



Emergency Management & Homeland Security Division Informational Letter



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April 6, 2006

TO: Local, State and District Emergency Management Coordinators, Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) and the Michigan Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Commission

SUBJECT: Chemical Awareness Week, May 7-13, 2006

On behalf of the Michigan Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Commission, I would like to request your assistance this year in promoting Chemical Awareness Week which is scheduled to be observed May 7-13, 2006.

We are all very much aware of the hazards that improper storage, transportation and use of chemicals can create. Accidents involving chemicals and other hazardous materials do occur. It is important to be aware of the possible dangers that chemicals pose to our families and communities, and what precautions should be taken to avoid harm.

Hazardous materials are manufactured, stored, used or transported in every community of our state. The Chemical Manufacturers Association estimates that in an average year, one out of every three trains and one out of every ten trucks is carrying hazardous materials. Knowledge of chemical hazards, employee safety training, proper use and storage of hazardous materials, and proper emergency response actions will assist us in minimizing unnecessary incidents and exposure.

Community awareness for hazardous material safety can be promoted in your local community during the upcoming campaign. I encourage you to take this opportunity to focus public attention on the dangers involved in an accidental release and what actions citizens should take to prevent injury to themselves and their families.

I am confident the enclosed materials will assist you in your efforts to promote this worthwhile campaign. If you require any assistance with your educational efforts, please contact your EMD district coordinator or Dana Wolverton of my staff at (517) 333-5032 or Wolvertd@michigan.gov.

Sincerely,

KRISTE ETUE, CAPTAIN
Deputy State Director of Emergency Management
and Homeland Security

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(067)

Attachments (4):

- Proclamation
- Chemical Awareness Week Community Awareness Campaign Guide
- Chemical Awareness Week Media Kit
- What to do in Case of a Chemical Emergency

STATE OF MICHIGAN



Executive
Office

Jennifer M. Granholm
Governor

CERTIFICATE OF PROCLAMATION

On behalf of the citizens of Michigan, I, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm hereby proclaim the week of May 7, 2006, as

Chemical Awareness Week

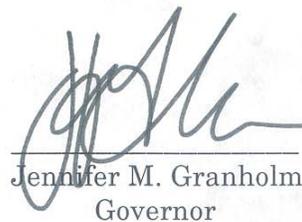
Whereas, Citizens of Michigan need to be conscious of the role that chemicals play in their daily lives, the benefits and hazards posed to our families, especially to our children, and the ways to prevent possible harm; and,

Whereas, Better communication between local emergency planning committees and local business, industry, retail, service, and farming sectors is necessary to increase the involvement of off-site emergency planning for hazardous materials accidents; and,

Whereas, Local emergency planning committees must become more knowledgeable and thus also raise the understanding of the citizens they serve about manufactured chemicals used or sold in the factories, companies, retail stores and farms in their area; and now therefore be it,

Resolved, That I, Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor of the State of Michigan, do hereby proclaim the week of May 7, 2006, as Chemical Awareness Week in Michigan as a means to support the goal of working cooperatively together to effectively address the concerns of local communities and plan for a safer future in Michigan.




Jennifer M. Granholm
Governor



**Michigan
Chemical
Awareness
Week**

**Community Awareness
Campaign Guide
2006**



Background Information Chemical Awareness Week May 7-13, 2006

A Partnership between the State Emergency Response Commission and the Michigan Chemistry Council

In 1986, Congress passed the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act as Title III of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA). Congress mandated that each state government appoint a State Emergency Response Commission (SERC). The commission can be comprised of a single agency or representatives of various groups. In accordance with this

law, Gov. James J. Blanchard established, by Executive Order 1987-5, the Michigan Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Commission on April 17, 1987. At that time, the Director of the Department of Natural Resources was appointed chair of the Commission, and the Director of the Department of State Police was appointed vice-chair.

