Nebraska State Emergency Response Commission (SERC)
Program Overview 2014
State Emergency Response Commission
2014 Commission Members

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Open
City Government
Partners and Stakeholders

The SERC would like to acknowledge its counterparts federal, state and local that have contributed to its success.

Without the input, advice and direction of those who have assisted in the development of the SERC, the hazmat program and the LEPCs, plans would not have been updated or exercised.

Special thanks goes to federal counterparts at the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Transportation, as well as state partners including: the Department of Health and Human Services, Nebraska State Patrol, State Fire Marshal, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Nebraska Department of Roads and Nebraska Military Department.

Most importantly, SERC extends its thanks to the volunteers, both citizen and first responders, who serve the citizens of Nebraska.
The primary focus of the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) is to coordinate hazardous materials chemical planning through the establishment of a state hazmat program. The SERC designates and oversees the Local Emergency Planning Committees known as LEPCs. The SERC coordinate with state and federal environmental protection agencies and implements the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act within the State of Nebraska.

The SERC consists of 19 members whom are governor appointed and approved by the Legislature. Members serve three-year appointments in their respective areas. The SERC is managed by the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and supported by the Department of Environmental Quality.

The SERC serves as the pass-through entity for the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning (HMEP) Grant. HMEP monies are provided to the LEPCs to develop and sustain hazmat plans, train first responders and exercise standard operating guidelines.

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday in January, April, July and October. An annual SERC retreat is hosted by an LEPC, where long-range goals are established, future training needs are identified and lessons learned are discussed from recent events.
SERC Executive Summary

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency - NEMA

Under Nebraska State Statute 81-15,210 the director of NEMA serves as the State Administrator of the Nebraska Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (NEPCRA) for administrative purposes. To support the planning efforts under the EPCRA NEMA has a full time SERC coordinator and four full-time planners.

The SERC coordinator manages the quarterly meetings, maintains record management, represents the SERC and NEMA at LEPC meetings and hosts annual trainings, exercises and workshops.

The planners assist in the development, updates and revisions of local hazmat plans and standard operating procedures. NEMA works directly with NDEQ to ensure plans incorpo-

Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality - NDEQ

Under Nebraska State Statute 81-15,213 the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) receives emergency notification and facility reports, establishes procedures for receiving and processing information requests and ensures information is made public.

NDEQ has a full-time Superfund Amendment Reauthorization Act (SARA) coordinator that works directly with the reporting facilities that fall under the EPCRA, ensuring TIER II reports are properly completed, filed and incorporated into the local plans.

NDEQ serves as the SERC information officer, obtaining, tracking and maintaining all chemical reports and release documents.
Local Emergency Planning Committees

Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) are located across Nebraska and typically are under the role and direction of the Emergency Management Agency within each respective county. LEPCs primary role is to support the EPCRA which includes the development of the hazmat plan, education of the general public on chemical awareness and tracking of chemical inventory supplied by local industry.

Active LEPCS are recognized for their outstanding efforts in community outreach by the SERC at a biannual LEPC conference. An LEPC that is considered active, not only involves the community, but has demonstrated working knowledge of the hazmat plan through full-scale exercises. One such example is outlined on page seven by the Homestead LEPC.

Industry partners are engaging LEPCs by hosting regular meetings and tours at the facility sites.

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**LEPC’s Across Nebraska**

LEPCs across Nebraska typically fall under three categories: inactive, partially active or active.

**Inactive** — a LEPC that's considered inactive has no known structure, does not meet on an annual basis and/or has not sent an annual report to the SERC.

**Partially Active** — a LEPC that's considered partially active holds regular meetings and updates the hazmat plan as directed.

**Active** — an active LEPC is one that regularly holds meetings (monthly or quarterly), conducts exercises, involves facilities and provides community outreach.

Source:
LEPC annual reports submitted to the SERC
EPCRA www.nemaine.gov

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By State Statute all 93 counties are represented by a LEPC.

The above chart depicts over half of the 93 counties have LEPCs that are considered either partially active or active.

According to submitted annual reports 80% of the Nebraska population is covered by an active or partially active LEPC.
Homestead LEPC Supports Full-Scale Exercise

One example of an active LEPC, one that goes above and beyond the call of EPCRA, is the Homestead LEPC. The Homestead LEPC, named such because they regularly meet at the Homestead National Monument in Gage County, is considered one of the state’s more active LEPCs and includes members from Saline, Jefferson, Gage, Fillmore and Thayer Counties.

The Homestead LEPC meets on a quarterly basis, hosts a hazmat response team, involves elected officials, industry and other volunteer groups. They regularly bring in outside presenters and trainings to encourage participation and professional growth.

