

Chapter 14. How to Maintain a Healthy and Active LEPC and TEPC Organization

This chapter provides suggestions to maintain a healthy LEPC (or TEPC) organization and keep it active.

14.1 Maintaining a Healthy LEPC and TEPC

To maintain a healthy and successful LEPC and TEPC, the following strategies are effective:

- Have clearly defined goals.
- Train members on the requirements established in EPCRA legislation and know what is expected of them.
- Appoint and retain the right people so as to achieve a broad-based membership not dominated by the interests of one segment.
- Maintain engagement so that members:
 - Feel useful and believe they are helping the community.
 - Are given tasks according to interests and expertise.
 - Have been given challenging tasks.
 - Are recognized for their contributions.
 - Have a chance to develop their own skills.
- Be purpose-driven and have executive-level buy-in and support.
- Maintain a relationship with the state (or tribal) agencies responsible for the EPCRA program.
- Conduct meetings, which are scheduled at regular, convenient times.
- Adhere to the meeting agenda and be concerned with common interests.
- Demonstrate effective and strong leadership with a commitment of resources (e.g., staff, funding).

14.1.1 Regional LEPCs and TEPCs

In some areas, it may make sense for LEPCs and TEPCs to be more focused on local issues. For example, in Colorado, the Southwest Regional Emergency Planning Committee encompasses Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma and San Juan counties and the Ute and Southern Ute Tribes. These areas share common interests and issues, and combining their geographic focus helps ensure coverage across the region. Additionally, regular meetings solidify mutual aid agreements and keep all parties in the loop on ongoing concerns.

Peer Exchanges

Exchanging information in a structured way between LEPCs and TEPCs can provide invaluable insight and new ideas. Consider hosting an event with LEPCs or TEPCs in your surrounding area to discuss common problems and successes across your LEPC network.

Case Study: Utah LEPC Peer Exchange

Weber County, Utah, along with Davis County, sponsors an annual LEPC Peer Exchange. The LEPCs meet to learn more about each other's activities, regulations, chemical concerns, emergency planning and other topics. It is a communal time for the members of the LEPCs to share ideas amongst themselves. It is well attended each year, with upwards of 100 attendees. It has recently expanded to six counties and became a northern Utah conference.

14.2 Ideas to Help Keep Committees Active

The following provides some suggestions to help keep LEPCs and TEPCs active.

- **LEPC and TEPC Meetings.** One of the best ways to ensure LEPC or TEPC success is simply to meet regularly to discuss the emergency response plan and any changes occurring in the community that may affect the plan. Having a set date, meeting agenda and recurrence helps people plan to attend. Also, ensure you invite all the stakeholders you want to attend, including local facilities. You should also inform and invite your SERC or TERC and state/local elected officials to your meetings.
- **Conduct Annual Meeting to Review the Plan.** Provide an opportunity for each subcommittee in the LEPC or TEPC organization to review their roles and missions during a response, as detailed by the plan. This agenda item allows the committee to meet one of the EPCRA mandates (annual review of the plan).
- **Conduct Outreach with Facilities in Your Planning District Near the Tier II Report Deadline.** It is possible that some facilities in your community are not aware of EPCRA reporting requirements. You may use the EPCRA factsheet and the quick guide EPA developed to explain EPCRA and the facilities' reporting obligations:
<https://www.epa.gov/epcra/epcra-fact-sheets>.
 - Additionally, you may utilize this meeting to provide assistance to facilities in completing Tier II forms. This process helps the LEPC and TEPC) receive accurate Tier II forms, and more importantly, it serves as a reminder to smaller industries that Tier II forms are due.
 - Other suggestions for outreach are provided below in section 14.3 of this chapter.
- **Invite Guest Speakers to Address Topics of Interest.** Topics that may be of interest to all members are cost recovery, district HazMat team response considerations, industry safety programs, and cleanup contractor considerations. Governmental agencies such as the State Division of Emergency Management, HazMat Team representatives, EPA, local industry, and cleanup contractor representatives may be willing to present on their program(s).