Michigan's original commission consisted of 15 members. Soon after, the commission membership was expanded to 17 by Executive Order 1988-1. On May 31, 1994, Gov. John Engler rescinded Executive Order 1987-5 and issued Executive Order 1994-17 which re-established the commission with the Director of the Department of State Police as chair, and the Director of the Department of Natural Resources as vice-chair. The Director of the State Police delegates the responsibilities of chair to the Emergency Management Division (now the Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division) Commander. Another change to the commission occurred on Nov. 1, 1994, when Gov. Engler, through issuance of Executive Order 1994-25, added the Directors of the Department of Labor and the Department of Commerce (now the combined Department of Labor and Economic Growth).

LEPC Information

The Michigan SERC has specified that each county in the state form a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). In addition, certain cities are also allowed to maintain their own LEPC. There are 89 LEPCs in Michigan. The LEPCs are responsible for oversight of emergency plans for approximately 2,800 facilities statewide that manufacture, use, or store extremely hazardous substances (EHS). The LEPC membership is broad and includes elected officials, police, fire, EMS, public health, environmental health, hospitals, transportation, regulated facilities community groups, media, education and agriculture.

2006 Chemical Awareness Week

This year, the State Emergency Response Commission, the Michigan Chemistry Council and the State Police Emergency Management Division have joined in promoting the 2006 Chemical Awareness Week scheduled for May 7-13, 2006. The Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division coordinates a statewide outreach effort and public information campaign. The campaign includes a proclamation issued by Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm, the development of a Community Awareness Packet that is provided to over 110 local emergency management programs, each state agency and the LEPCs.

Michigan's Chemical Awareness Week

Introduction

From industrial chemical and toxic waste to household detergents and air fresheners, hazardous materials are part of our everyday lives. That's why the need to make people better aware of the role that chemicals play in their lives is so important. The need to improve the awareness of Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) and local communities about chemicals manufactured, used or sold in the factories, companies, retail stores and farms in their area is essential. For these reasons, the Michigan Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Commission, commonly referred to as the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC), and the Michigan Chemistry Council support "**Chemical Awareness Week**" in Michigan, May 7-13, 2006, and encourage LEPCs, local businesses, schools and chemical companies to be involved in this worthwhile campaign of education and awareness.

The first "**Chemical Awareness Week**" was held in 1993 through a planning coalition made up of representatives from associations that have chemical interests: Michigan Chamber of Commerce; Environmental Protection Agency; Michigan Local Emergency Planning Committee Association and the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management Division.

The goal of this year's campaign is to make the public more aware of chemicals and the role LEPCs and the chemical industry play in manufacturing, storing, use or transport of hazardous materials in an effort to make our communities safer. The focus of this campaign will be an educational outreach effort to increase the involvement of facilities in the off-site emergency planning for response to hazardous material accidents by working with Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs).

Activities that are being encouraged during "**Chemical Awareness Week**" include plant tours for LEPCs and public officials, coordinating workshops with LEPC and facility coordinators, and recognizing successful LEPCs and highlighting planning activity. Meeting the requirements mandated by SARA Title III is a responsibility shared by local community groups, business and industry interests, and local jurisdictions. We need your involvement to develop plans and outreach information.

Join us the week of **May 7-13, 2006**, to promote and support the goal of working together effectively to address concerns, provide information, and plan for a safe future in Michigan. Enclosed you will find information and ideas to use as you promote "**Chemical Awareness Week**" in your community.

Michigan Chemical Awareness Week Participants and Supporters



A Message from the Chair of the SERC



Although rare, accidents involving chemicals and other hazardous materials do occur. It is important to be aware of the possible dangers that chemicals pose to our families and communities, and what precautions should be taken to avoid harm.

Hazardous materials are manufactured, stored, used or transported in every community of our state. The Chemical Manufacturers Association estimates that in an average year, one out of every three trains and one out of every 10 trucks is carrying hazardous materials. Proper emergency preparedness and response actions will assist us in minimizing unnecessary incidents and exposure from these materials.

We must also be mindful that chemicals or hazardous materials could be used as weapons to perpetrate intentional acts of domestic terrorism against our homeland. Our preparedness efforts must encompass a full range of deliberate, critical tasks and activities necessary to build, sustain and improve the operational capability to prevent, protect against, respond to and recover from an incident of this nature. Our preparedness efforts must also involve actions to enhance readiness and minimize impacts. This includes mitigation measures to save lives and protect property from the effects of terrorism, natural disasters and other events in which chemical or hazardous materials may be involved.

