

Weld County Office of Emergency Management

State chemical emergency preparedness programs have been evolving since the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act [EPCRA] of 1986 called on states to develop plans for responding to a chemical emergency and to educate the public about chemical risks.

To this end, the Local Emergency Planning Committees [LEPCs] were created in each state by the State Emergency Response Commissions [SERCs], which are appointed by the governor. Both the SERCs and LEPCs were organized by counties.

By federal law, each LEPC must consist of representatives of all of the following groups and organizations:

- elected and local officials
- law enforcement
- civil defense
- emergency response agencies
- health care
- local environmental and transportation agencies
- hospitals
- media
- community groups
- representatives of industry



The initial task of the LEPCs was to develop, by October 17, 1988, an emergency plan that would allow them to prepare for and respond to chemical emergencies in their communities.

The LEPCs are also required annually to review, test and update the plan, which must include the identity and location of hazardous materials, procedures for immediate response to a chemical accident, ways to notify the public about actions they must take, names of coordinators at facilities, and schedules and plans for testing the plan.

After the plan is written and reviewed by the SERC, the LEPC is required to publicize the plan through public meetings or newspaper announcements and solicit public comments, as well as let the public know of any other LEPC activities of interest.

LEPCs are also responsible for reviewing emergency release and hazardous chemical inventory information submitted by local facilities and making this

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information available to the public upon request. It must also establish and publicize procedures for handling these requests.

With this information, there is a set direction Weld County LEPC has. As the LEPC we need to be aware of the dangers chemical facilities place on our communities. The ability to educate citizens about the facilities in their community, and reduce the fear citizens may have about them.

In addition to community outreach, the LEPC needs to make sure that we are meeting the requirements of state and federal laws for the Right-to-Know Act. I believe this has been met in the past and should not be an issue. We also need to continue to schedule Exercises to test the Emergency Plans that each of our agencies have.

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Office of Emergency Management