



**Local Emergency Planning Committee
El Paso County, Colorado
3755 Mark Dabling Blvd
Colorado Springs, CO 80920**

MEETING MINUTES

The LEPC Fourth Quarter meeting was held on November 19th, from 0900 – 10:32 at 3755 Mark Dabling Blvd, Colorado Springs, CO 80907. The meeting was held with 40 members in attendance. Sign in was conducted via QR Code in Veoci with all attendees captured in Attachment 2 of this document.

PURPOSE OF THE LEPC

To administer the federal program for development and review of chemical emergency response plans and providing advocacy and support for storage facilities, transportation routes, and intentional incidents to promote protection and response of the local community, emergency responders, industry professionals within the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA) of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act, Title III.

ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS

The meeting was facilitated by the County LEPC Co-chair John Cole, who opened the floor for any public comments not on the agenda. Meredith Nichols, PPROEM Deputy Director was standing in as proxy for District 3 County Commissioner Bill Wysong. The committee approved the 3rd Quarter LEPC Meeting Minutes and those will be posted on the LEPC website and accessible to those with access or functional needs. We read the LEPC purpose to everyone present. While technology is great, we encourage folks to attend in person for both collaboration and building relationships that will be helpful in incident response and support. Recorder Dave Gallagher asked for any feedback to the audio-visual experience as this is the first real use of their facilities setup.

There were no public comments captured during this meeting.

OLD BUSINESS (UPDATES)

LEPC Chair John Cole presented the agenda and progressed through old business to include Shelter-In-Place procedures and alerts, LEPC Board member elections, and status of draft by-laws.

Shelter-in-Place (S-I-P) messaging and outreach. John Cole mentioned an incident last week in Weatherford Oklahoma declared a S-I-P for a Anhydrous Ammonia

release from a transport vehicle that left 34 medical transports with two in critical condition. We are looking to differentiate messaging from Active Shooter events to provide the most direct and actionable warning to protect citizens.

Jim Rebitski updated the committee on the coordination and finalization of S-I-P messaging. He's been working with the El Paso County 911 Authority and Mr. Ben Bills. We have discussed a 400-character drafted message that is being finalized with the goal in January to put this in place. The alert and warning for Shelter-In-Place actions will benefit areas where hazardous materials that present a vapor contact hazards to guide people to shut windows, doors, vents, and turn-off climate control systems to minimize exposure to chemicals. Part of this effort will be to develop a trifold poster or flyer that can be shown and handed out in public safety outreach events utilizing our Community Emergency outreach team. Looking to provide the final version and materials to everyone in February.

LEPC Board Position Elections. Dave Gallagher facilitated the election of Chair, Co-Chair, then handed it over to Cynthia Norton who facilitated the Recorder position voting. Dave Gallagher read a short version of the duties and responsibilities of these Board positions (see Attachment 3 for the complete list. John Cole (Co-Chair) by unanimous vote was elected for the Chair position. Cynthia Norton by unanimous vote was elected to Co-Chair position. Dave Gallagher was unanimously elected to the Recorder position. All three are currently filling and serving in these positions while the official term begins in January 2026 and will follow the election cycles of the current and future bylaws.

Review of Draft LEPC Bylaws. While the By-Laws are being sent for legal review, we've extended the review timeframe and open to discussion on proposed ideas or changes. There was a question on the voting mechanism of the LEPC as identified with our various Emergency Support Functions with the intention of a representative to vote on behalf of the functional group. The discussion was to define and understand the rationale for this setup. The LEPC Board see this as a way to include those functions to extend the advisory and voting capacity. Lizz Floro recommended verbiage towards having two members from each functional group identified and present a counterbalance of the functional vote and to be able to send a proxy to vote on their half. LEPC voting is primarily towards approving minutes, electing officers, adopting bylaws, and membership actions. While we take this recommendation up for Board discussion, we currently have a voting system that is flexible for our committee needs. If there was a need to vote on policy, planning direction, budgetary/financial, then this would need to be more robust. Our proposed configuration is designed to socialize updates with those functional organizations and generate ideas, queries, and to shape actions. Another facet is the to outline how subcommittees vote and this will be flexible as well.

NEW BUSINESS (INITIATIVES)

State LEPC Conference Updates. John Cole provided an overview of key take-aways from the conference held in Glenwood Springs in October addressing railroad safety requirements, Xcel Energy Wildfire Mitigation, environmental legislation or regulatory updates, and assistance or support of LEPCs by the State Emergency Response Commission.

