

Facility Visits & Site Tours

One of the most effective — and underutilized — activities an LEPC can undertake is visiting the regulated facilities in its jurisdiction. Facility visits give LEPC members and first responders a firsthand look at the chemicals present, how they are stored, where they are located on the property, and what a facility's internal emergency response capabilities look like. This kind of direct knowledge is difficult to get from Tier II reports alone and can make a meaningful difference during an actual incident.

What Makes a Facility Visit Valuable?

A site tour benefits both the LEPC and the facility. For the LEPC, a visit helps to fulfill the following:



Confirm and supplement the chemical storage information in Tier II reports



Identify access routes, hazards, and vulnerable zones that would affect response



Build working relationships with the facility emergency coordinator



Inform updates to the local Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and facility-specific annexes



Identify facility resources — equipment, personnel, or expertise — that could support a response

For the facility, hosting an LEPC visit demonstrates good faith participation in the community planning process and can uncover planning gaps before an incident occurs.

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How to Get Started

Under EPCRA, local fire departments may conduct on-site inspections of facilities with hazardous chemicals. LEPCs can coordinate with fire departments to participate in or schedule these visits.

When reaching out to a facility, best practices include the following:

-  Contact the facility emergency coordinator — the designated EPCRA point of contact
-  Explain the purpose of the visit and how the information will be used to support local planning
-  Invite the facility coordinator to become an active LEPC member if they are not already

Even a brief annual visit to the highest-risk facilities in a jurisdiction can significantly strengthen the LEPC's planning foundation.

Does your LEPC have an active relationship with the regulated facilities in your jurisdiction?

For more information, contact your MT DES District Field Officer or visit des.mt.gov.

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EPCRA References: Sections 301–303, 311–312 | LEPC Handbook Section III