



How to Set Up a Successful Local Emergency Planning Committee Guidance

Connecticut Emergency Response Commission
May 2008

Subtitle A - Emergency Planning and Notification

Section 301 11001 CGS 22a-601	Establishment of State Commissions, Planning Districts and Local Committees
Section 302 11002	Substances/Facilities Covered and Notification
Section 303 11003 CGS 22a-603	Comprehensive Emergency Response Plans
Section 304 11004 CGS 22a-608	Emergency Notification
Section 305 11005 CGS 22a-603	Emergency Training & Review of Emergency Systems

Four Major Provisions of the Federal Law - EPCRA

- Emergency Planning – Sections 301-303;
- Emergency Release Notification – Section 304;
- Hazardous Chemical Storage Reporting Requirements – Sections 311-312; and
- Toxic Chemical Release Inventory – Section 313.

EPCRA – the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act

Purpose of Emergency Planning

- The emergency planning section of the law is designed to help communities prepare for and respond to emergencies involving hazardous substances.

What is a LEPC or REPC?

LEPC

- Local EPC is a committee responsible for EPCRA compliance formed by a single community.

REPC

- Regional EPC is comprised of a group of communities charged with EPCRA compliance.

EPC – Emergency Planning Committee

LEPC Membership

- Membership must include, at a minimum, local officials including police, fire, emergency management, public health, transportation, and environmental professionals, as well as representatives of facilities subject to the emergency planning requirements, community groups and the media.

Required Elements of a Community Emergency Response Plan

General Statutes, section 22a-603 reads that the Commissioner of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Department shall implement the state emergency planning activities required pursuant to EPCRA.

- Identify facilities and transportation routes of extremely hazardous substances;
- Describe emergency response procedures, on and off site;

Required Elements of a Community Emergency Response Plan continue

- 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 affected 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); and
- Provide the methods and schedules for exercising emergency response plans.

Preparedness Activities

Membership in an Emergency Planning Committee helps support the following preparedness activities within a community:

- Developing and maintaining all-hazards local comprehensive emergency management plan;
- Planning efforts to provide shelter for residents in the event of an evacuation;
- Networking with other departments/agencies, communities, and the private sector in advance of an emergency; and
- Developing and conducting training and exercise programs for all hazards.

Creating Emergency Planning Committees

- A LEPC is comprised of one municipality and is responsible for all aspects of EPCRA compliance on behalf of their municipality.
- A REPC is composed of several communities who have formed a working relationship in order to accomplish EPCRA goals for all the communities in the region.

CT Local and Regional EPCs

- Please visit the SERC web at www.ct.gov/serc to view the latest news, activities, rules, guidance and map of Connecticut that identifies LEPCs and Regional EPCS.

Getting Started

Membership

The process for forming a LEPC or REPC begins with membership.

Membership categories include:

- Elected State/Local Official(s)
- Law Enforcement
- Emergency Medical Services
- Emergency Management
- Fire Service
- Public Health
- Local Environmental
- Hospital/Healthcare
- Transportation
- Media
- Community Groups
- Representative(s) of a facility using Extremely Hazardous Substance(s)
- Public Works

Individual Can Represent More Than One Category in Membership

- For example, the Fire Department may also operate the community ambulance service.
- Therefore one individual could represent both the Fire Service and Emergency Medical Services categories.
- Send an invite letter to potential members informing them of the importance of the committee.

Meetings

- Once potential members have been identified, a meeting should be convened based upon the availability of the membership.
- Some committees find meeting during the workday is best for them, while others find meeting in the evenings more accommodating for their members.
- While all schedules can't always be accommodated, it is best to find a timeframe that works for the majority of the membership, as a quorum may often be required.
- SERC recommends that bylaws be developed to assist in the administration of the committee.

Subcommittees

- Establishing subcommittees who focus on specific topics can reduce the number of full committee meetings.
- The subcommittee structure allows members to focus their energies on topics in which they have an interest.
- Subcommittees generally meet separately from the full committee meetings, and report back the work accomplished to the full committee.

Frequency of Meetings

- Start up requires at least one meeting.
- Schedule at least two – four meetings a year.
- There is no limit to how often meetings are held.
- The need to meet is general predicated on the amount of work that the committee has to accomplish, as well as the amount of time committee members are willing to give.
- The decision on when to meet is best decided by the membership.

Agenda

- Meeting agendas should reflect the name of the committee, the time, date and location of the meeting, as well as all topics that must be discussed and perhaps voted during the meeting.
- Meetings should be a useful time for the membership.
- The agenda should be carefully crafted as a crowded agenda with limited time could result in topics not receiving enough attention, or a meeting that runs long – both of which could be a source of frustration to members.

Start-Up Committee Meeting

An agenda for a Start-Up Committee meeting could include:

- A discussion of the reason for the Meeting
- How to organize the committee
- Selection of a chair
- Possible formation of subcommittees
- How often to meet
- Time and day of week for meeting times
- A review of the training status of members
- Review of the hazmat component of the local comprehensive emergency management plan.
- Many start-up committees have invited guest speakers from functioning LEPCs/REPCs to learn how they managed to overcome growing pains while going through the process.

