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Media Coverage of Chemical Crimes, Hillsborough County, Florida, 1987–97

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Abstract

While criminologists focus a considerable amount of attention on issues relating to crime and the media, little consideration has been given to the

news media's coverage of environmental crimes. Consequently, we examine the amount of news coverage devoted to corporate environmental crime in Hillsborough County, Florida for the years of 1987–97. Specifically, we investigate the frequency and content of reports of accidental chemical releases (ACRs) in the Tampa Tribune—the County's largest newspaper. We find that of the 878 chemical spills reported to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Emergency Response and Notification System (ERNS), nine made the news. We also discover that news reports appear to reflect public opinion concerning the nature of corporate crime.

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