Community awareness for hazardous material safety can be promoted in your local community during the upcoming campaign. You and your Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) should take this opportunity to focus public attention on the dangers involved with intentional and unintentional chemical releases and what actions citizens should take to prevent injury to themselves and their families.

I encourage all Michigan citizens to become familiar with the nature of hazardous materials throughout the week of May 7-13, Michigan Chemical Awareness Week. Please take a moment or two this week to learn the steps for sheltering in place if an incident occurs. Look at ways to reduce the number of unneeded chemicals you may be storing in your homes; and learn how to handle chemicals in the safest way possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kriste Etue".

KRISTE ETUE, CAPTAIN
SERC Chair
Deputy State Director of Emergency Management
and Homeland Security

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How to Conduct an Awareness Campaign

Local involvement in Chemical Awareness Week is essential in protecting our citizens and their property. While this information can provide a basic blueprint and materials to carry out a local campaign, it is local agencies that best know their communities, their county structure and their resources.

The following information should help local communities, businesses, government and schools develop a Chemical Awareness Week campaign.

Campaign Ideas for LEPCs

Conduct a Chemical Awareness Fair

1. Establish a location for the fair - shopping centers, campuses, community centers, malls, chemical companies.
2. Contact businesses in your area and see if they would like to set up a booth about what they manufacture, how they benefit the public and keep them safe.
3. Have the EPA, fire department, and other related agencies also set up booths.
4. Ask fire department or local businesses to conduct a chemical spill response exercise.
5. Ask businesses to conduct plant tours, and arrange public transportation from the fair to the plants.

Chemical Clean Up Day

1. Contact a local environmental health agency, find out when their scheduled collection days for household chemicals are and try to incorporate them within the week's activities.
2. Distribute a notice to libraries and local government facilities with a printed reminder of their scheduled pick-up date.

How to Advertise These Events

1. Use local newspapers, send out press releases (see sample in this packet).
2. Send out radio announcements.
3. Send out flyers to organizations in the community: Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary, Scouts, 4-H, professional groups, and senior citizens' organizations.
4. Use envelope stuffers; ask chemical companies to send out envelope stuffers in employee payrolls.
5. Print posters - distribute them to local libraries, city buildings, schools and participating businesses.

Campaign Ideas for Local Businesses

Conduct an Open House

- Inform your local LEPCs what time the tour will be (if tours can't be conducted on the day of the fair or if there is no fair in your area, distribute flyers to inform the public of when the tour will be conducted).
- Develop a small poster or flyer to inform the public of participation.
- Supply transportation to and from facility.

Participate in Chemical Awareness Fair

- Displays may want to focus on such topics as: proper storage of hazardous chemicals; proper disposal of hazardous substances; ways your agencies reduce the amount of chemicals in your production; how your agencies keep the surrounding communities safe; people you have or use to respond to a chemical incident.
- Use visuals and hand out materials on your company; what products you make; how you serve the community; why chemical control is so important.

Make a Statement

- Industries that are unable to participate in either of the above events could send out a news release. The release would be sent out during Chemical Awareness Week and inform the public what they are doing to keep the public safe.

Sponsor

- Sponsor handouts and printed materials developed for this campaign. Some materials may have room to add business logos for those who help cover the cost of providing print materials.

Campaign Ideas for Local Government

Public Viewing of the Emergency Management and Homeland Security Training Center (or first responders) Drill

- Ask the Emergency Management and Homeland Security Training Center (formerly the Hazardous Materials Training Center) - (telephone 517-322-1190) to suggest a team, or give you a list of trained responders in your area to conduct a drill during the week or during the chemical fair.
- Ask the fire department to send a team of responders to conduct a drill or set up a booth at the fair.

