Preventing hazardous substances emergencies

The MSB issues regulations for the transport of dangerous goods by road and rail, large scale chemical operations (Seveso), and for flammables & explosives.

Transport of dangerous goods
The MSB works to prevent and limit injuries and damage as a result of emergencies that involve the transportation of dangerous goods on land.

The MSB issues regulations and is responsible for the legislation applicable to the transport of dangerous goods by road and rail. The MSB examines and certifies safety advisors and drivers that transport dangerous goods; and also provides advice and information to the private sector and the public. The MSB coordinates work on the transport of dangerous goods at the Swedish authorities that have a supervisory role in the field of the transportation of dangerous goods.

Flammables & explosives
The objective is that emergencies in connection with the handling of flammables & explosives should not occur. Prominent experts work for the MSB on the dangers associated with chemical product, for example, how products react to fire and explosion.

The MSB is responsible for the implementation of the Explosives Directive, for the issue of regulations, and for the legislation applicable to flammables & explosives.

The MSB supervises adherence to the Flammables & Explosives Act.

- Flammables & explosives used by the armed forces, the Swedish Defence Materiel Administration, and the Swedish Fortifications Agency
- Natural gas pipelines with a pressure higher than 4 bar
- Explosives manufacturers

Seveso
To prevent serious emergencies in chemical industries and to limit their consequences for people and the environment the EU adopted the Seveso Directive. The work on the directive started after the serious and much reported about emergency in the town of Seveso in Italy, during which there was an emission of dioxins which contaminated 25 km² of land and poisoned a large number of people.

Supervision of adherence to the directive is carried out by the county administrative boards and the Swedish Work Environment Authority. The MSB as one of the competent authorities in Sweden issues related regulations and advises and informs the relevant stakeholders.

MSB supervision of Seveso related issues consists of monitoring, evaluation, and coordination of the supervision of operations covered by Seveso, as well as support and advice to the supervisory authorities.

The MSB works with the entire emergency cycle, in other words, before, during and after the occurrence of emergencies, crises and disasters, which provides good opportunities to adopt a holistic perspective and to gain experience from incidents. Regardless of whether it is one person that is affected, for example, in an accident in the home, or if it is a serious emergency that could have consequences for the entire country or even other countries as well.

The objective of the Swedish Civil Contingency Agency (MSB) is to strengthen society’s ability to prevent and handle accidents and severe peacetime emergencies. Society can learn from past experience by evaluation and follow-up in a continuous process where experience is being used to organise and develop tasks for the actors in the civil emergency planning system. Evaluation and learning from accidents and disasters, supervision and monitoring, need for new research and support for civil emergency planning activities are important tasks in order to strengthen societal security and to support prevention, preparedness, response and recovery throughout the disaster management cycle.
Environmental and safety assessments
All operations that can lead to health problems or damage to the environment must be granted a permit before they can start. Such permits are granted either by an environmental court or a county administrative board. The MSB is party to such cases and can submit viewpoints and appeal against court findings.

Dangerous operations according to the Civil Protection Act
At plants where an emergency could result in serious injury to people or serious damage to the environment there is a requirement for emergency preparedness that supplements municipal resources. The MSB has produced guidelines on what such a form of preparedness should be able to cope with.

Extraction waste
Some plants for "extraction waste" are defined as risk sites, and as such are subject to specific regulations for, for example, safety management systems, internal emergency response plans, municipal emergency response plans.

The MSB has the responsibility to provide guidance to those individuals responsible for supervision with regard to emergency prevention and response to serious emergencies related to extraction waste.