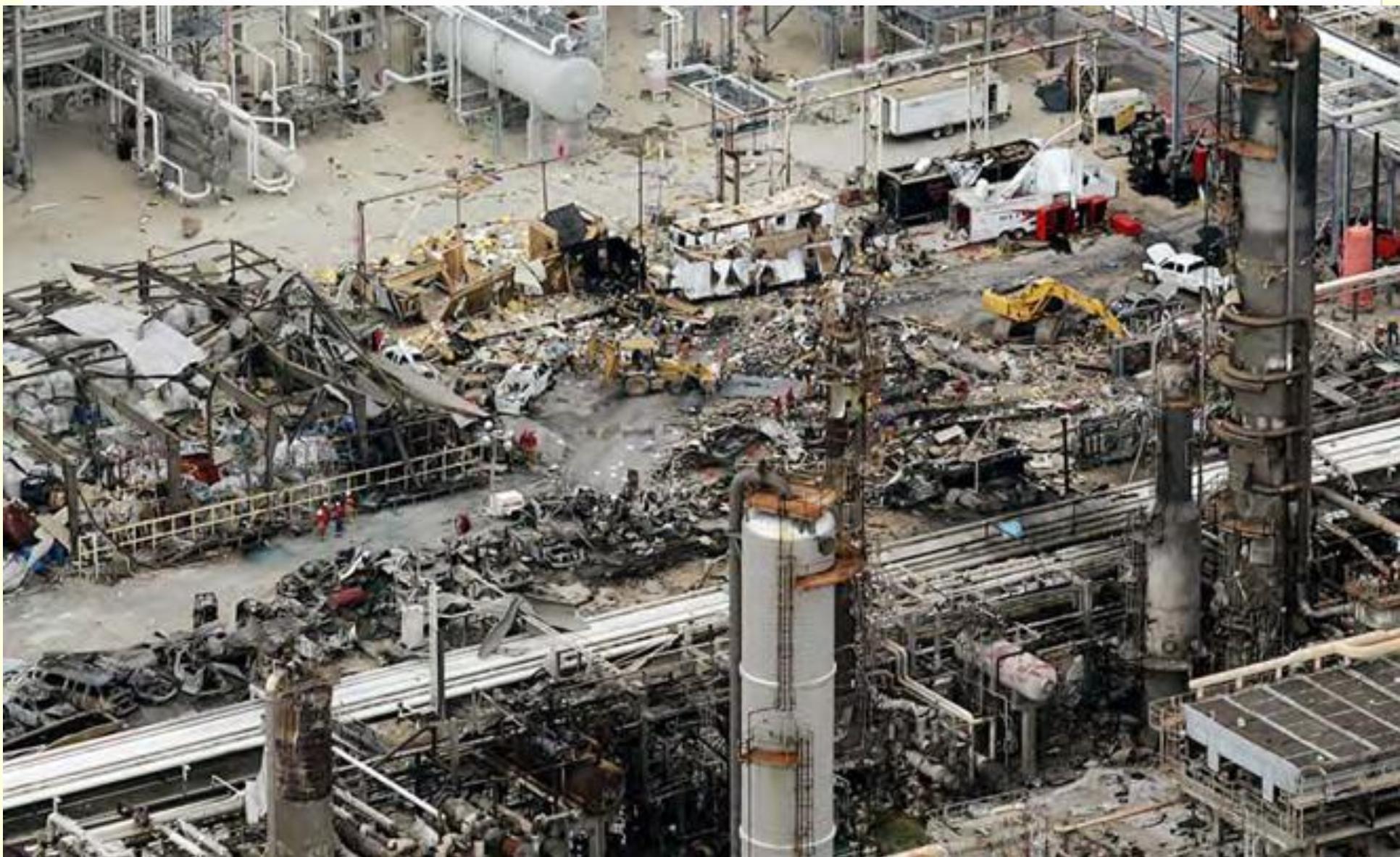


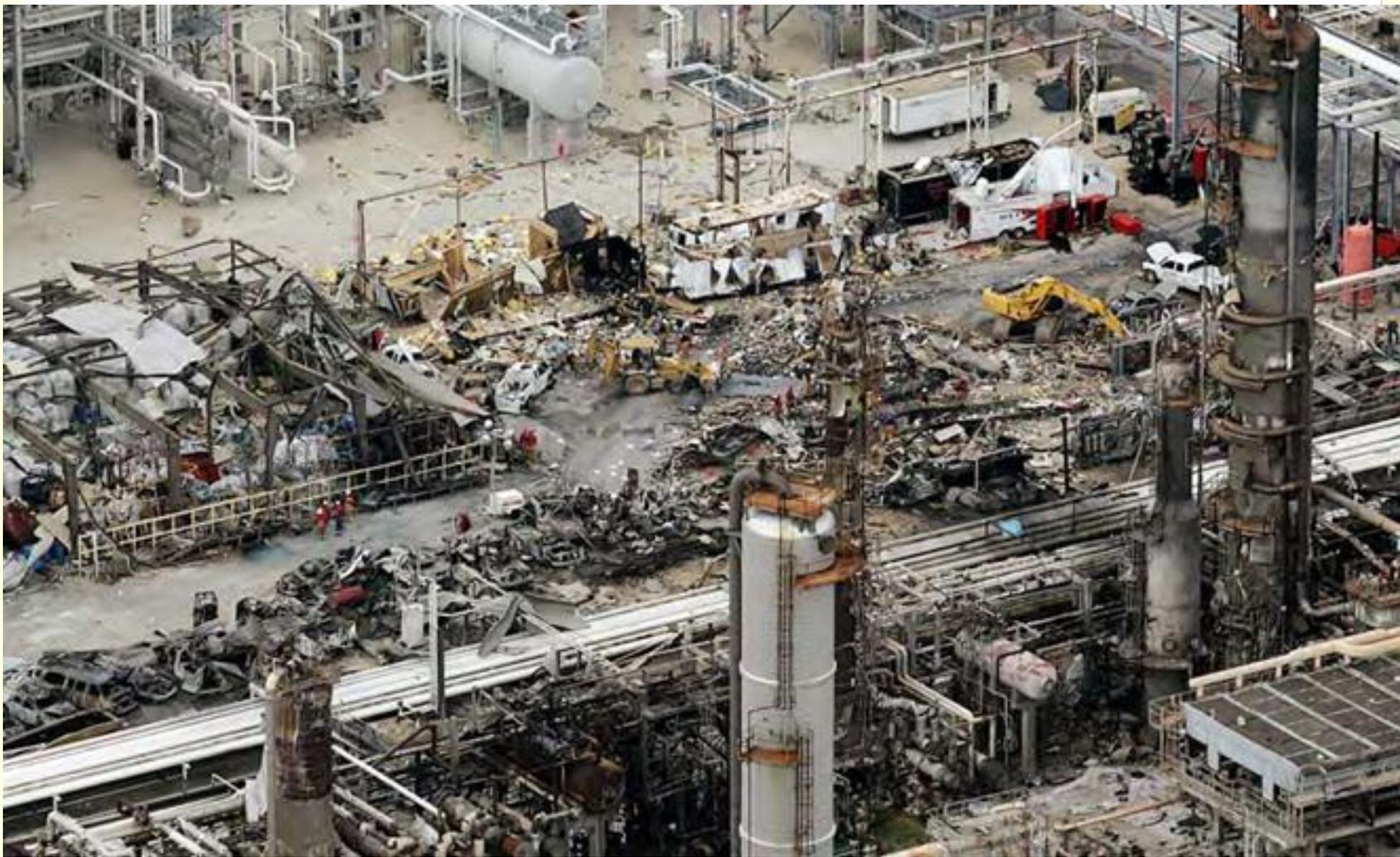
Baden-Württemberg

They're funny things, Accidents. You never have them till you're having them.

