

Victoria County LEPC Communications Plan - DRAFT

Role/Purpose

The Victoria Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) is a group of local representatives that provide information about existing chemical hazards within the city and county to help residents be better prepared to understand, manage, and respond to these potential hazards. The LEPC does this by forming partnerships between responders, local governments, communities, businesses, industries, media, schools, and the public. The LEPC works closely with local government agencies to develop emergency plans, public notification plans and the appropriate actions to take during a chemical emergency.

The Victoria LEPC also implements the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act ([EPCRA](#)) within the City and the County, and carries out the responsibilities established for the LEPC by Public Law 99-499, Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA) Title III, the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, (EPCRA) and related regulations.

Another core component of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) is education, public awareness and notification. Through the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), the public will be able to seek information about chemicals in their community and identify safety plans for their own families. The LEPC works closely with the city, county, schools and community to encourage emergency preparedness and provide shelter in place education to those who live and work in our area.

The Victoria LEPC provides an opportunity for all local organizations and individuals involved in responding to emergencies to work together, prepare and plan BEFORE an emergency occurs.

This Communications Plan outlines goals and actions to inform and educate the public about appropriate actions to take and what to do in advance, during and after a chemical release or emergency in the City and/or County.

The following values are important to the LEPC with regard to an effective communications plan:

- a. Prompt dissemination of accurate information
- b. Citizen engagement/community outreach using social media, including mobile technology and online communications to extend our reach
- c. Transparency and accessibility of chemical hazards in the County
- d. Two-Way communication

Primary Target Audiences

- **Residents of the City of Victoria and Victoria County**
Residents of the City of Victoria and Victoria County are the highest priority target audience.
- **City/County Government Officials & Emergency Responders**
This target audience should be at the forefront of LEPC communications, and includes city and

county officials/administrators, city council members, county commissioners, elected officials, firefighters, EMTs, police officers, sheriff's deputies, dispatchers and DPS troopers.

- **Community, Regional, Statewide and National Partners**

Community partners collaborate with the LEPC to help share, educate and distribute pertinent information to residents. Community partners include City of Victoria and Victoria County government officials/leadership; City of Victoria Police and Fire Departments and Fire Marshal; Victoria County Sheriff's Department and Victoria County Fire Marshal; Victoria County Office of Emergency Management; Victoria Independent School District; Victoria College; University of Houston-Victoria; DeTar Healthcare System; Citizens Medical Center; public information office/spokespersons and OSHA/safety officers at the petrochemical facilities in the area; American Red Cross; Health Dept.; businesses; industries; local media partners (both print and broadcast). Partners also include State partners who work in tandem with the City and County and its interests in responding to emergency and hazardous situations, including the Texas Division of Emergency Management; Federal Emergency Management Agency; Department of Public Safety; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; National Weather Service; U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security; etc.

- **Media**

The media are important because their coverage of LEPC information can have a broader reach to the public. Media includes newspaper, radio, television and social media.

Communication Tools

The Victoria LEPC will utilize a variety of communication tools to convey messages and provide information to target audiences. Communication tools include:

- The development and launch of a new LEPC website, www.victorialepc.org. A broad range of information will be available on the new website, including information about the LEPC, meeting dates and how to get involved/volunteer opportunities; shelter in place, pipeline safety, a map of hazardous cargo routes; education and community outreach initiatives/citizen engagement; a list of tier 2 companies; Code Red registration; Reverse 9-1-1; LEPC by-laws; meeting minutes; as well as helpful resources and links. The website will also include the Community Right To Know provision, which helps increase the public's knowledge and access to information about chemicals at individual facilities, their uses, and release into the environment.
- Social Media Tools – Develop social media pages, including Facebook and Twitter (Implement by the 1st quarter of 2016)
- Emergency Notification Tools – Code Red and Reverse 9-1-1 (Ongoing)
- Public Relations and Media Relations – News releases, articles, meeting notices, training opportunities, etc., will be submitted to local media outlets. (As needed)

Victoria LEPC Authorized Spokesperson (s)

The following LEPC representatives will serve as authorized spokesperson(s):

- LEPC Director
- Emergency Management Coordinator
- Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator
- Public Education Committee Chairperson

Goals, Actions & Strategies for 2015-16

The Victoria LEPC will focus on the following goals, actions and strategies as part of its communication planning:

- Develop Victoria LEPC website (Complete and launch by the 1st quarter of 2016)
- Develop Social Media pages – use social media, including Facebook and Twitter, to distribute alerts and advisories during and after emergencies. (Implement by the 1st quarter of 2016)
- Partner with local schools, including the Victoria Independent School District, Victoria College, University of Houston-Victoria and private schools to educate teachers and students about shelter in place and other chemical emergency responses. (Ongoing)
- Develop community outreach campaigns (Ongoing)
- Recruit volunteers and members for Victoria LEPC (Ongoing)
- Create a shelter in place video and post on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter (TBD)
- Incorporate a “Wally the Wise Guy” educational page for kids, teachers and parents on the new Victoria LEPC website (First quarter of 2016)
- Activate a CAER (Community Awareness and Emergency Response) hotline with pre-recorded messages during emergencies (TBD/As needed)

Victoria LEPC Subcommittees

The Victoria LEPC Public Education Committee supports the following LEPC Subcommittees by servicing their need for public education materials/resources and online support:

Right-to-Know Information Subcommittee

Hazardous Materials Facilities Liaison

Emergency Response and Resources Subcommittee

Also Include in the Plan?:

- Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act
- Two-Tier Reporting Process