

Bill Creating the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security Signed

Governor Henry signed HB 2280, the Oklahoma Homeland Security Act, which creates the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security as a stand-alone agency, replacing the interim administration housed within the Department of Public Safety. The bill states the responsibilities of the Office of Homeland Security (OHS) and establishes a statewide emergency response system. It goes into effect July 1st.

Under the Oklahoma Homeland Security Act the primary responsibilities of the OHS will be:

- Establish a plan to implement a statewide All-Hazards emergency response plan, including responsibility for the state regional emergency response teams
- Create, implement and administer an advisory system
- Apply for federal funds related to homeland security and access and distribute these monies
- Co-operate with federal agencies to develop and implement a nationwide homeland security response plan.

Initially three divisions are set up within the Office: Prevention and Intelligence; Response and Recovery Planning; and Awareness and Preparedness. The bill also sets out these four “strategic objectives”:

- Prevent terrorist attacks
- Reduce vulnerability to terrorism
- Minimize the damage from and to recover from terrorist attacks
- Other duties as the Governor may prescribe

Responsibility for coordinating OHS efforts with other state agencies, local officials and governments, emergency responders, private-sector businesses, educational institutions, volunteer groups and the general public is the duty of the OHS Director.

Also created within the Act are the eight regional

planning and coordination advisory councils for homeland security. The chief function of the advisory councils is to access and document the needs of their region related to homeland security. Members to each council will be appointed by the Director of OHS and the councils are to be composed of the following:

- Chief of a paid fire department
- Chief of a volunteer fire department
- County sheriff
- Chief of a police department
- Physician or hospital administrator
- Emergency management coordinators
- Emergency medical services provider
- Veterinarian
- Representative of a state or local disaster relief agency
- City manager or mayor
- County commissioner
- Public Health representative

Each member of a council will live or work within the region served by that council. Terms are three years and the terms on each council are to be staggered.

Additional information on the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security is available on its website: <http://www.youoklahoma.com/okohs>. ■

Does your LEPC have a Webpage?

DEQ currently is constructing a website for the OHMERC. Links to Local Emergency Planning Committees across the State will be provided from this site. If your organization has its own webpage and you would like to have it linked from the OHMERC site, contact **Jami Murphy, DEQ, 405-702-1011** or Jami.Murphy@deq.state.ok.us. ■

Shelter-In-Place Brochure Ready for Distribution

The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee to the Oklahoma Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Commission (**OHMERC**) recently produced an updated Shelter-In-Place pamphlet for LEPC's, Emergency Managers, police and fire departments, local health departments and other stakeholders in emergency response. Shelter-In-Place is a means to safeguard the public within homes and businesses during chemical emergencies and is a viable alternative to evacuation in some situations, including chemical or biological terrorism. While there is a clear need for citizens to understand Shelter-In-Place procedures and to plan in advance for them, neither the OHMERC nor the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee receives funding of any kind. Therefore, the updated pamphlet is being released electronically for distribution from within communities. Oklahoma Emergency Management has determined that DOT grants disbursed to LEPC's for training may be used to fund the printing and distribution of these brochures. Commercial sponsorship is another possibility. The final pamphlet contains an area for contact information, for example, LEPC, emergency manager, police or fire department or other sponsoring entity. Also there is a cut out section outlining Shelter-In-

Place procedures sized to fit into a wallet or to easily be posted in homes and public places.

The Ad Hoc Committee suggests extra efforts be taken to reach the disabled or others with special needs by distributing the brochure to groups in your area such as schools, nursing homes, daycare centers, daily living centers, local chapter of "Oklahomans for Independent Living", local vocational-rehabilitative services office, home health care services and churches, especially those providing "Meals-on-Wheels". The Ad Hoc Committee also suggests contacting civic groups such as the Kiwanis or Rotary Club to assist with the distribution of these pamphlets. Special efforts should be made as well to see that Shelter-In-Place information reaches residents and businesses close to facilities handling large quantities of potentially dangerous chemicals. If you should have questions about the contents of the Shelter-In-Place pamphlet, contact **Betty Reaties, Ad Hoc Committee Chair, 405-297-1772, betty.reaties@ci.okc.ok.us**. To receive an electronic copy, contact **Jami Murphy, DEQ, 405-702-1011, Jami.Murphy@deq.state.ok.us**. ■

TRI Reports Due July 1st

Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) reports for 2003 are due both to TRI Reporting and to the Department of Environmental Quality by July 1, 2004. The program, also known as EPCRA Sec. 313, applies to those facilities that:

- Engage in manufacturing or a related industry (covered industrial classification codes);
- Employ ten or more persons, or the equivalent;
- Manufacture, process or otherwise use one or more of any of 600 covered toxic chemicals at or above the specified thresholds.

Companies annually report releases, transfers, reuse and treatment of these chemicals. TRI reports also contain information on source reductions and other pollution prevention activities. The majority of releases and transfers reported are permitted under DEQ or EPA.

Oklahoma companies reported 23.2 million pounds released in 2002, the most recent reporting year, a decrease of over two million pounds or more than eight percent from 2001. Significant reductions in emissions to deep under-

ground injection wells and a continued decline in releases to surface waters and air account for the majority of the decrease. The numbers also demonstrate a 32 per cent reduction in releases of toxic chemicals in the State in the past ten years. Re-use, primarily recycling, increased in 2002 to 72.4 million pounds. In addition, 44 million pounds of chemicals were destroyed by treatment, and 3.2 million pounds of chemicals were transferred off-site for proper disposal.

The Environmental Protection Agency plans to focus more on electronic reporting through encouraging the use of its TRI-Made Easy (TRI-ME) software and its Central Data Exchange (CDX). Kimberly Nelson, assistant administrator for Environmental Information, urged all facilities to "take advantage of available electronic reporting." Use of these products help to assure quality data as both greatly eliminate errors. EPA also intends to focus future enforcement activities on those facilities filing after the July 1st deadline. TRI-ME software is free and can be downloaded from the EPA TRI website at <http://epa.gov/tri/report/trime/patches.htm#cd>. ■



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