

# Your Community and SARA Title III



**Other sections** of the law cover what to do about reporting chemicals that are considered trade secrets (Section 322), penalties for non-compliance (Section 325), and how the public can access the information gathered under SARA Title III.

## A Summary of SARA Title III

**Sections 301-303** of the act establish State Emergency Planning and Response Commissions (SERC) and Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC). Membership requirements for each body are identified. Requirements for those facilities that must have a plan and what should be in those plans are specified.

**Section 304** covers accidental releases of certain chemicals and specifies who a facility should contact if there is a release. The SERC and the LEPC must be notified as well as the National Response Center.

**Sections 311-312** require facilities to submit a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) or a list of any Extremely Hazardous Substances (EHS) at their site at or above certain levels. Reporting must be done to the state, the LEPC, and the local fire department.

**Section 313** specifies that certain facilities report non-emergency emissions of certain chemicals if those emissions are over a federally mandated limit.

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**HAZARDOUS  
MATERIALS  
EMERGENCY  
PLANNING IN  
YOUR  
COMMUNITY**

# Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning In Your Community

**R**emember the tragic hazardous materials incident in Bhopal, India in 1984? This incident caused hundreds of deaths and injuries from a leak of poisonous gas. Many of those who died or were injured lived close to the plant where the leak occurred, but had little or no knowledge of the danger there. The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986, also known as the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA), was passed by Congress after the Bhopal incident. Title III of the SARA law is intended to reduce the chance of a similar chemical accident happening in the U.S., no matter how large or small it might be. The events of September 11, 2001 remind us that we must also be prepared to respond to a deliberate release of chemicals.



## Title III

Title III identifies what facilities, the state, and local communities must do in order to protect the public from hazardous chemical accidents. These mandates include:

- Requiring that facilities with supplies of certain Extremely Hazardous Substances report what they have to the state, their local fire department, and their Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)
- Establishing the Michigan Citizen-Community Emergency Response Coordinating Council (sometimes known as the State Emergency Response Commission - SERC)
- Establishing LEPCs under the direction of the Michigan Citizen-Community Emergency Response Coordinating Council.

## What It Means To You

**T**he Michigan Citizen-Community Emergency Response Coordinating Council has appointed LEPCs throughout the state. Presently, Michigan has 88 LEPCs. The main task of the LEPC is to develop response plans for community response to accidental spills or releases of Extremely Hazardous Substances. In addition, the LEPC must keep information on hand about each site that manufactures, uses, or stores certain quantities of Extremely Hazardous Substances. This information must be made available to the public.

*For more information, contact your  
Local Emergency Planning Committee  
or the Michigan State Police  
Emergency Management and  
Homeland Security Division  
517-333-5042  
[Michigan.gov/emhsd](http://Michigan.gov/emhsd)*

**L**EPCCs have an important role in protecting both their communities and emergency responders if a chemical release emergency happens by accident or by deliberate release. Members come from a variety of backgrounds in their communities and bring different points of view to the planning table. This improves the completeness of each response plan and involves the community in the planning process.

### LEPCs include members from the following groups:

- **Elected Officials**
- **Police**
- **Fire**
- **Emergency Management**
- **Public Health**
- **Environmental Health**
- **Hospitals**
- **Transportation**
- **Regulated Facilities**
- **Community Groups**
- **Media**
- **Education**
- **Agriculture**

Once plans are developed, they provide community members with basic information about chemical hazards in their area and what will be done about those hazards in the event of an accident.