

# History of the Deer Park LEPC

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December 2, 1984

# Union Carbide Disaster: Bhopal, India

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- The Bhopal disaster was one of the world's worst industrial catastrophes.
- A massive release of methyl isocyanide gas from the Union Carbide Pesticide Plant in Bhopal, India,
- Killed 3,800 and injured tens of thousands.
- The accident raised public concern about toxic chemical storage, releases and emergency response.
- The incident led to the passage of the first community right-to-know law under the 1986
- Superfund Re-authorization.

June 1985

# EPA's Chemical Emergency Preparedness Program (CEPP) Developed

EPA developed a Chemical Emergency Preparedness Program strategy to deal with air toxins in the environment, including addressing accidental releases of acutely toxic chemicals.

This **voluntary** program had two goals:

- to increase community awareness of chemical hazards, and
- to develop state and local response plans for dealing with chemical accidents.

This program led to the creation of EPA's Chemical Emergency Preparedness Program Office (CEPPO), which later became the Office of Emergency Response (OEM).

August 11, 1985

## Institute, WV, Facility Release

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The facility at Institute, West Virginia released a cloud of methylene chloride and aldicarb oxime, chemicals used to manufacture the pesticide Temik. Six workers were injured, and more than a hundred residents were sent to the hospital. Thirty people filed two lawsuits seeking \$88M in damages, but hundreds of people marched in support of the company, Union Carbide. OSHA proposed fines of \$32,100 for endangering workers, though later agreed to having Union Carbide pay \$4,400 if it bought an accident simulator for workers' training. Union Carbide spent \$5M to improve safety systems, but two more leaks occurred in February 1990.

October 17, 1986

## Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA)

Congress amended Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act

(CERCLA) in 1986 with the enactment of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA).

These amendments improved the Superfund program and added an important section focused on strengthening the rights of citizens and communities in the face of potential toxic and hazardous substance emergencies.

This section, SARA Title III, also known as the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA).

June 18, 1986

# Deer Park CAER and Implementation Committee

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- Jack Coe, Rohm and Haas
- B.T. Waggoner, Shell Oil
- Blair Moore, Diamond Shamrock
- Jimmy Burke, City of Deer Park
- Horace Stack, City of Deer Park – Director of Emergency Services and POC for Industry
- Joe Ligi, Texas Alkyls
- Stan Anderson, Rohm and Haas
- John Wilson, Lubrizol – Host Company
- Tom Gillespie, Shell Oil
- Kent Van Eaton, DuPont

May 20, 1986

## Deer Park CAER and Implementation Committee

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- Recommended three committees
  - Communications – George Perry, Chair
  - Emergency Response – Tommy Cutrer, Chair
  - Community Awareness – Bill Black, Chair

# Deer Park CAER

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- June '86 – Budget recommendation
  - Communications - \$1000
  - Emergency Response - \$1000
  - Public Awareness - \$6700
  - Contingency - \$ 750
- July '86 – City of Deer Park contributed \$5000
- August '86 – Diamond Shamrock, Lubrizol, Rohm and Haas contributed \$1000 each
- Level Alert System we use today put in place



# Deer Park CAER

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- November '86 – First Tabletop Exercise – Chlorine release from Shell
- December '86 – First CAER Mock Exercise – Chlorine release from Shell
- 1986 – CAER/CARE phoneline established at Dow
- 1986 – Household hazardous waste day

# Deer Park CAER

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- February 7, 1987 – First Level II
  - WR Grace release of Cyanide Gas
- February, '87 – Chemical Manufacturers Association awarded Deer Park Level II CAER community Recognition Team
- June '87- Jack Coe appointed to Judge Lindsay's Sara Title III local LEPC committee

April 17, 1987

# Governors Establish State Emergency Response Commissions (SERCs)

The governor of each state has designated a State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) that is responsible for implementing EPCRA provisions within its state. The SERC's duties include:

- Establishing procedures for receiving and processing public requests for information collected under EPCRA
- Reviewing local emergency response plans
- Designating local emergency planning districts
- Appointing a Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC) for each district
- Supervising the activities of the LEPC.

# Deer Park CAER

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- July '87 – First team to submit Title III membership list to Judge Lindsay
- August '87 – State Regulatory Commission appointed the Deer Park CAER team as an LEPC
- November '87 – Dues
  - North of 225 – min of \$250 or \$1.00/employee whichever is greater
  - South of 225 – min of \$25 or \$1.00/employee whichever is greater

# Deer Park CAER

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- April '89 – Outside alarm system approved (5 alarms - \$87,000)

CAN system – telephone system to call citizens –  
Now Code Red

- 1993 – Walley Wise adopted as Mascot for Shelter-in-Place

# Deer Park CAER/LEPC Leadership

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- Chairman has always been a City representative (due to importance of LEPC)
  - Burke – Mayor
  - Crabtree – City Manager
  - Stokes – City Manager
- Secretary/treasurer has always been a City representative
  - Watkins – Asst. City Secretary/City Secretary
  - Bennett – City Secretary
- Vice Chairman has normally been an Industrial representative
- Emergency Response has normally been an Industrial representative
- Communications was industrial and then Director of Emergency Services
- Public Awareness has been Citizen, City Rep and Industrial Rep

# Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs)

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**Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs)** are community-based organizations that assist in preparing for emergencies, particularly those concerning hazardous materials. Under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) must develop an emergency response plan, review the plan at least annually, and provide information about hazardous materials in the community to citizens. Plans are developed by LEPCs with stakeholder participation. The LEPC membership must include (at a minimum):

Elected state and local officials

Police, fire service, civil defense, and public health professionals

Environment, transportation, and hospital officials

Facility representatives

Representatives from community groups and the media