Campaign Ideas for Local Schools

Field Trip

- If the chemical fair occurs during the week, see if school will attend the event. Send a letter to science teachers or principals.
- If the chemical fair does not fall during the week, see if local schools would like to visit local fire stations. See if a team can show them their equipment and provide safety tips.

How to Conduct a Chemical Awareness Fair

1. Establish a date for your fair. Make sure it does not conflict with other large events. The event date should be during the week, preferably on a Tuesday or Wednesday. Choose a site familiar to local residents, highly visible from the street. The timing of the event should be between 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. for maximum coverage.
2. Obtain a map of the site and determine how many exhibits you can accommodate. Identify the location of electrical outlets and loading areas.
3. Send out letters to local businesses, first responders, fire departments, health departments, the Environmental Protection Agency, Michigan Chemistry Council, environmental consulting firms, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, bomb disposal unit, marine units about the event. Include a space reservation form to interested vendors, and set a deadline for completed forms.
4. Establish an exhibitor registration fee and describe what the fee includes (six-foot draped tables, two chairs, name tags, etc.).
5. Send all exhibitors a confirmation letter, map, program for the day, and list of items supplied.
6. Determine whether exhibitors are interested in contributing door prizes. Offering door prizes is an excellent way for vendors to advertise their products. It also helps attract people to the expo.
7. Work with local media to publicize the event. Compile a media contact list with editors at television stations; news directors at only those radio stations with live local news; editors at daily newspapers and editors of weekly newspapers; producers of community affairs shows and cable community access programs; editors of local publications--magazines, Chamber of Commerce, community service groups (like the Kiwanis), and campus newspapers. Don't forget school newspapers, community newsletters, community bulletin boards, and professional publications.
8. Make sure posters are well distributed throughout the community.
9. Send thank-you notes to everyone involved.

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF A HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENT

- If you witness a hazardous materials accident, spill or leak, call 911, your local emergency notification number or the fire department.
- If you hear a warning signal, turn on your radio or television for further information from emergency response personnel. Follow all instructions carefully.
- Stay away from the incident site in order to minimize your chances of contamination.
- If you are caught outside during an incident, try to stay upstream, uphill and upwind. Hazardous materials can be transported quickly by water and wind.
- If you are in a motor vehicle, close off ventilation and shut your windows. This will reduce the possibility for contamination or inhaling the hazardous material.
- If you are asked to evacuate, do so immediately.
 - ⇒ Before leaving your home or office, close windows, shut vents, and turn off attic fans to minimize contamination.
- In certain circumstances, you will be requested to stay indoors, rather than evacuate.
 - ⇒ Strictly follow all instructions given by emergency authorities.
 - ⇒ To reduce the possibility of toxic vapors entering your home, seal all entry routes as efficiently as possible. Close and lock the windows and doors. Seal gaps under doorways and windows with wet towels and duct tape.
 - ⇒ Seal any gaps around window air conditioning units, bathroom and kitchen exhaust fan grills and stove and dryer vents with duct tape and plastic sheeting, wax paper or aluminum wrap.
 - ⇒ Close all fireplace dampers.
 - ⇒ Close as many internal doors as possible in homes or other buildings.
 - ⇒ Turn off all ventilation systems, including furnaces, air conditioning vents and fans.
 - ⇒ If you suspect that gas or vapors have entered the building, take shallow breaths through a cloth or towel.
 - ⇒ Remain in protected, interior areas of the building where toxic vapors are reduced, and keep your radio with you.
- Avoid contact with any spilled liquid materials, airborne mist or condensed solid chemical deposit.
- Avoid eating or drinking any food or water which may be contaminated.
- If you learn that you will be sheltered indoors, quickly fill up your bathtub or large containers with water and turn off the intake valve to your home.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Contact your local fire department, Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), Local Emergency Management Coordinator, or the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Training Center at (517) 322-1190.

Who to Call

For Hazardous Material Collection Dates

- Call Local Health Departments

For List of local Chemical companies

- Call the Michigan Chemistry Council at (517) 372-8898

Available Material

The American Red Cross video “Your Guide to Home Chemical Safety”

This video can be obtained through your local Red Cross; its call numbers are A5045V. It is a 22-minute video which explains to homeowners the kinds of injury that can occur from exposure to chemicals found in the home; tips for avoiding problems with household chemicals; family protection and preparedness tips; and a description of who helps in a hazardous materials emergency.