Eeyore, in *The House at Pooh Corner* by A.A. Milne



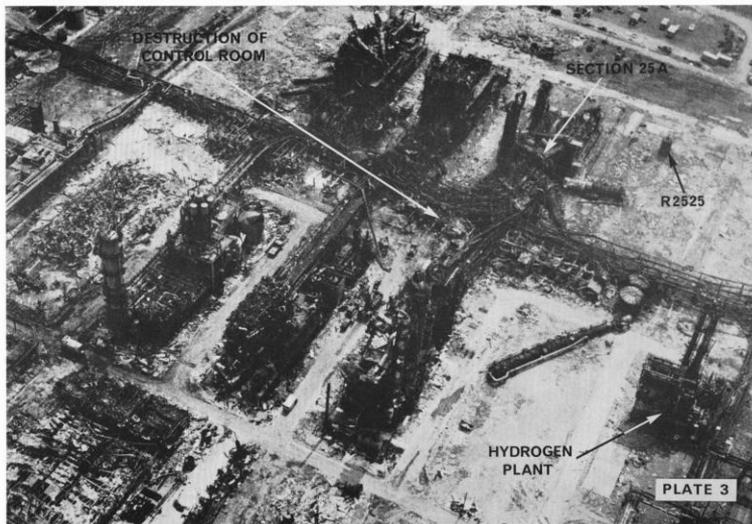




Lessons not learned – or message forgotten / not understood?

Flixborough, 1 June 1974

Texas City, 23 March 2005







Lessons not learned – or message forgotten / not understood? (2)

Piper Alpha 6 July 1988



Buncefield, 11 Dec. 2005



Learning from Accidents is essential

- Individuals must learn through:
 - Qualifications
 - Training
 - Sharing knowledge with others
- Organisations must learn by:
 - Developing and maintaining processes to record, retrieve and use data on accidents
 - People within the organisation applying those processes
 - Review of the processes
 - Continual mindfulness – awareness that the fact that an accident has not occurred is no guarantee for the future.

Organisational Learning for Industry: 1

- Sharing of information through, e.g. “Learning Experience Reports (LER)”
- Documentation of reports in corporate IT-Systems, issuing of internal safety alerts
- Use of documented reports in:
 - In-house training
 - Process Safety Reviews
 - Design studies
 - Maintenance , etc
- Sharing within industry associations, e.g. Euro Chlor, or CEFIC
- Processes need to be embedded in the Safety Management System

Organisational Learning for Industry: 2

- For SME's learning from accidents is often a challenge.
 - No large corporate structure (fewer individual events)
 - Fewer staff to dedicate to accident analysis / learning activities
 - Often lower awareness of the business consequences of a major accident
- For “non-Chemical” industry, e.g. warehousing and storage, energy, metal treatment, etc. learning from accidents also appears to be difficult.
 - Hazardous chemicals are not the core business (lack of awareness of risks)
 - Industry associations often not aware of the role they could play.

Organisational Learning for Industry: 3

- OECD: Corporate Governance for Process Safety
- The lessons from past incidents demonstrate that strong process safety leadership is vital in preventing catastrophe, and it is essential that these lessons are learned and adopted across all sectors to prevent the same failings leading to more accidents in the future.



Organisational Learning for Authorities: 1

- Learning from accidents is also a critical activity for inspectors and inspection authorities
 - Assessment of safety report
 - Emergency planning
 - Land-use planning
 - On-site inspection
 - Prioritising of interventions
- Opportunities for sharing and exchanging experience:
 - IMPEL – Lessons learnt from industrial accidents
 - MJV's and other European meetings
 - National and regional workshops
 - Official databases for the Seveso regime (ARIA, ZEMA, eMARS)

Organisational Learning for Authorities: 2

- Is learning from accidents embedded into the management of Seveso inspection authorities?
- Do senior managers understand the need for maintaining knowledge, sharing experience and using past experience?
- How are inspectors able to learn from accidents in their current organisation?
 - Access to reports
 - Regular discussion of cases (e.g. within local or regional meetings)
 - Resources (time, finance, personnel, IT, literature)
 - Training activities

Conclusions

- Learning from accidents within organisations needs to be embedded into the organisational framework.
 - Loss of knowledge due to retirement or reorganisation can damage organisational memory permanently.
- Senior leaders in industry and authorities need to recognise the need to learn through sharing, and encourage cultures within their organisations which develop this.
- Companies carrying out activities which have the risk of a major accident need to learn from accidents to manage their risks appropriately.
- Authorities need to recognise their own need to learn from accidents so as to be effective in supervising hazardous industries.
- Professional engineers and scientists need to share lessons for the benefit of society in general.

End piece

It should not be necessary for each generation to rediscover principles of process safety which the generation before discovered. We must learn from the experience of others rather than learn the hard way. We must pass on to the next generation a record of what we have learned.

Jesse C. DUCOMMUN

Vice-president, Manufacturing and a director of American Oil Company in 1961; Process Safety pioneer and instigator of a unique series of booklets on process safety