



EPCRA AND WHY LEPCs ARE IMPORTANT

Indiana Emergency Response Commission

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THE GENESIS FOR EPCRA

- On Dec. 2, 1984, in Bhopal, India, a cloud of methyl isocyanate gas escaped from Union Carbide's Chemical Plant and spread to the community near the plant.
- As a result, approximately 4,000 residents died and thousands more were injured.
- However, in the two weeks afterward the incident, an additional 8,000 people died.
- In the end, over 550,000 thousand people experienced long-term exposure-related illnesses.
- A few months later in August 1985, another Union Carbide facility in Institute, West Virginia, experienced a similar incident when methylene chloride and aldicarb oxime were released.
- This resulted in six workers being injured and more than a 100 residents being sent to the hospital.



WHAT IS EPCRA AND ITS INTENTIONS?

EPCRA was created to prepare and protect the community from chemical accidents and provide information on potential chemical hazards to the community and first responders by:

- Improving community preparedness
- Promoting cooperation
- Increasing public awareness
- Building information databases



HOW DOES EPCRA PROTECT THE PUBLIC?

- It does so by recognizing that local planners and responders are in the best position to understand the chemical risks in their communities and quickly respond when an accident occurs.
- EPCRA creates the emergency planning infrastructure at the state, tribal and local levels by placing implementation responsibilities on state, tribal, and local agencies and reporting requirements on facilities that handle, store and use hazardous chemicals.
- It requires Comprehensive Emergency Response plans for each community, facility and community participation in the emergency planning process, collection of hazardous chemical information from the facilities throughout the community, and collective planning that involves facilities, key stakeholders and community members.



INTRODUCTION OF SERCs AND LEPCs

- EPCRA requires the governor of each state to appoint a State Emergency Response Commission, also known as SERC, whose member organizations are responsible for implementing the statute.
- SERCs are responsible for establishing a Local Emergency Planning Committee also known as an LEPC in each county or district.
- The LEPCs develop and implement the emergency response plans for their communities.
- LEPCs are comprised of key local organizations and industry, making them full partners in identifying chemical risks in the community and preparing for chemical emergencies.

LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEES (LEPCs)

- EPCRA creates the opportunity for collaboration among a diverse group of participants who broadly represent their communities by serving on their LEPC.
- Each participant in an LEPC brings expertise that is essential to the development of a Comprehensive Emergency Response plan for any chemical accident.



LEPC REPRESENTATIVES

- The law states that LEPCs shall include representatives from the following groups:
 - State and local officials
 - Law enforcement
 - Emergency management agencies
 - Firefighters
 - Emergency medical services
 - Health
 - Environmental
 - Transportation
 - Hospital
 - Broadcast/print media
 - Community groups
 - Industry





LEPCs

- While participants bring their expertise to the LEPC, political officials are responsible for demonstrating the importance and supporting the LEPCs.
- LEPCs should demonstrate through their leadership that they value community participation and stakeholder coordination to help prepare for and prevent chemical incidents.
- With the collaboration among local agencies, states, tribes and industry is essential to develop a local response plan and inform the community of chemical risks.
- However, leadership is KEY.

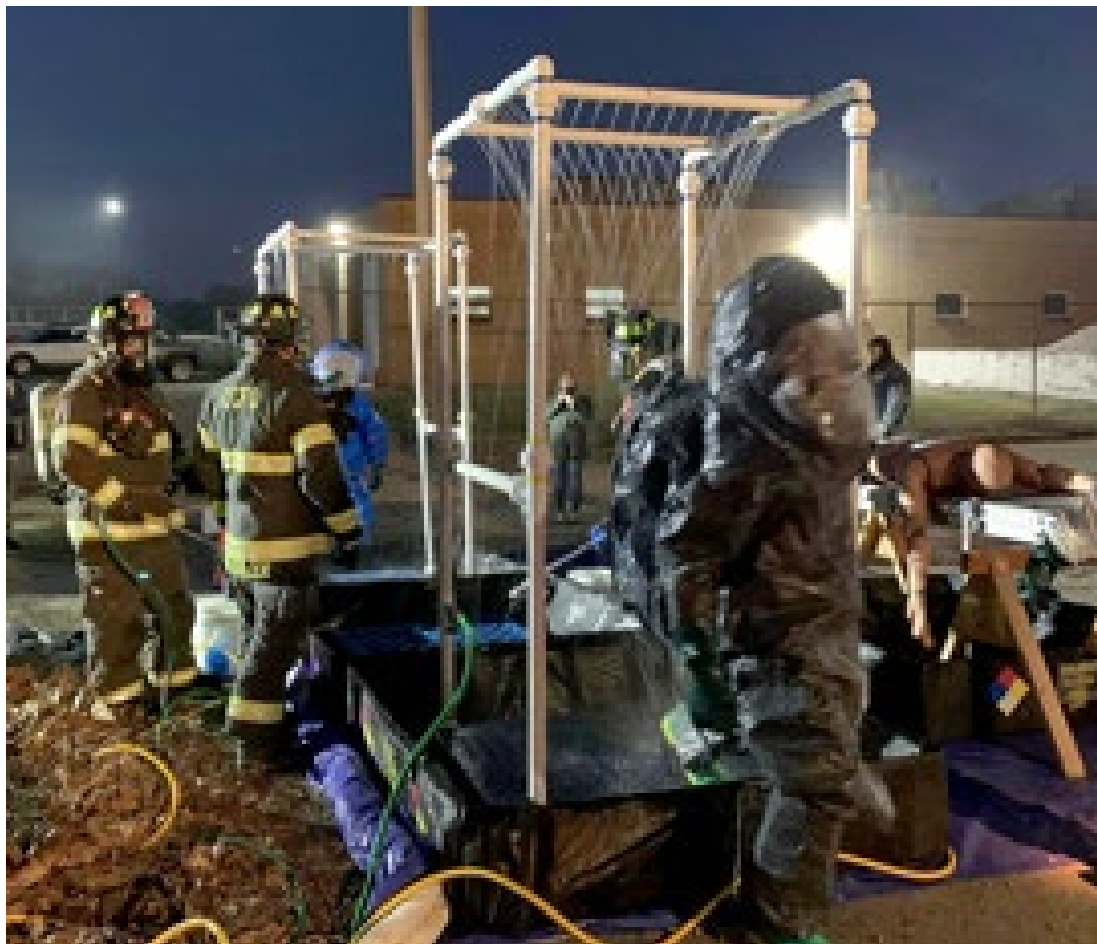


FACILITIES RESPONSIBILITIES

- Facility owners and their operators play a key role in implementing EPCRA.
- The law requires industry to report on the presence and accidental release of a hazardous chemicals to the organizations created under EPCRA.
- As a member of an LEPC, industry leaders can then help assist these entities in identifying potential chemical risks and help to develop a plan that will help first responders when they respond to those risks.



LOCAL PLANNERS AND RESPONDERS



- Local planners and responders who are a part of an LEPC, receive information on the presence of hazardous chemicals in their community to help them prepare for and respond to any chemical releases.
- Local elected officials are the shepherds of the planning process and should emphasize the importance of preparedness in the support of their LEPC.
- Community members can volunteer to serve as a citizen representative on their LEPC and be informed of potential chemical hazards in their community.

THE END

