



## OREGON OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

### SUPPORTING COMMUNITY BASED EMERGENCY PLANNING & PREPAREDNESS THROUGH LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEES

Disasters that can jeopardize a community's safety are best understood by the people who live, work and play there. Depending on where you live in Oregon, your greatest disaster risk might be a windstorm, flood, wildfire, drought, snowstorm, earthquake, or tsunami. However, there is one type of disaster that can occur anywhere in Oregon.

Between 2000 and 2006, in Oregon there were more than 1,700 reported hazardous chemical releases. In the event of a chemical release, is your community prepared? What would your local emergency responders and government officials do? What would you do? To help you answer these questions, the Office of State Fire Marshal is giving an old law a new look.

In 1986, the United States Congress passed the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) after a series of incidents in the U.S. and abroad raised concerns about a lack of planning and preparation for accidental releases of hazardous chemicals.



The law gives emergency responders, emergency planners, local officials, the public and others the right to know about the hazardous chemicals in their communities. This information, along with the help of a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), allows communities to be better prepared in the event of a release.



The role of an LEPC is to help communities plan, prepare for, and respond to hazardous chemical releases. An LEPC also assists communities with developing public information campaigns about the existence of the emergency response plans and steps citizens can take for personal protection during an emergency involving hazardous chemicals.

The State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) Advisory Board supports LEPCs by providing them with tools, training and support mechanisms at the state level to help them fulfill their responsibilities. The goal is to create a comprehensive statewide system of emergency preparedness beginning at the local level.

LEPC members include people from emergency management, police, fire, EMS, transportation, health, broadcast and print media, industry, elected officials, community groups, colleges, and the public. Together they form a cohesive and skilled team, familiar with the local issues that could threaten the health and security of their community.

To date, the OSFM is proud to report that LEPC's have been established in Columbia, Morrow, Linn and Klamath Counties and the development process is underway in Deschutes, Coos, Jefferson, Clatsop, Clackamas, Benton, Hood River and Crook Counties, to name a few.

For more information about Oregon's new LEPC system, contact Terry Wolfe, in the Emergency Planning & Response Section of the OSFM at (503) 934-8219, or email him at [Terry.Wolfe@state.or.us](mailto:Terry.Wolfe@state.or.us)