Railroad Safety Requirements. House Bill (HB24-1030) establishing the Office of Rail Safety with two advisory committees. This Bill also requires the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to initiate agreement with the Federal Railroad Administration to take on inspections, investigations, and enforcement activities. This month, the State of Colorado started conducting comprehensive assessment on the ability to respond to large-scale releases. Also, PUC is advocating highway-rail grade crossing education, enforcement, and engineering practices.

This prompted the State to pass State Bill (SB25-162) outlining the Hazardous materials response assessment and report due to State Legislatures by December 2029. This looks like a capability assessment, sizing up the number of responders, training, equipment inventories and caches, mapping environmentally critical areas, and railroad emergency response plans. Bottomline, is there is a piece where LEPCs will be involved to coordinate the stakeholders review for gaps and solutions to local response capabilities.

Emergency Drill Requirements. There are a vast amount of online resources and even a book put out by BNSF and Union Pacific on various classes offered. Railroad Emergency Drills will be required at the State level with table-top scenarios annually involving a derailment, release of crude oil or flammable liquids, toxic inhalation hazards, and involve containment, recovery, and sensitive area protection walkthrough. Every 5 years, an exercise with local Fire Chiefs and Emergency Management will be conducted. This may involve our local jurisdictions if the State coordinates an exercise in our locale.

BNSF conducted a Full Scale Exercise on October 22nd this year simulating a derailment into the South Platte River involving multiple jurisdictions. Colorado State Patrol participated in this exercise along with Denver Fire, EOD, EPA Region 8, City and County of Denver OEM, Colorado Department of Public Safety, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, and BNSF contractors who provide water rescue and environmental.

Wildfire Detection. XCEL Energy Wildfire Mitigation provided a tutorial on mapping and camera sensors located in Tier 2 and 3 wildland areas. These 135 Pano Artificial Intelligence Cameras provide remote, 360-degree view, detection of smoke plumes

within a few minutes of a fire starting, and send alerts to responders. They measure temperature, humidity, fuel moisture, and wind speed/gusts providing early warning, fire behaviors, and conditions to rapidly respond and suppress fires in remote areas from spreading out of control.

Colorado Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Director Remarks. Presidential declarations may be challenging to qualify limited un-insured damage or loss from \$11 Million (M) to \$54M. In fairness, \$11M has not been adjusted with the consumer price index. Programs will need to be less reliant on grants to ensure sustainability.

Environmental Protective Agency Legislative and Regulatory Updates. The Clean Air Act is still in effect, however the EPA is focused on reconsidering the chemical act towards prevention. Executive Order 14192 with the focus on “Prosperity through Deregulation” where for every one new regulation, that 10 outdated regulations will be repealed. The EPA’s Chemical Safety Board will continue from 5 to 3 will streamline members from 5 to 3 with no additional appointments. The intent of Congress is they do not want to defund the President’s actions. The purpose is to work to harmonize EPA and OSHA Regulations to clarify to business and industry standards.

Landowner Immunity in Emergency Access to Property. House Bill (B23-166) provides immunity for landowners from civil liability from damages or injury to people or property. Immunity is not granted when damages or injury arises from gross negligence or willful misconduct caused by the property owner. Emergencies such as fire, rescue, hazardous materials, natural or human caused disaster; anything that can reasonably be determined by an emergency responder may qualify for immunity.

Developing and Supporting LEPCs. Tim Gablehaus presented the intent of the State Emergency Response Commission through National Association of State Title 3 Program Officials (NASTTPO) guidance documents. NASTTPO is the LEPC at the Federal Level who recommend considering utilization of legal interns and undergraduates to work pro-bono on local jurisdictional issues on behalf of LEPCs. Training in advanced issues; for LEPCs to be proactive, facilitated in-person, and utilize information platforms such as webinars, public outreach, or social media platforms. Another initiative is to recognize members, leaders, and volunteers for their contributions to the LEPC and endeavors to include certificates, letters of appreciation, awards, etc., to encourage outstanding planning, advocacy, and support for the community. NASTTPO also advocates for LEPCs to establish themselves as a 501c3 non-profit to help fund resources towards planning, training, exercises, and community engagement activities. This may help offsetting costs from the County budget while furthering LEPC program initiatives.

Path Forward. Promote a planning process and involve all stakeholders identifying risk and identifying capabilities. The LEPC will require input into a series of capabilities based on likely hazard situations to further determine gaps and measurable objectives to demonstrate success. Also, this requires active education, training, and support to plug people into the process. Meaning, proactively engaging the community where they are, providing guidance and protective measures, explaining how we plan and prepare, and reasonable expectations (what we can/cannot do).

Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Grant. Meredith Nichols, Deputy Director, PPROEM presented on Colorado Springs grant funding through UASI along with Denver. PPROEM worked through the weekend to process several funded projects recently. These funded projects are aimed at building capabilities in prevention and response to terrorism ranging from Bomb Robots, Drones, District Attorney projects, Veoci (Common Operating Picture tool) funding for Colorado Springs Utilities, and looking to outfit the Mobile Communications, and radio updates. Two additional projects included funding to complete a Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and administrative and to cover a 30-month grant management cost. Jim Rebitski has formulated the HazMat Working Group that will assess capabilities and identify gaps to fulfill in HazMat or CBRNE response.

LEPC Sub-Committees. John Cole opened the discussion on LEPC Sub-Committees. Some ideas floated around were industry, assessments, research capabilities, studies, exercises, public outreach committees. As these communities form, we can provide a link to list their charter, purpose, objectives, and record committee progress. Another idea was to create a committee that arranges tours of Risk Management Plan facilities and reports during the LEPC. Another idea was based on Denver's LEPC where they would tour Risk Management Plan facilities and involve responders, members, or citizen communities. Another idea is to have an ESF sub-committee (i.e., ESF-13, Public Safety) where they can determine and solve planning gaps and needs. Another idea is the Public Outreach committee. We ask that ideas are submitted through our email: LEPC@elpasoco.com for attention of the LEPC Board.

2026 Public Outreach. PPROEM has historically focused on large community events, such as the El Paso County Fair, Monument Fourth of July, and Colorado Springs Fire Department open house, yet we might be missing some of our most impacted community. While there were events mentioned to expose many people, we might consider focusing our outreach efforts in/around the Extremely Hazardous Substance reported facilities in the 1-mile radius to include Schools, Hospitals, Nursing Care Facilities, or if there is an event that may impact a mass gathering such as I-25 and the Ford Amphitheatre (as one example). If we target these areas and educate those who lead and manage to enable them to meet needs and actions to take if there was a release. It was suggested to have an outreach sub-committee to guide this process. Lizz Floro, El Paso County Sheriff's Office provided two ideas: first to coordinate with EPSO and the Fire Chief's Council and second, to get on the Board of County Commissioners' agenda and update to reach out 1-2 times per year will reach a larger informed group. Another idea is to build partnerships with our community agencies and train

them to promote an idea (i.e., Shelter-In-Place, HazMat Awareness) to have a greater reach effect across the whole community. Hannah Rigdon, Colorado Springs Stormwater mentioned a good place for outreach is the Children's Water Festival each year in September where a bunch of organizations provide outreach. Robert Kelter, BELFOR Environmental provided an idea to coincide with October's National First Responders to reach first responders in our community.

UPDATES / ANNOUNCEMENTS (AROUND THE ROOM)

County HazMat Program Update

Jim Rebitski updated the committee on the program initiatives. El Paso County HazMat just finished their springtime HazMat Technicians level course graduating 15 students from around the region and certification testing over the next two months. The fall season HazMat Operations course is currently underway with 19 students around the region. There will be another HazMat Technician course with 25 slots in March 2026 and is funded through the PPROEM – El Paso County Budget and open to anyone who wants to apply. This is a hybrid course over 8 weeks utilizing Friday evening and Saturday for hands-on training.

The HazMat Response Truck obtained from Lake County in Leadville to El Paso County has been assigned to the Monument Fire Department to support the North Group incident response to also reinforce support for Colorado State Patrol and the I-25 Corridor.

There is a handout on our newly developed mobile HazMat training where we bring the training props and offer them at your fire station or within your protection district. The training can range to air monitoring, plugging and patching, A/B/C Kits, various tanks, containers, or valves, and decontamination to provide a few ideas,

Immediately following this LEPC will be the HazMat/CBRNE Working Group meeting.

City Hazmat Program Update. Captain Robert Haines publicly acknowledged Mr. Ed Garner from the South-Central Region and Board for facilitating purchase of a new Gas Analyzer and Meter that uses infrared technology. With all the funding challenges this year, Ed was able to get this much needed equipment funded for the City. This instrument has over 5,500 chemical libraries to include WMDs. Training was programmed in the purchase from the contractor Farr West in December and will be in service soon from HazMat Station 14.