The UNOCAL Corporation video “Shelter-in-place”

This video can be obtained through UNOCAL by calling John Averill at (907) 776-3124. It highlights the first steps for in-place sheltering in an emergency, should this be called by emergency response officials: Move indoors immediately, close all windows and doors, turn off ventilation systems, go into and seal off a smaller room, and turn on the radio.

“Your Guide to Home Chemical Safety and Emergency Procedures”

This brochure is produced by the American Red Cross and can be obtained through your local Red Cross. It contains information on shelter-in-place, evacuations, chemical household handling. These are free in small amounts.

“Chemicals in Your Home”

Produced by the Chemical Education Foundation, this brochure can be obtained by calling (703) 527-6223. It briefly describes how to dispose of some products and how to handle them. The brochures are free in unlimited amounts.

“Got Leftover Paint”

This brochure is also produced by the Chemical Education Foundation and can be obtained by calling (703) 527-6223. It lists the six points of how to deal with leftover paint. It is free in unlimited amounts.

LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE
SUGGESTED FACILITY ACTIVITIES
FOR
CHEMICAL AWARENESS WEEK
MAY 7-13, 2006

- Distribute spot announcements to local radio stations. Larger firms with communication departments can tailor “spots” to their communities.
- Establish a community speakers bureau utilizing plant personnel, involve local chambers of commerce.
- Envelope stuffers - payroll envelopes, customer bills, (utilities).
- Editorial visits - Plant managers visit with local newspaper editors about what their plant is doing for Chemical Awareness Week.
- Posters - Print and distribute posters to local libraries, city buildings and schools about hazardous materials awareness.
- Sponsor an employee suggestion program about Chemical Awareness Week.
- Show video or have short presentations during staff meetings about chemical awareness.
- Conduct a plant "open house" for the general public.
- Conduct public officials' tours of the plant for city council, county and township officials.

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
FOR
LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEES (LEPCs)**

CHEMICAL AWARENESS WEEK
MAY 7-13, 2006

- Develop a campaign package.
- Send out media releases on LEPC activities.
- Issue a local proclamation.
- Print and/or distribute pamphlets, brochures, literature, etc., to industry, citizens groups, public safety, schools, and libraries.
- Develop a video and send to local cable companies.
- Conduct presentations for community groups (Lions, Kiwanis, and Rotary) and local business associations.
- Develop a speakers bureau with representatives from the LEPC; send out letters to public and private interest groups, industry.
- Contact industry for LEPC tours.
- Conduct a local media event or press conference.
- Contact a local radio station about being a guest on a call-in talk show.
- Conduct training for HazMat responders.
- Conduct workshops for industry and for public officials.
- Conduct a local exercise.



**Michigan
Chemical
Awareness
Week**

**MEDIA KIT
2006**

Tips for Better Media Coverage

Media Relations

Working with the media to share information can be a powerful way to build awareness about **Chemical Awareness Week** and other public informational campaigns for emergency management. Publicity differs from advertising in that there is no absolute control over the message given. News articles and television and radio interviews do, however, carry more validity than advertising because reporters' comments can serve as "third party endorsements" for the campaign.

You can help inform individuals in your community about informational campaigns by trying to schedule interviews with the following radio and TV contacts in your community:

- Television news directors or assignments editors
- Radio news directors
- Talk show hosts and producers
- Public affairs directors at local TV and radio stations
- Local radio and TV reporters who regularly cover public safety issues
- Various reporters at your local newspapers

Feel free to call your local newspaper or television or radio stations to identify specific names of people handling each of these positions.

When trying to interest reporters in your campaign, here are the kinds of things they are looking for in a story:

- A local twist on broad social issues
- Interesting people and events
- Timeliness
- Something new and different
- Results
- Trends
- Experts
- Diversity
- Brief, succinct and lively statements

Working with Reporters

There are a number of different opportunities for you to educate reporters in your community about your public information campaign. Your options include:

- Interviews with local newspaper, television and radio reporters.
- Working with talk show producers in larger markets to arrange for a segment on your campaign.
- Background/informational meetings with local reporters.