Provisional/Full Committees

- Focus on the review and update of the Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan.
- Once the Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan has been updated, the committee may plan an exercise (usually a tabletop exercise) to test the elements of the plan.
- Maintain the Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan currency.
- Achieve training and exercise goals.
- Increasing community awareness.

Public Meetings

- Create and post a notice and agenda with the appropriate official – check with City or Town Clerk and the Secretary of State.
- The posting should be located where community posts its other governmental meeting. May want to advise the Town or City Clerk of the appropriate posting location.
- Accommodate the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requirements.

Conducting the Meeting

- All attendees should be asked to sign an attendance roster to determine and document that attendance requirements are met for the meeting.
- Keep on record the posted notice and agenda, the attendance roster, and meeting minutes as part of your documentation.

Length of Meetings

- There is no steadfast rule about length of meetings.
- Most meetings tend to last between one and two hours.
- In the development stages of the committee, meeting may be longer in duration as a number of tasks may need to be accomplished.

Meeting Minutes

- It is recommended that meeting minutes be taken.
- The person taking the minutes may use whatever format with which he or she is comfortable.
- The minutes should be kept as part of your documentation of the meeting – along with the agenda, the posting notice and attendance roster.

Committee Records

- LEPCs and REPCs are responsible for a variety of records, such as meeting minutes, agendas, attendance rosters and notices.
- Responsible for maintaining annual Tier 2 report submissions from facilities located with the committee's jurisdiction.
- Check general statutes for time periods for records retention schedules.

Tier 2 Reports

Tier 2 reports are

1. The foundation to the EPCRA philosophy of the EPCRA legislation.
 2. Useful source of information for investigators both in epidemiological and environmental studies.
 3. Quantify the hazardous materials that facilities within the community may store on site, utilize and/or transport.
 4. Typically stored either by facility name or by address.
- Most committees typically keep a file for each facility or address.

Hazardous Materials Response Plans

- EPCRA specifies that each Committee shall develop a Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan for the community.
- NRT-1 provides guidance and set forth the provisions required in the plan.
- Recommend visiting the DEHMS website for specifics at www.ct.gov/demhs.

Bylaws of Committee

- Committee are recommended to develop a Bylaw document to help them operate under the legal authority of the provision of EPCRA.
- The primary mission of the LEPC is to be an effective community network for planning for emergency management of incidents involving spills or releases of hazardous materials.
- Any modifications and/or deletions of Bylaw language must be voted by Committee for approval.
- Copies of the Bylaws should be made available upon request.
- Bylaws should be revisited by members from time to time.

Risk Reduction Activities

- Committees should encourage local industry to engage in risk reduction activities.
- One such activity is assisting the facility in determining if the quantity of chemicals stored on site is necessary or if risk could be reduced by ordering the materials more frequently.
- Another activity could also evaluate their manufacturing process and determine if a less hazardous chemical could be used in production.
- Suggest contacting the CT DEP Pollution Prevention staff or visiting the DEP website at www.ct.gov/dep.

LEPC Roles and Responsibilities Checklist

- The SERC adopted a specific checklist that identifies the federal and state laws. A copy of the checklist is available on the SERC Website at www.ct.gov/serc under the LEPC link.
 - The checklist is a great tool to ensure that all tasks required under EPCRA is being taken care of.

Proven Ideas to Help Keep Committees Active

- Conduct annual meeting to review the Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan.
- Conduct a meeting near the Tier 2 report deadline (March 1).
- Invite guest speakers to address topics of interest to members.
- Conduct a Facility Process Review.
- Conduct review of any new regulation or law.
- Conduct a review of available software.

Available Language format

The SERC Website has several language formats for general use. The documents are set up as a PDF so that they can be printed for markup and retyped with the appropriate for the individual LEPC. The following formats are available:

- Letter that invites people to participate in LEPC meetings
- Agenda Format
- Possible Bylaw Language

Subtitle B – Reporting Requirements

Section 311 11021 CGS 22a-809	Material Safety Data Sheets MSDS
Section 312 11022 CGS 22a-610	Emergency & Hazardous Chemical Inventory Forms (Tier Two Forms)
Section 313 11023 CGS 22a-611	Toxics Chemical Release Forms Toxic Release Form

Subtitle C – General Provisions

Section 321 11041	Relationship to Other Laws
Section 322 11042	Trade Secrets
Section 323 11043	Provision of Information to Health Professionals, Doctors & Nurses
Section 324 11044	Public Availability of Plans, Data Sheets, Forms and Follow-up Notices
Section 325 11045	Enforcement
Section 326 11046	Civil Actions
Section 327 11047	Exemptions
Section 328 11048	Regulations
Section 329 11049	Definitions
Section 330 11050	Authorization of Appropriations

Contacts

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