



About the Winnebago County Local Emergency Planning Committee

Shortly after the enactment of SARA Title III the Winnebago County Local Emergency Planning Committee was formed when the emergency response community came together to fill the need for a countywide approach to hazardous materials incidents. The events of Bhopal, India (search "Bhopal") gave warning to the State of Illinois and the County to prepare for the worst and exercise the preparedness plans on a countywide basis. This forward-thinking group was made up of city and county response agencies. The agenda was simple; prepare a response plan, work together, help our neighboring communities when needed, know where the hazards lie, in essence, be prepared.

Emergency Planning (EPCRA Sections 301-303, 40 CFR Part 355)

The emergency planning section of the law is designed to help communities prepare for and respond to emergencies involving hazardous substances. Every community in the United States must be part of a comprehensive plan. Public funding was not included.

What are the SERCs and LEPCs?

The Governor of each state has designated a State Emergency Response Commission (SERC). Each SERC is responsible for implementing EPCRA provisions within their state.

The SERCs in turn have designated about 3,500 local emergency planning districts and appointed and Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC) for each district. The SERC supervises and coordinates the activities of the LEPC, establishes procedures for receiving and processing public requests for information collected under EPCRA, and reviews local emergency response plans.

The LEPC membership must include, at a minimum, local officials including police, fire, civil defense, public health, transportation, and environmental professionals, as well as representatives of facilities subject to the emergency planning requirements, community groups, and the media. The LEPCs must develop an emergency response plan, review it at least annually, and provide information about chemicals in the community to citizens.

What are the required elements of a community emergency response plan?

- Identify facilities and transportation routes of extremely hazardous substances.
- Describe emergency response procedures, on and off site.
- Designate a community coordinator and facility coordinator(s) to implement the plan.
- Outline emergency notification procedures.
- Describe how to determine the probable affected area and population by releases.
- Describe local emergency equipment and facilities and the persons responsible for them.
- Outline evacuation plans.
- Provide a training program for emergency responders (including schedules).
- Provide methods and schedules for exercising emergency response plans.

For information visit the Winnebago County Local Emergency Planning website: winncolepc.org or send your questions to: lepc@wcso-il.us