

# LEPC Frequently Asked Questions



## What is an LEPC?

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A Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) is a gathering of representatives in your community that have an interest in hazardous materials safety. As a group you will be tasked with identifying potential risks that your community faces, such as chemicals stored in and/or transported throughout your community. The LEPC should seek ways to help minimize the risk, prevent accidents and assist in the development of plans to deal with a chemical emergency. Education and community outreach is another core component of an LEPC. Through the LEPC, the public will be able to seek out information about chemicals in their communities and learn how to safely shelter in place.

## Why do I need an LEPC?

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The citizens of your community needs to know they are safe and that there are plans in place to assist with a chemical release. Under the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA) it was mandated that LEPCs form as a means of allowing communities to assess their risks from hazardous chemicals and a way to exercise its right to know. Nebraska adopted EPCRA under the Nebraska Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (NEPCRA) - see link for complete details on NEPCRA. The NEPCRA law is administered by the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) and is overseen by the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC).

## What is the SERC?

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The SERC consists of 19 members from State and local government, private and public sector including; fire, law, public health, school, industry, transportation and military. Members of the SERC are appointed by the Governor and are responsible for the oversight of the LEPCs. The SERC meets on a quarterly basis and approves members for the LEPC, discusses any changes to the NEPCRA and works directly with the LEPCs to ensure their compliance with Federal and State Laws.

## Who is responsible for forming a LEPC in my community?

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Under the NECPRA each county has been identified as a local emergency planning district and will maintain Annex F – Hazmat in the Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP). Any person with interest in community right to know / public safety can start a LEPC. Members should include; state and local elected officials, public health, hospitals, firefighters, local emergency management, law enforcement, transportation, broadcast and print media, neighborhood and community organizations and owners and operators of facilities subject to NEPCRA.

## What will our LEPC be expected to do?

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Your LEPC will be expected to meet at least once a year to review the LEOP, hazardous materials annex and make necessary changes to the plan. An annual report will need to be completed and sent to the SERC by April 30th. The report will include the number of TIER II forms received, a notification that the plan has been reviewed and any changes documented, changes in elected officers, upcoming meeting schedule, copies of public meeting notes, LEPC member names, addresses, phone numbers, area they represent, items of special interest/special projects.

## Who pays for all this?

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There is virtually no cost to operating an LEPC. A LEPC is a meeting of the minds, a communication system, a forum to bring interested parties and the public together to make their communities safer. While there may be some incidental costs, they should be not significant. Some costs of operation are reimbursable under the Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning (HMEP) grants.

## Can counties join together to form a regional LEPC?

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With the approval of the SERC, counties can combine their LEPCs into a regional LEPC. This multi-county LEPC must be able to meet the objectives set forth by each of the participating counties. For more information or assistance please contact the SERC Coordinator, contact information below.

## What are the minimum requirements for my LEPC?

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According to NEPCRA, the following requirements must be adhered to:

- Establish rules and procedures, 81-15, 217(1) a & b
- Review and update Hazardous Materials plan once a year, 81-15, 217 (c)
- Designated public library to receive the plan, 81-15, 217 (e)
- Provide plan to governing body for review, 81-15, 221.
- Provide annual notice to public in local newspaper. The Hazardous Materials Plan, MSDS, and chemical inventory forms (Tier IIs) will be available for public view, 81-15 229.
- Annually elect a chairperson, 81-15, 216 and designate a Coordinator of Information 81-15, 217 (1)(b).
- Meet at least annually and provide public notice of meeting 81-15, 216.
- Provide annual report of all expenditures to the SERC, 81-15, 217 (2).

## Where do I get help?

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If you need assistance in developing your LEPC or need ideas for your LEPC, begin by contacting the SERC Coordinator, James Rashilla at the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency by phone at (402) 471-7176 or by email at [james.rashilla@nebraska.gov](mailto:james.rashilla@nebraska.gov). Members of the SERC will also be happy to meet with you and attend your meetings.