



## U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

# Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) Program

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## TRI Data Quality Program Information

The Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) Program conducts a number of activities every year to ensure the quality of TRI data reported to EPA. These activities range from providing extensive reporting guidance, intelligent reporting software, and training to facilities prior to the reporting deadline as well as data validation and analysis after the data are received.

The information below outlines the TRI Program's Data Quality Program

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### Q: What steps are taken to ensure that TRI data reported by facilities are correct?

A: Each year, the EPA publishes a document called the [Toxic Chemical Release Inventory Reporting Forms and Instructions](#), which is available to the all interested parties via the Internet. This document provides detailed instructions to help facilities determine and complete their reporting obligations under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) section 313 and the Pollution Prevention Act (PPA) section 6607.

To complement the Reporting Forms and Instructions, EPA provides the Toxics Release Inventory - Made Easy (TRI-ME) software. The TRI-ME software helps facility owners and operators in determining and completing their EPCRA Section 313 Form Rs and Form A certification statements. TRI-ME is an interactive, intelligent, user-friendly software tool that guides facilities through the TRI reporting process. TRI-ME contains extensive intelligence to prevent facilities from making common errors and alert users to possible errors so they can double check their forms before submitting them. EPA provides the TRI-ME software to all reporting facilities free of charge. For RY04, about 95 percent of all chemical reports received by EPA were created using TRI-ME. Additionally, EPA provides a number of [detailed guidance documents](#) in the TRI-ME software and through the TRI Web site which address reporting for specific chemicals and industry sectors. Many industry associations also produce guidance documents to encourage TRI compliance, data compatibility, and continuity among their members.

The data submitted to the TRI Program include descriptions of how the data were obtained (i.e., based on monitoring data or measurement, mass balance calculations, published emissions factors, or other approaches such as engineering calculations). Information about the nature of the data are maintained by the TRI Program and are available to all those who query the TRI database. TRI data is transparent and accessible to the public, except for the information that is known to be incorrect or incomprehensible, is a trade secret, or involves an individual's privacy.

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**Q: Does EPA offer live reporting assistance?**

A: Yes. The TRI Information Center provides a toll-free number that industry representatives may call to obtain answers and guidance to questions about completing the TRI reporting forms. The TRI Information Center number is 1-800-424-9346. Furthermore, each EPA Regional Office has a TRI coordinator who conducts training classes and workshops, often in conjunction with associated state and tribal programs. Both live and Web-based classes are available. Information on training can be found at [www.epa.gov/tri/map/2006Training.htm](http://www.epa.gov/tri/map/2006Training.htm).

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**Q: Does EPA have the statutory authority and resources to ensure compliance with the TRI reporting requirements?**

A: Yes. When necessary, EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance may take action to ensure compliance with the TRI reporting requirements. Compliance resources include inspectors and attorneys in each of the EPA's ten Regional Offices and at EPA Headquarters. Compliance resources can be found on EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Web site at [www.epa.gov/compliance/incentives/](http://www.epa.gov/compliance/incentives/).

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**Q: Why does the TRI Program distinguish between Reporting Year (RY) and Calendar Year (CY)?**

A: The statute that governs TRI reporting (EPCRA 313) requires certain facilities in specific industrial classification codes to report on the release, processing, and management of certain toxic chemicals. The reports are filed for activities in a particular calendar year – from January to December of a given year. However, the facilities submit their reports for the calendar year by July 1st of the following year. The term Reporting Year (RY) is used to signify the year that is covered by a facility's TRI report, rather than the year in which the report is submitted to EPA. Calendar Year (CY) is the following year in which the reports are filed. For example, the facility reports for January thru December 2004, i.e., Reporting Year 2004, were due on July 1, 2005, i.e., Calendar Year 2005. This distinction is made to eliminate ambiguity and reduce confusion.

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**Q: What percentage of TRI reports are submitted electronically to EPA?**

A: In RY 2004, facilities submitted approximately 90 percent of their TRI reports electronically. Over half of all reports were submitted electronically over the Internet through EPA's Central Data Exchange (CDX), with the remainder of the electronic submissions by diskettes or compact discs. Only 10 percent of all reports were submitted on paper. EPA strongly encourages the electronic submission of TRI reports because it eliminates the need to enter data into the TRI system manually – a step where errors may be inadvertently introduced.

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**Q: What data quality checks are used to verify the validity of TRI submissions after they are received by EPA?**

- The TRI Program requires each chemical report submitted to EPA be signed by a Senior Manager/Owner/Operator of the facility.

- After EPA receives the reports, the data are loaded into the TRI data processing system for further analysis. At this stage, a “facility data profile” (FDP) is created. The FDP serves two primary purposes. First, the FDP gives the reporting facility the opportunity to confirm that the data were correctly entered into EPA’s national computer system – i.e. EPA “echoes back” the information that it has received. Second, if potential errors are identified in the forms a facility has submitted, the FDP indicates what these errors are and requests that the facility provide EPA with corrections.
- EPA then performs a technical audit of selected submissions and makes follow-up telephone calls as necessary. EPA also performs additional data quality checks as it prepares the data for the annual [TRI Public Data Release \(PDR\)](#).
- Finally, the TRI program maintains ongoing contact with a variety of data users, both within and outside the Agency, and conducts further analyses when inconsistencies or new trends in the TRI data are identified.

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**Q: Are potential data quality issues discussed with the facility that submitted a particular TRI report?**

A: Yes. All data quality edits and alerts are sent to the reporting facility for review. If the facility then determines that an error occurred, the facility may correct the error and resubmit the report. If a potential error could materially affect the validity of EPA’s annual release of the data (i.e., the PDR), EPA Headquarters may contact the facility for clarification and/or refer the issue to an EPA Regional Office for further investigation.

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Last updated on Friday, June 16th, 2006  
URL: [http://www.epa.gov/tri/tridata/data\\_quality\\_reports/index2.htm](http://www.epa.gov/tri/tridata/data_quality_reports/index2.htm)