- Editorial board visits with local newspaper reporters.
- Submitting opinion articles and letters to the editor of newspapers.
- Submitting photos of events that take place in your area that showcase how you are spreading your campaign message.
- Placing ads in local newspapers.

Remember . . .

There are some specific suggestions about how to make the most of all conversations with the media. Remember to include your name, phone and fax numbers on all correspondence to the media. Please note that you will be serving as a local contact for the media and that all your comments about the campaign or anything else are “on the record.”

Media Terms You Should Know

Media Advisories

Media advisories are brief, written notices designed to alert the media before an event. Reporters and editors generally expect three to four days notice; calendars may expect at least a month. Advisories should include the who, what, where, when, why (“five W’s”), and how of the activity. Always include a contact name and phone number so interested reporters or editors can reach someone for more information.

News Releases

News releases offer more information than media advisories and reach more contacts in less time than phone calls. A release usually precedes a “hard news” event. However, a release can also be used to announce a response to a current issue or recent story.

Because they are longer than advisories, releases are also easy for reporters and editors to dismiss. Be sure to organize information in order of importance. This will allow an editor to get the message quickly without having to read the entire release.

News Conferences

News conferences create an interactive setting in which to tell a “hard news” message to the media. Be sure to choose an appropriate or interesting location that is relevant to the message. Smaller sites are better than larger ones because they make the event appear better-attended and visually interesting.

Make sure the site offers adequate electrical, audio, and visual access for reporters. Include a sign-in sheet and media kits for distribution, as some reporters may not stay for your entire presentation. If possible, also secure an additional room for one-on-one interviews.

Editorials

Sending letters to the editor of a newspaper is an excellent way to contact the entire community. Call in advance to find out deadlines, length, and format. The usual maximum length is 200 to 300 words. Letters should be typed and signed. They should always contain an address and home telephone number.

Print and Broadcast Editorials

Print and broadcast editorials are used to react to a recent editorial, event or news story, or to make a point, state a fact or offer an opinion.

Eight Easy Promotional Ideas

- Conduct a live interview with local media at your local/county Emergency Operations Center.
- Send news releases to local chamber of commerce, insurance companies, large employers, and other community groups that have newsletters. Editors of these publications often make space for messages designed to improve the health or safety of their audience.
- Conduct disaster preparedness and hazardous materials presentations at civic group meeting such as Lions Clubs, Kiwanis, Rotary, business associations, etc. They will be very receptive to your request.
- Contact downtown merchants associations to request they sponsor Chemical Awareness Week window painting contests in conjunction with Chemical Awareness Week. Youth, church and other community groups could be invited to participate.
- Work with local TV and radio personalities to promote chemical awareness safety themes during Chemical Awareness Week.
- Ask local businesses, utility companies to include Chemical Awareness Week reminders in their billing statements and paycheck envelopes.
- Promote a local Chemical Awareness Week Poster Contest with prizes for the local winners.
- Contact your local radio, TV or cable station about recording public service announcements for Chemical Awareness Week.

Preparing for an Interview

Interviews, particularly radio and TV interviews, can be very short. Reporters look for concise, useful, and interesting statements from which to prepare their story. The following will help you feel in control of the interview and assist you in communicating your messages.

- Review key messages about the Chemical Awareness Week campaign several times before your interview. Know what you want to share in the interview. If the interview is conducted over the phone, you may want to keep a copy of the key messages in front of you.
- If possible, review a tape of the program or the reporter's article to familiarize yourself with the reporter's style.
- Immediately prior to your interview, practice a few sentences out loud to exercise your voice and to become completely comfortable with your messages.
- During the interview, keep your answers short, approximately 10-15 seconds in length.
- Once an interview is complete, feel free to add one or two additional comments if you haven't had the opportunity to discuss your key messages. Say something like "You know, I have one more comment I would like to make that may be of interest to your readers/viewers . . ." Most reporters will appreciate this addition because it may cover an item they forgot to discuss.
- Remember, the interview is not over until the reporter leaves. Do not say anything that you do not want the reporter to use. Never answer questions "off the record."
- Offer to mail or fax additional information or a press kit to a reporter after an interview, particularly if the interview is not in person. If the interview is in person, be sure to give the reporter a copy of the materials. This will allow the reporter another opportunity to review your messages.

