



Media Release

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April is Hazardous Materials Awareness Month

SPRINGFIELD— Residents may not always know what chemicals are used in their community or how to interpret the safety codes posted on certain buildings. That's why agencies including the Illinois Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security (IEMA-OHS), Illinois Department of Labor, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the Illinois Fire Service Institute (ISFI), and local fire and emergency management partners monitor and manage this critical information.

These subject matter experts know what materials are considered hazardous, providing advice to businesses and others on hazardous material safety, and provides a system for reporting spills or other potentially dangerous releases.

This Hazardous Materials Safety Month, IEMA-OHS hopes everyone takes some time to learn about potential hazards in their communities. "Being proactive and safety conscious is key," said IEMA-OHS Acting Director Theodore (Ted) Berger. "Each year, facilities that store certain hazardous chemicals are required to report their inventories to the State. These reports help ensure that emergency planners and first responders have the information they need to protect their communities."

IEMA-OHS coordinates shared efforts with ISFI to provide guidance and hazardous materials training, with updates every four years or sooner as needed. Federal funds are used to provide hazardous materials training to first responders in the State of Illinois, including public employees who may come across hazardous materials during their workday.

"Illinois has just under 9200 active Tier II chemical facilities," explained IEMA-OHS Hazardous Materials Section Supervisor David Martin. "When properly managed and stored, these chemicals can be used safely and utilized by responsible parties. The State of Illinois has proactive and well-trained regional and local responders, which reduces risk."

The federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA) mandates that each state designates a State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) to implement the requirements of the act. Under the Illinois EPCRA, IEMA-OHS is designated as the SERC.

As such, IEMA-OHS works closely with Local Emergency Planning Committees, first responders, and emergency managers to ensure local communities have knowledge and access to information about certain types of hazardous materials located within their communities and are prepared in the event of chemical release.

Disaster preparedness information is readily available from IEMA-OHS on the [Ready Illinois website](#), a one-stop resource for detailed information about what to do before, during, and after disasters.

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