



Deer Park Community Advisory Council

DPCAC Receives Refresher on Emergency Response and Communications, and Sheltering in Place

Deer Park Community Advisory Council (DPCAC) learned about local emergency response and communication protocols in late August from a panel of experts that included Robert Hemminger, City of Deer Park Emergency Management Coordinator; David Wade, Harris County Industrial Liaison; Joe Reynolds, Chair of Channel Industries Mutual Aid (CIMA); and Mark Turvey, Facility Fire Chief at Lubrizol. Christina Perez, Chair of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Community Awareness Subcommittee, talked about how to shelter in place for a chemical event and the LEPC's community awareness efforts.

Turvey described how a facility like Lubrizol would respond to an emergency on site, using internal alarms and their emergency response team. Plants use e-Notify to contact impacted cities and the county. If the plant response teams need assistance, they may call on Channel Industries Mutual Aid (CIMA). CIMA may send personnel and equipment, but the plant remains in command. The Harris County Industrial Liaison responds to a plant's emergency operations center in a major event to facilitate communications with city and county offices of emergency management and others. Industry and local cities and Harris County use agreed-upon protocols for reporting significant events to give responsible agencies the information they need if a shelter in place is recommended.

Hemminger said the city relies on the plant with the event to tell them what chemicals are involved but will call for a shelter in place as a precaution if that information is not made available quickly. Wade said that cities and the county rely on air monitoring data to determine when they can issue an all clear. Hemminger urged everyone in Deer Park to visit www.readyDP.com to sign up to receive calls, emails, and texts from Code Red. If you have a land line listed in the phone book, the city has your number. Otherwise, you must sign up to receive these important notices.

Perez said there are three simple steps to shelter in place: 1) Go inside. 2) Close up. 3) Stay informed. In addition to welcome packets for newcomers and the annual LEPC calendar sent to Deer Park residents and businesses, the LEPC uses the big turtle, Wally Wise Guy, to teach children to shelter. The LEPC has revamped www.deerparklepc.org and is working on additional community awareness outreach. See slides for details.

DPCAC welcomes visitors. If you would like an invitation to attend one of the 6 p.m. meetings, contact a member or email the DPCAC facilitator at info@deerparkcac.org. The group meets again on Sept. 23, 2019 for the Annual Report on Emissions from DPCAC Plants.