- **Conduct an After-Action Meeting for Incident Response.** Conducting a review of a local response to identify best practices—as well as lessons learned—is a unique opportunity to incorporate changes to the emergency response plan.
- **Conduct a Facility Process Review.** The review can serve as an awareness tool for the responder community. Having an industry explain how and why they use hazardous substances can be a beneficial means of improving awareness of the specific facility and the hazardous substances used. It also familiarizes the responders with where the various hazardous substances are used or stored.
- **Conduct a Review of any New Regulation or Law.** Reviewing new laws or regulations recently enacted by EPA and other federal agencies or governing standard organization, such as the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), that impacts the LEPC and TEPC, allows members to keep current.
- **Conduct a Review of Available Software.** There are many software programs that are available to industry or the emergency response community to help with topics associated with committee activities. CAMEO and Tier2 Submit software are all public domain programs that can provide assistance to response agencies and the LEPC (*see 16.27*).
- **Facility-hosted Meetings/Conduct Tour of Facilities within the Jurisdiction.** A great way to get local industry involved in your LEPC or TEPC is to invite them to host meetings and conduct facility tours. Citizens in your community get access to the facility and facility emergency coordinator to continue conversations about preparedness, as well as getting a sense of the activities at the facilities.
 - Touring a regulated facility in the county is an effective way to connect the private and public sectors. It allows LEPC and TEPC) members to become more familiar with the hazardous chemicals within their jurisdiction.
- **Conduct Table-Top Exercises.** LEPC and TEPC meetings are the ideal time to discuss potential disaster scenarios and identify how each agency would coordinate with one another and respond to the disaster. By making the scenarios realistic, the input provided by the LEPC or TEPC members can be incorporated into the emergency response plan. Table-top exercises provide an opportunity to identify where additional planning is required. The most effective exercise scenarios are those that are inclusive of all the LEPC or TEPC members and the organizations they represent.

14.3 Other Suggestions for Outreach to Facilities in Your Planning District

14.3.1 Chemical Safety Workshops

One way to reach out to industry and the local community is to conduct workshops on various topics. You can invite your federal, state, and local regulators to discuss relevant regulations and current events, as well as having industry on the agenda to discuss planning and strategy. This can be a great venue to publicize your LEPC or TEPC and explore partnerships with organizations that you have not worked with before.

Case Study: South Dakota Chemical Safety Workshops

The issuance of Executive Order 13650, *Improving Chemical Facility Safety and Security*, created an Interagency Working Group co-chaired by EPA, DHS and OSHA. The Working Group met at the HQ-level, as well as separately at the regional-level. Within Region 8, the working group met regularly to discuss implementation and coordination activities, which included working with the regional state programs on how to educate the regulated community on best chemical safety practices.

Beginning in 2016, the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources, EPA, OSHA, and DHS have annually conducted a weeklong series of Chemical Safety Industry Workshops across South Dakota that reach hundreds of attendees across multiple locations and offer industry a direct line of communication with federal partners. The sessions include ample time for questions.

14.3.2 Trade Associations/Chambers of Commerce

Another way to reach out to industry is through their trade associations. You should contact national or regional trade associations and request assistance to involve local facilities to join your organization. You can also contact your local Chamber of Commerce, which should have good information on businesses in your area that you may want to target.

14.3.3 Non-Profit Partnerships

Foundation and donation-funded organizations can be a great resource to partner with. They have access to different funding sources and may be able to help you reach out to industry or local partners in innovative ways.

Case Study: Colorado Emergency Preparedness Partnership

One example of this is the Colorado Emergency Preparedness Partnership, which provides a platform for public, private and philanthropic organizations to work together on preparedness issues in the state of Colorado. The partnership collaborates on projects and programs that promote joint emergency planning and information sharing.

The partnership was created in 2008, just prior to the Democratic National Convention (DNC) in Denver. Its purpose was to connect the public and private sector during this event to ensure that the business community had situational awareness of planning efforts surrounding the DNC. It was recognized that this public-private collaboration contributed to the success of the DNC and was an important part of emergency preparedness planning efforts in Colorado.

Following the DNC, the partnership worked to provide the private sector with educational briefings and workshops on emergency preparedness topics. It also provided an avenue for government entities to interact with businesses and to gain a better understanding of the issues the private sector faces with regard to preparedness.

Over the past several years, the partnership has conducted programs in the Denver metro region, Fort Collins, Brighton, Loveland, Colorado Springs and Grand Junction. You can find more information at <https://thecepp.org/index.html>.

14.3.4 EPA Region 7 Newsletter

A newsletter, *Energize Your LEPC*, published by EPA Region 7 in collaboration with their states, is provided in Appendix K.