Recently this LEPC along with the local emergency manger and the Beatrice Fire Hazmat Team hosted a full-scale exercise with the 72nd Civil Support Team (CST).

The exercise tested the hazmat plan (developed by the LEPC), operating guidelines and mutual aid between city, state and federal hazmat response.

Members of the Beatrice Fire Hazmat Team work with the 72nd Civil Support Team in a full-scale drill that involved the evacuation of a hospital, identification of a unknown chemical and decontamination of equipment.
A new and improved LEPC Guide was created with the assistance of the Education/Outreach and Strategic Plan Committees and several LEPC members. The guide was developed to assist new LEPCs in establishing an active committee while giving long-time LEPC members new and energized ideas.

The U.S. Department of Transportation supplied the SERC with Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning (HMEP) grant monies that are allocated to the LEPCs for support in plan development, workshops, trainings and exercises.

Examples of LEPCs benefiting from the use of HMEP funds include the increase in hazmat training, plans being updated and exercised and the development of a Nebraska hazmat challenge.

2014 marked the first year that the Nebraska Hazmat Symposium, LEPC Conference and SERC Retreat were scheduled simultaneously. Attendees from the local community learned from members of the SERC and local first responders.

Author and nationally known hazmat expert Mike Callan presented on the history of EPCRA, EPA and PHMSA gave updates on programs and attendees engaged with SERC members at a quarterly meeting.
**Hazmat In Nebraska**

**Nebraska’s Resources**

Nebraska first responders have several hazmat options when it comes to a response to an unknown chemical or the situation becomes un-manageable.

NEMA has signed inter-local agreements with 10 teams across the state whom that have received specialized training as hazmat technicians. The State Emergency Response Teams (SERTs) include the cities of Beatrice, Bellevue, Columbus, Grand Island, Hastings, Norfolk, North Platte, Omaha, Scottsbluff and the rural department of Red Willow Rural (McCook County).

The state has a hazardous response team made up of law enforcement from the Nebraska State Patrol, fire specialists from the State Fire Marshal’s Office and environmental specialists from the Department of Environmental Quality.

Under the direction of the Nebraska National Guard is a federally supported Civil Support Team, ??????

General information, resource lists, and call out numbers can be found for all three resources on the NEMA website www.nema.nebraska.gov or by reaching out to the SERC at (402) 471-7421.

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**Hazmat Challenge**

The Nebraska hazmat community came together for the first time in a statewide hazmat challenge held at the Omaha Public Safety Training Center. Members from across the state competed for a chance to attend the national challenge in New Mexico. The Nebraska challenge’s objective was to test existing hazmat procedures, and to ultimately identify a group of individuals who would travel as a team to the Los Alamos National Lab and represent Nebraska.

Representatives from Red Willow Rural, Hastings, and Omaha Fire Departments and two troopers from the Nebraska State Patrol gathered in Los Alamos and competed with other national level teams.
Due to recent derailments of trains carrying crude oil, and fatalities associated with these accidents, in May 2014, the USDOT issued an emergency order that required railroads carrying Bakken crude oil with an amount at or above one million gallons to report to the affected State Emergency Response Commission. Required reports were to include the number of trains traveling through the state, the route traveled, chemical specific information and an emergency point of contact.

In June, the SERC received reports from Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) that indicated One million gallons or more of Bakken crude oil travels through Nebraska along the eastern border. Union Pacific (UP) reported no trains meeting the threshold of one million gallons were being transported through Nebraska. Further reports from BNSF indicated a change in the route and added an eastern route between the counties of Cass and Sarpy.

In July, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) met with the local emergency managers and first responders to discuss the route information, existing plans and response capabilities. Current hazardous response plans are being reviewed, updated and exercised.

*The map at right shows the current route information. Twelve counties are affected, including: Dakota, Thurston, Burt, Dodge, Saunders, Cass, Lancaster, Gage, Johnson, Pawnee, Richardson & Sarpy are impacted.*
Nebraska Prepares for the Increase in Transportation of Crude Oil, continued

Route Trends and Changes

The following chart depicts the changes in shipping along the affected route within the six months the emergency order has been in place:

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<th>June 6</th>
<th>June 13</th>
<th>Sept 30</th>
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Source: BNSF commodity reports to the SERC. Information is categorized and forecasted based on historical weekly averages unless otherwise noted.

Summary:

Early reports indicated an average of three trains, each carrying one million gallons of Bakken Crude, traveling through the listed counties on a weekly basis. The route outlined in the three initial reports traveled north to south arriving in Nebraska in Dakota County and departing in Richardson County.

A change in route was indicated in a September 30 report with an eastbound turn around at the Cass/Sarpy county lines.

Increased shipments were detected in the last three reports, showing an influx in weekly shipments originating in Dakota County and departing to the east in Sarpy County.