



Hazardous Materials Education: North Central Florida LEPC



RMP Network is designed to share successful practices in RMP implementation, risk communication, and use of the data. The projects detailed in RMP Network are easily reproducible, low cost and promote partnership-building in the community. This fact sheet does not provide extensive information about a project. Rather, it is intended to help stakeholders generate ideas, identify tools and pinpoint funding sources for accident preparedness and prevention initiatives.

Purpose

The North Central Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee annually holds a Hazardous Materials Spill Prevention Week to educate the public about hazardous chemicals stored and used in their community. The Clean Air Act Section 112(r) Risk Management Program (RMP) expands the focus of the LEPC from primarily planning for emergency responses to accidental hazardous materials releases to playing an active role in preventing spills. Hosting a spills awareness week gives the LEPC an opportunity to increase awareness of the requirements and opportunities of this new program. In 2000, the LEPC distributed instructions on sheltering-in-place and evacuation that the public may be asked to take during a spill or chemical release.

Outreach

Counties, municipalities, and school boards proclaim the week as a public education effort. The LEPC district covers 55 local governments in 11 counties, covers 7,000 square miles, and serves a population of 434,000. The LEPC also posts information on its website regarding the various activities that occur during Spills Week. Additionally, letters are sent to newspaper editors with a reminder that hazmat is an important public safety issue and notices are placed about availability of chemical use and storage information. In 2000, the LEPC also will host a booth at the North Central Florida Hurricane Response Exhibition, which features a hurricane hunter aircraft. In 1999, 6,000 individuals attended the Expo and attendance in 2000 is expected to top 10,000.

Funding

The budget runs around \$400, excluding staff time. Some funding was donated directly by industry and the remainder was from funds obtained through a State fee system set up under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act to support hazmat planning. Florida annually collects nearly 2 million dollars from companies that submit hazardous materials reports. Each of the State's 11 LEPCs receive approximately \$45,000 in funds.

Benefits

Site-specific hazards analyses were updated using CAMEO software and available Tier II information. The reports were distributed to facilities during spills awareness week. In the past, compliance seminars have been held and local governments were encouraged to send employees to free hazmat awareness classes. Typically, requests for right-to-know information increase following a spills awareness week. New LEPC members have been recruited from people that learned about the organization during an awareness week activity. In 1999, over 200 people attended the Gainesville Safety Street, which concluded Spill Prevention Week. One-third of the attendees were citizens seeking more information about the local impacts of the RMP program.

Available Materials

The Hazardous Materials Spill Prevention Week is the focal point of the LEPC's public education and outreach efforts. The following documents are available on the LEPC website at www.ncflepc.org:

- LEPC proclamation for Hazardous Materials Spill Prevention Week;
- Resolution for cities, counties, and school boards;
- Spill prevention/hazards analysis memo to facilities;
- News release to the local media;
- Letter to the Editor about Spill Prevention Week;
- Year 2000 Hurricane Hunter Exhibition; and
- Annual public data availability notice (EPCRA Section 324)

You are encouraged to duplicate these materials to sponsor your own spills awareness week.

For more information, contact ...

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