About three years ago, we allocated a 7'x14' trailer to augment Colorado Springs Utilities as an entity of the City. CSFD serves as their fire brigade. The trailer is equipped with a large stock of absorbent pads, booms, socks, and has 100' of floatable booms that can be deployed in waterways. This trailer is located at Station 14 and available for materials response in the waterways in the City or County. There is a busted HazMat response truck awaiting \$1.5M in repairs, El Paso County has stripped their main response vehicle while they have theirs repaired. John Cole weighed in; these assets are regional assets to ensure the community is protected.

Partner Updates.

Hannah Rigdon, City Illicit Stormwater Manager, mentioned if interested, the EPA has restarted their quarterly environmental crimes focus group. Hannah will send the LEPC information on this quarterly training.

Darren Pemberton, Schriever Space Force Base Emergency Management announced they will be conducting small scale WMD drills in December leading to a larger exercise in 2026. This may involve hosting some observers and involve decontamination teams to get involved. Right now, they are coordinating with their internal team and will make an announcement on the future exercise planning.

John Cole opened it up to any other partners updates and anyone online and there was no reply.

Our next scheduled quarterly meeting is for February 18th, 2026, 9:00 am – 10:30 am in this Room 140a. We are interested in moving the meeting to another location and program some additional guest speakers. (e.g., Microchip or Rinchem). Please direct any questions about any changes or inputs to the meeting minutes to lepc@elpasoco.com.

Please see the Agenda in Attachment 1 and attendance in Attachment 2.

David Gallagher
LEPC Recorder, Emergency Management
Specialist
Pikes Peak Regional Office of Emergency
Management

Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. Attendance
3. Draft LEPC Board Member Roles and Responsibilities

Attachment 1: Agenda



Local Emergency Planning Committee
El Paso County, Colorado
3755 Mark Dabling Blvd
Colorado Springs, CO 80920

LEPC AGENDA

Wednesday, November 19, 2025, 9:00am – 10:30am

Room 133

In-Person at 3755 Mark Dabling Blvd, Colorado Springs, CO. 80907 or [MS Teams](#)

Item	Topic/Discussion	Presenter
1.	Introductions 1a. Roll Call – around the room and online 1b. Administrative Remarks 1c. Public Comments not in Agenda 1d. Motion to Approve 3QTR August 13th LEPC Meeting Minutes	Recorder LEPC Chairs
2.	Old Business - Updates and Initiatives 2a. Shelter-In-Place Procedures and Alerts 2b. LEPC Board Member Elections: Chair and Recorder Positions 2c. Draft LEPC By-Laws	John Cole/ Jim Rebitski
3.	New Business - Primary Discussion(s): 3a. State LEPC Take-Aways 3b. Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Grant 3c. Sub-committees? (i.e., Assessments, Capabilities, Studies) 3d. 2026 Public Outreach	LEPC Co-Chair John Cole
4.	Announcements 4a. County HazMat Program Update 4b. City HazMat Program Update 4c. Partner Updates (Planning, Organization, Equipment, Training and Exercises)	LEPC Chairs County DERA City DERA Around the Room
5.	Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 18, 2026, Rm 140, 9:00 am – 10:30 am 5a. Planned initiatives and Guest Speakers	LEPC Chairs
6.	Adjournment (approximately 10:30 am)	Recorder

Attachment 2: Attendance

Present

- Adams, Danielle – Citizen’s Representative
- Adler, Gary – Denver Search & Rescue
- Andrew Kathy – El Paso County Community Resources Department - Environmental
- Baird, Heidi - Common Spirit Health
- Baumgartner, James - El Paso County Public Health
- Blanton, Joshua - Rinchem
- Bouwari, Elias - Applied Technical Sciences/Reliability Testing Services
- Brabham, Chance – OneOk Pipeline Services
- Carr, Michael – Colorado State Patrol
- Chavez, Patrick – Colorado Department of Transportation OEM
- Cole, John, PPROEM, DERA, County HazMat - LEPC Co-Chair
- Floro, Elizabeth – El Paso County Sheriff’s Office Wildfire
- Gallagher, David – PPROEM – LEPC Recorder
- Gallegos, Andy – Peterson Space Force Base, Bio-environmental
- Gromko, Gerald – 21st Missile Defense Agency, Schriever Space Force Base
- Haines, Robert – Colorado Springs Fire Department, Station 14, HazMat Captain
- Hiller, Charles – Colorado State Patrol
- Kelter, Robert – BELFOR Environmental
- Kirtley, Fabiana – U.S. Air Force Academy OEM
- Lackey, Brett – Schriever Space Force Base OEM
- McAnally, Brandon – Microchip Corporation
- Meikle, Doug – Citizen’s Representative
- Molina, Amy – Colorado Springs Utilities
- Nichols, Meredith – PPROEM County Deputy Director
- Norton, Cynthia – University of Colorado at Colorado Springs OEM
- Parsons, Kristopher – University of Colorado at Colorado Springs OEM
- Pemberton, Darren – Schriever Space Force Base OEM
- Rebitski, Jim – PPROEM, DERA County HazMat
- Renslow, Chad – Sunoco Pipeline
- Rinesmith, Jon – Schriever Space Force Base
- Sebastian-Coleman, Richard – Colorado Springs Utilities, Safety & Risk Management
- Shields, Sean – Colorado State Patrol
- Tomczyk, Teresa – Colorado Springs Police Department
- Tanner, Cori – American Red Cross
- Trujillo, Nikki – El Paso County Sheriff’s Office Dispatch
- Valencia, Juan – U.S. Air Force Academy OEM
- Waldrip, Christopher – Peterson Space Force Base, Fire & Emergency Services Chief
- Word, Trashun – Peterson Space Force Base, Bio-environmental
- Yousef, Andrea – American Medical Response

