



KENT COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

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Know the Risks Associated with Chemicals

GRAND RAPIDS – Would you know what to do if there was a chemical emergency in your neighborhood? What should you do if a child ingests a household cleaner? Every day, these types of incidents occur across the country. Being prepared for a chemical emergency is critical for every family. The Kent County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) wants to remind everyone to be ready. Chemical Awareness Week is May 5-11, 2013.

“Every day, we use chemical products in our homes and our workplaces,” said Jack Stewart, Emergency Management Coordinator for Kent County. “Transportation and use of chemicals can be harmful, even deadly. Taking a few minutes to know the dangers of chemicals in your home or workplace can be a lifesaver.” The Kent County LEPC has taken the lead role in preparing the community for chemical emergencies. Representatives from a broad spectrum of community agencies, including education, hospitals, news media, human services, and public safety serve on the LEPC.

The purpose of Chemical Awareness Week is to help citizens to become more conscious of the role chemicals play in their daily lives and helps citizens realize the benefits and hazards chemicals pose to our families, especially to our children, and ways to prevent any possible injuries.

15 Steps to Take if There is a Chemical Emergency

If you hear a local public warning siren or your NOAA weather radio sounds an alert what you do in the few minutes following could help protect you and your family from harm.

1. Stay calm.
2. Immediately turn on the TV or radio to a local station.
3. Don't call 911 to ask questions (only use in an emergency).
4. If you are told to leave home do so immediately. Don't stop to pack.
5. Only take things you really need such as medications.
6. Lock your doors & windows and head to the nearest designated shelter.
7. If you are told to stay inside, close all doors and windows.
8. Turn off all ventilation from the exterior such as heat and air conditioners.
9. Go into an interior room if possible and use plastic to seal windows, push towels under doors. Do not go down into the basement unless instructed to do so.
10. Keep the TV or radio on to listen for further instructions.
11. If you think you are exposed to fumes, place a wet cloth or towel over your mouth and nose.
12. If you are driving, stay in your car, turn off the heater, air conditioner and close the vents. Make sure you are driving away from the chemical release area.

13. Schools, childcare centers and health care facilities should have emergency plans in place. It is usually best to keep your loved ones there for everyone's safety.

14. You will know it is safe when you hear an "all clear" announced on the TV or radio. Do not abandon these emergency procedures until you are told to do so by the authorities.

15. If you need special help talk to a neighbor or family member who lives close by. Make sure that they can help in a chemical emergency.

The LEPC has developed brochures with information for families, industries, agri-businesses, and educators on chemical awareness and safety. In addition, the LEPC has developed offsite emergency response plans for all identified sites in Kent County that have Extremely Hazardous Substances as required by the Environmental Protection Agency.

For more information, visit www.accesskent.com/Sheriff/LEPC.

ABOUT THE KENT COUNTY LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE:

- The Kent County LEPC continues to be a leader within the State of Michigan for the development of SARA Title III emergency response site plans. These plans are developed for facilities in our community which have Extremely Hazardous Substances (EHS).
- The LEPC has 21 members representing the following categories: Health/Environment, Fire/HazMat, Education, Agriculture, Hospitals, Transportation, News Media, Industry, Human Services, First Aid, Community Groups, Public Officials, Law Enforcement and Emergency Management.
- Kent County is one of five jurisdictions within the State that have developed emergency response site plans for all of the identified Extremely Hazardous Chemical sites within our community.
- The Public Information subcommittee develops brochures including How to Respond to A Chemical Emergency and Hazardous Materials in your Community, Your Right to Know. They also have two videos available which detail how to shelter in place. Members of the LEPC are available to go out and give presentations.
- The Kent County LEPC exercises one of their plans each year.
- LEPC in conjunction with the Emergency Management Office has formed the Kent County Food Protection and Security Committee. This committee meets to discuss agriculture and food security issues, and exercises food protection plans. Federal, State, and Local agencies and authorities are represented on this committee.
- In 2006, the Kent County LEPC also became the Citizen Corp Council. In 2007 the Grand Rapids LEPC also became part of the Council. This group oversees the Medical Reserve Corp (MRC), Fire Corp, Citizen Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Neighborhood Watch, and Volunteers In Policing (VIP) programs.

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