

## COMMUNITY AWARENESS PROJECTS

EPCRA does not require LEPCs to conduct public awareness programs, but it is desirable that LEPCs carry out such programs. The public needs to be aware of the dangers of hazardous substances and the procedures they need to follow in the event of orders for in-place sheltering or evacuation. Special facilities, such as nursing homes, schools, hospitals, public buildings, senior citizen housing, and others should also be included in emergency planning and awareness programs.

If not already in place, the LEPC needs to develop a program to provide for public education regarding hazardous materials. An important part of this program is the identification and education of administrators of special facilities. Additionally, education of special populations living independently, such as the hearing impaired, the blind, and the homebound is critical. This program could include presentations, audio-visual programs, written notices, pamphlets, and other materials to insure that community residents are aware of actions that may be required in the event of a hazardous materials incident.

The LEPC is encouraged to sponsor speakers for schools, clubs, and other groups, provide written or audio-visual programs, assist local response organizations with their public information programs, and coordinate other activities to take advantage of ongoing special events in the area. Close coordination with Community Emergency Response Teams and with local emergency managers is strongly recommended.

FEMA has several instructional programs on the subject, to include a home study course entitled "Hazardous Materials: A Citizen's Orientation" (IS-5), a four hour course entitled "Hazardous Materials Introduction for Public Officials" (G300), and others. Federal and state governments and industry can provide LEPCs with a considerable number of documents related to hazardous materials and appropriate community preparedness.

Remember, the Federal EPCRA law has not changed much since it was written. In addition to large quantities of written material about hazardous materials, numerous videos and slide shows have been produced showing the importance of planning for chemical emergencies. These presentations demonstrate successful training and public awareness programs throughout the country. Generally, videos and slide shows can be borrowed or copied for presentation to specific audiences. Many LEPCs and State and Federal agencies have produced their own public awareness videos and will give copies of these tapes to other LEPCs for their use.