Do not expect news releases to be used in their entirety. Ordinarily, they were as a rough sketch of the story. Editors cut or add to the original release, depending upon the value they place on the story and the amount of space available.

Guidelines for Writing News Releases

- Always use 8 1/2" x 11" paper. Copy should be double-spaced with one inch margins and printed on one side of the paper only.
- At the top of the page include the name, phone, and fax numbers of the person to contact for more information.
- Start the release about a third of the way down the page leaving room at the top for the editor to make notes.
- Indicate the release date, when the story can be used, at the top of the page.
- Indent paragraphs five spaces. If more than one page is necessary, do not break paragraphs between the pages. Staple pages together.
- Be sure the news release provides answers to these essential questions: who, what, where, when, why and how.
- Using past tense, write the release in inverted pyramid style. Start with facts the reader considers most important. Background information should be included toward the end.
- Make certain all facts are accurate. If the release quotes someone in your department, make certain that individual has seen and approves the comments before disseminating the releases to the public.
- Write - "More" - at the bottom of page one. Give the second page a heading that includes an identification of the story and the page number, i.e. Chemical Hazards/2. Write "-30-" at the end of the release.
- Mail releases with sufficient time for them to be processed. If this is not possible, consider faxing them, but make certain you include the name of the reporter or editor you want to receive the information.

How to Organize a News Conference

Event Planning Checklist

One Month in Advance

Set an event date and time that will only be changed to accommodate the key spokesperson. The event date should be during the week, preferably on a Tuesday or Wednesday. The timing of the event should be between 10:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. for maximum coverage. The time of your event should allow for tardy reporters (you might consider "calling" the event 15 minutes before you actually intend to start, for example, 10:15 a.m. for a 10:30 a.m. media conference).

Three Weeks Before the Event

Secure your spokesperson for the press conference.

Identify personnel that should be involved.

Determine location of the event--inside or outside. Get clearance from appropriate authorities to conduct a media event at the location you have selected.

Reserve a podium and/or sound equipment (microphone, stand, speakers, and cord). Make sure there is access to AC power if you need it for lighting or sound equipment. If AC is unavailable, consider battery operated sound. You can go without sound if your speakers can be heard without it. Many television and radio stations will use their own sound equipment and either place it on the podium or table you provide, or interview speakers one-on-one after the formal presentation.

Two Weeks Before the Event

Compile a media contact list with names, addresses, phone and fax numbers of: assignment editors at television stations; news directors at only those radio stations with live local news; metro or city editors, crime reporters, and editorial page editors at daily newspapers and editors of weekly newspapers; producers of community affairs shows and cable community access programs; editors of local publications--magazines, Chamber of Commerce, community service groups (like the Kiwanis), and campus newspapers.

Find out deadlines for weekly publications and whether or not they will accept photo submissions.

Determine program order--no more than three speakers, no longer than 20 minutes total speaking.

Sample Program

- Introduction and welcome given by Master of Ceremonies and/or spokesperson - 1 minute;
- Main message (Hazardous Materials, disaster preparedness, benefits) -- 5 minutes given by spokesperson - 5-6 minutes;
- Previous speaker or Master of Ceremonies introduce guest speaker - 1 minute;
- Guest Speaker remarks - 5-8 minute;
- Spokesperson gives closing remarks - 1-3 minutes;
- Open to questions and answers (Q & A).

One Week Before the Event

- Draft speaker's remarks, if necessary;
- Draft Media Announcement;
- Draft Media Release;
- Draft Media Advisory; and
- Produce Media Kits -- Include final version of speaker's remarks, final version of media release (not to be released before the event), and fact sheets.

