

How to do it all

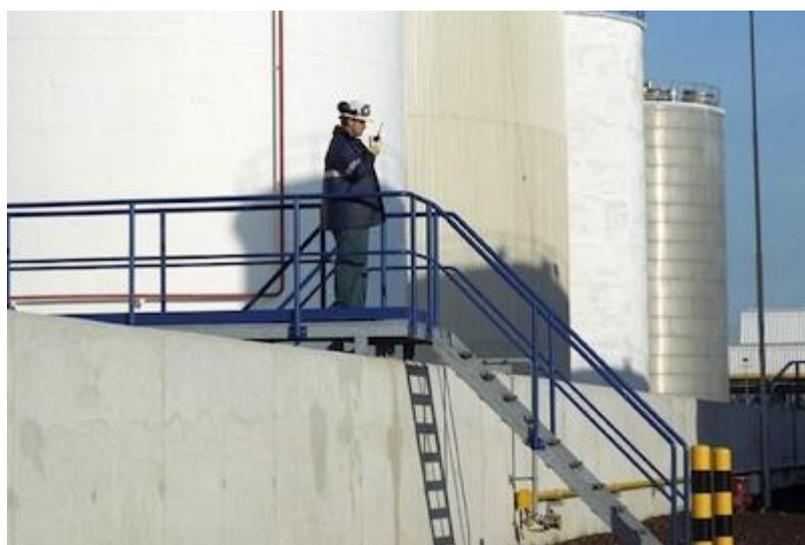
SAFETY This month sees the publication of the BLCH Guide, ostensibly a handbook for those subject to CDI-T inspection but in reality an encyclopaedic summary of everything you need to know about chemical terminals, depots and product handling

The Chemical Distribution Institute (CDI) has been instrumental over the past 15 years or so in improving standards in the chemical and gas tanker shipping sectors and in bulk storage terminals handling liquid chemicals. Its CDI-T inspection protocol, which is part of the European chemical industry's application of the Responsible Care precepts, has spread beyond its original bounds and is now recognised worldwide as an objective and useful system of third-party verification, used by cargo owners and terminals themselves as a means of benchmarking quality.

CDI's expertise in the terminals sector has now been bundled into a two-volume, 560-page handbook, the *Bulk Liquid Chemical Handling Guide for Plants, Terminals, Storage and Distribution Depots*, handily abbreviated as the (BLCH) Guide, published for the first time this month.

The stated aim of the Guide is to provide detailed guidance for managers and employees at terminals and other facilities and for terminal inspectors when answering the questions contained in the CDI Terminal Inspection Protocol. However, CDI says, it should also be useful to anyone involved in bulk liquid chemical handling, either as a terminal or as a service provider.

Indeed, the list of potential readers includes not just terminals but chemical shippers, chemical shipowners, road tanker operators, chemical processing facilities and those companies that provide equipment and services to storage terminal facilities.



One world vision

CDI does not set standards. Similarly, the BLCH Guide does not offer an industry standard but, rather, recognises the requirements of applicable legislation in various territories. It also references industry best practice for the safe and secure handling of bulk liquid chemicals, as provided for by the various international, regional and national standards-setting bodies and by respected industry associations.

To meet corporate and legal requirements, chemical companies storing products at terminals around the world need to ensure that they all meet generally accepted minimum technical and operational standards, both local and international. Some terminals are located in countries or regions where there are established high standards and strict regulatory requirements and controls that have been established and implemented over decades. Some are located where standards and regulatory requirements and controls are in varying stages of development or implementation.

The BLCH Guide provides guidance on the various solutions available to achieve an international level of consistency for safe and high quality operation of bulk liquid chemical terminals and the handling of liquid chemicals in bulk in the associated transport and distribution sectors. That guidance is spelled out in 17 chapters covering:

- chemicals and their classification
- storage tanks and their equipment
- product transfer equipment
- vapour and emissions control

- jetties and shipping
- road and rail connections
- drumming and warehousing
- hazardous area classification
- fire safety
- buildings
- solid and liquid waste
- electrical and power distribution
- traffic circulation and control
- personnel safety
- emergency response
- security, and
- management of the terminal.

Meeting a need

The need for the Guide is outlined by Capt Howard Snaith, CDI's general manager: "In addition to chemical industry demands for a robust inspection scheme, CDI receives a constant stream of enquires from the bulk liquid chemical storage industry, seeking guidance and understanding of best industry practice. CDI's primary objective is to constantly improve the operating standards of the supply chain, and whilst the global players generally have excellent standards of operation, there remains an obligation for CDI to raise operating standards of all players.

"Compliance in the world fleet of chemical tankers is relatively easy to measure against international regulations and the abundance of established best industry practice. In sharp contrast, for the bulk liquid chemical storage industry, there is no international legislation and the national legislation differs widely from one region of the world to another. Both the chemical industry and the storage industry require an industry reference, a quick guide to provide answers for the terminal manager, the supply chain manager, the employee, the surveyor and not least as a teaching reference for the next generation. Additionally and most important, the reference has to be international to bring the global consistency that is desired."

As the process of putting the Guide together went along, however, it became clear that it had wider applicability. Snaith continues: "Originally it was envisaged that the Guide would be an essential handbook for both the chemical and bulk liquid storage industries. However, as the work progressed, it has become clear that the publication will be valuable to a much wider group of industries. A liquid storage terminal has so many operations taking place, each with individual and critical disciplines: tanks, drumming, packaging, road and rail, ships, barges, waste water, emergency response, etc, all requiring the application of best industry practice. Information exists, but from so many sources that it is fragmented and often difficult to locate; no single publication brings the data together in one volume of internationally consistent best practice. This publication will provide answers for the numerous employee groups involved in the whole chemical distribution industry, and beyond."

Publisher Witherby Seamanship has set up a dedicated website for the Guide, which contains more details about the book and also full ordering details – go to www.chemicalhandling.org for full information.