



Local Emergency Planning Committee

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What is the Local Emergency Planning Committee Of Columbiana County?

The LEPC's are a requirement of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 under 42 U.S.C. 11021 & 11022 (sections 311 and 312), otherwise known as SARA Title III. SARA Title III and the Ohio Revised Code, Chapter 3750, established a State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) for the state of Ohio. The SERC commission membership is comprised of members by statute and also by appointments by the governor of Ohio to oversee the SARA Title III program for emergency response and planning. The Ohio EPA is also appointed by the governor of Ohio to be the lead agency to coordinate the SERC commission along with the Ohio EMA.

The SARA Act requires companies with chemical inventories over the threshold reporting quantities for Extremely Hazardous Substances (EHS) and Hazardous Substances (HS) to file an annual facility chemical reports with the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) of their county, their local fire department, and as well as to SERC. Section 3750.03 of the ORC requires each state to designate Local Emergency Planning Districts (LEPD's). In Ohio, each county is a LEPD and they must establish a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). Therefore, in Ohio, there are eighty-seven (87) LEPD's/LEPC's. The State of Ohio does have 88 counties, but two counties are merged, therefore the reason for only 87 LEPCs.

LEPCs are a group of individuals that volunteer their time to serve on this committee. They are nominated to and approved by the County Commissioners and then approved by the SERC commission for membership into their local LEPC. LEPC members serve a two-year (2) term of office and they can be reappointed following their initial two-year term. The membership of the LEPC must include, without limitation, personnel from each of these groups: elected state and local officials, law enforcement, emergency management, firefighting, first aid, health, local environment, hospital, transportation, broadcast/print media, community groups, and facilities which are subject to the ORC, Chapter 3750. Our organization has 4 "Full Committee" meetings a year; which are held on a quarterly basis. The LEPC also is comprised of 4 sub-committees meet at numerous other times about the year as needed. The sub-committees are; Finance Committee - comprised of the Executive Board members, Public Relations & Membership, Exercise & Training, and Enforcement & Compliance & Planning.

Since the LEPC memberships are approved by the County Commissioners, the LEPC is also considered to be a County Board and as such, are entitled to the assistance and representation from the County Prosecutor and Auditor. In Columbiana County, the local LEPC receives no county tax payer's monies. All monies received are from grants for which the local LEPC applies for on a yearly basis.

The County Auditor's office records and maintains financial records of all expenditures and receipts that are incurred of the local LEPC. The LEPC office also maintains its financial records to coincide with what the Auditor's office issues. The local LEPC is covered under the liability coverage that is provided by CORSA to Columbiana County since we are considered to be an entity of the county government. We are covered while we are operating under the scope of our authority as an organized LEPC. The Columbiana County LEPC does have one part time paid employee whom serves as the Information Coordinator.

Some of the tasks and objectives that your local LEPC are involved with are;

1. The conducting of an annual HAZMAT exercise to determine the readiness of emergency response agencies to respond to a hazardous incident in cooperation with the local safety forces, local, county & state offices, and county facilities that deal with reportable quantities of hazardous materials, both as a facility or by transportation.
2. The updating of the county wide Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan (ERP) on an annual basis. The ERP is required by law to be updated on an annual basis with all changes submitted to the SERC by the 17th of Oct. for either their concurrence or non concurrence. The Columbiana County LEPC Hazardous Materials ERP is available for public review at the eight public libraries that are in the county and also at the LEPC office at 215 South Market Street, Lisbon.
3. The timely submitting of various compliance reports to the SERC that reflect the LEPCs evaluation of chemical data received. Facilities that use reportable quantities of certain chemicals are required by law to report on an annual basis a chemical inventory not only to SERC but also to the local LEPC and the local fire department. These facility reports are kept on file at the LEPC and information on the reporting facilities is available to the public upon written request. The LEPC does have the ability to take civil actions and impose penalties against the facilities if they fail to provide the information required under the Act with the cooperation of the County Prosecutor.

4. Works to maintain a full body of volunteers from the necessary required list of agencies to the membership roster of the LEPC.
5. Establish and revise current by-laws that reflect the operation of the Committee and also establish various policies and procedures that assist in governing the operation of the LEPC.
6. Hold LEPC meetings, both full quarterly committee and sub-committee meetings throughout the year on a regular basis, which are open to the public.
7. File fiscal reports that reflect how LEPC money is being spent throughout the year. These reports are required to be submitted to the SERC on a regular basis. The Columbiana County LEPC uses the services of the County Auditor to maintain an accurate accounting of all LEPC monies. No County monies are involved with the operation of the LEPC. The LEPC receives their own operating monies through grant monies from the State Emergency Response Commission.
8. Co-ordinates the training of emergency responders in the various aspects of hazardous materials through the State Fire Marshals Office and various training agencies. This is an on going task to see that all emergency responders are trained to the proper levels of protection and to ensure for their safety when they respond to a hazardous materials situation.
9. Does routine site inspections of facilities within the county for current chemicals and plans. This not only keeps the LEPC informed of the facilities practices and chemical inventory, but it also gives the LEPC, the local fire departments and the local facilities a chance to better communicate as to what each others duties and functions are.
10. Works with the necessary state agencies to fulfill our responsibilities under the law and establish procedures to handle facilities that do not report their chemical inventory and/or do not make proper notification of chemical releases.
11. Works closely with the County EMA office and other county offices on items that concern the safety of the residents of Columbiana County which pertain to hazardous materials.

If you should have any further questions concerning the Columbiana County LEPC, please contact us at the address or phone number listed above. Thank you.