Four-Five Working Days Before the Event

- Hand deliver or fax out media advisory to media contact list.

Three Working Days Before the Event

- Call media contacts to provide additional information if necessary to gauge interest in attending.

Two Days Before the Event

- Fax out media advisories (reminders) to all contacts. If your event is outside, contact the National Weather Service or most reliable local weather forecaster in your area for a two-day outlook. Plan accordingly.

Day Before the Event

- One final call to media, confirm attendance and if they require AC power. Call the National Weather Service, if necessary.

Event Day

- Relax and have fun!
- Set up a podium paying special attention to what's behind and to each side of the speaker (you don't want something growing out of your speaker's head or distracting from your message). Television and print photographers often "shoot" from a variety of angles, from the front of the event to the back, so be aware of what's in your space. In addition, you can "dress up" your space, especially around your speakers, with posters or other visual aides (like charts) that will add color and depth to your "picture" and also help tell the story without words.
- Set up only the number of chairs necessary to accommodate non-speaking members of the program (for example, if there are three speakers, set two chairs).
- Set up and test your sound (one hour in advance). If it sounds bad, don't use it.
- Set up a few chairs for reporters, leaving enough room between the podium and front row of chairs so that still photographers can get close shots. In addition, allow enough space at the rear and sides of your "event space" for television videographers.
- Set water inside the podium for speakers, if possible.
- Designate one person to "sign-in" media as they arrive and distribute media kits.
- Take your own black and white photos of the event to keep and distribute to any newspapers that did not attend.
- Call any of your targeted reporters who have not arrived within five minutes of published event time to confirm attendance. In general, do not hold up the news conference over ten minutes waiting for more media to arrive. They will catch up.
- Follow up with anyone on your media contact list that does not attend with hand delivered or faxed copies of the media kit and a photo, if appropriate.

Ten Commandments of Good Media Relations

Be Honest

Be Brief

Be Available

Be Timely

Be Fair

Be Flexible

Be Objective

Be Positive

Be Informed

Be Professional

if You Are Told To Evacuate



You should move to the place designated by public officials. Follow these steps to get ready for the trip.

- Stay as calm as possible and move to the place designated by public officials.
- Gather and pack only a few essential items such as medication, drivers license or identification, checkbook and credit cards.
- As you leave turn off lights, household appliances, heating and cooling systems. Remember to lock your doors.
- Use only one vehicle per family and keep your car windows and air vents closed. Do not take shortcuts.
- Listen to local radio stations for reports about your route. Do not go to your child's school to pick them up; this delays their move to a safe place.



For more information contact your local fire department, local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), Local Emergency Management Coordinator, or the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management Division's Hazardous Materials Section at (517) 333-5029.



What to do In Case of a Chemical Emergency



Michigan Department of State Police
Emergency Management &
Homeland Security Division

What to Do.....if

A hazardous materials accident can occur anywhere. Communities located near chemical manufacturing plants are particularly at risk. However, hazardous materials are transported on our roadways, railways, and waterways daily, so any area is considered vulnerable to an accident.



if Caught at the Scene of a Hazmat Accident.

If you see an accident, call 9-1-1 or the local fire department to report the nature and location of the accident as soon as possible.

Move away from the accident scene and help keep others away. Do not walk into or touch any of the spilled substance. Try not to inhale gases, fumes, and smoke. If possible, cover mouth with a cloth while leaving the area.

Stay away from accident victims until the hazardous material has been identified. Try to stay upstream, uphill, and upwind of the accident.

Precautions you can take to lessen the chance of serious injury.



if You are Told to Shelter in Place During a Hazmat Incident.

- Go inside and turn on your radio, or television
- Close all doors and windows. Seal gaps under doorways and windows with duct tape, wet rags or towels.
- Turn off all heating, cooling or ventilation systems, and cover exhaust fans with plastic sheeting and tape.
- Close off nonessential rooms such as storage areas and laundry rooms. Do not shelter in the basement.
- It will be announced on the radio when the emergency is over. Only then should you open all doors and windows to let fresh air into your home.