Attachment 3:

LEPC BOARD MEMBERS DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Board Members have specific roles and responsibilities defined by federal and state laws, particularly under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA). These roles ensure effective planning and response to hazardous materials incidents in the community.

Here are the general duties and responsibilities of LEPC Chair, Co-Chair/Designated Emergency Response Authority, and Recorder.

Chair (or Chairperson) - Leads the LEPC and oversees the development and implementation of emergency planning activities.

Responsibilities include:

- Presiding over LEPC meetings and ensures proper meeting procedure and agenda.
- Provides leadership in planning, organizing, and coordinating LEPC activities.
- The primary spokesperson and representative of the LEPC in official matters.
- Working with local, state, and federal agencies, industry, and the community to support emergency preparedness.
- Ensuring the LEPC meets all regulatory requirements under EPCRA, including annual plan updates and public access to information.
- Signing official documents and representing the LEPC in public or official settings.
- Coordinating with emergency response agencies to ensure integration of local plans and standards.
- Encouraging stakeholder participation and fosters collaboration between sectors (e.g., government, industry, citizens).

Co-Chair (or Vice Chair) / DERA - Supports the Chair and assumes leadership in their absence.

Responsibilities include:

- Assisting the Chair in planning and conducting meetings.
- Acting on behalf of the Chair when they are unavailable.

- Leading on specific projects or subcommittees as assigned.
 - Leading and supporting outreach and training initiatives.
 - Coordinating public education or information-sharing efforts related to hazardous materials safety.
 - Assists in the preparation of reports and updates required by state or federal agencies.
-

Designated Emergency Response Authority (DERA) - The agency or jurisdiction official responsible for managing the Hazardous Materials program providing subject-matter expertise on operational response, capabilities, and resource requirements.

Responsibilities include:

- Collaborating with the LEPC to develop, maintain, and update the local hazardous materials annex or emergency response plan as required under EPCRA Section 303.
- Identify response capabilities, mutual aid partners, and resource gaps (equipment, personnel, training)
- Review facility emergency plans, chemical inventory reports, and transportation routes to assess potential hazards.
- Serve as or coordinate with the Incident Commander during hazardous materials releases ensuring procedures for containment, evacuation, Shelter-In-Place, and public warning are properly implemented. Coordinate with other emergency support functions (i.e., Fire, EMS, Law Enforcement, Public Health, and environmental agencies.)
- Participate in or lead LEPC-sponsored training programs and HazMat exercises (tabletop, functional, and full-scale).
- Ensure responders meet federal and state training standards under OSHA 29 CFR 1910.120 (HAZWOPER) and NFPA 472/1072.
- Provide input on public notification systems and Shelter-In-Place (S-I-P) messaging strategies ensuring protocols integrate with Dispatch centers, 911 authorities, and public information officers.
- Liaise with the State Emergency Response Commission, EPA, DOT, and environmental agencies on compliance and reporting matters.
- Assist in post-incident review and reporting to improve future response and prevention efforts.

Recorder - Maintains records and documentation of LEPC activities.

Responsibilities include:

- Records and distributes LEPC Agenda and Meeting Minutes in a timely and accurate manner.
- Maintains official records of correspondence, meeting notices, sign-in sheets, and other LEPC documentation.
- Keep an up-to-date membership roster and contact list.
- Ensures public notices (such as meeting announcements) are published in accordance with Sunshine laws and available in a timely manner to promote attendance.
- Supports document control for the Emergency Response Plan, criteria, and updates.