



Alabama Emergency Response Commission (AERC) Updates

The AERC met on May 9th of this year. The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) were our guest speakers. Recordings of the AERC meetings can be found on [ADEM's YouTube channel](#).

The AERC wants to emphasize the importance of providing accurate data when filing EPCRA documents. EPCRA data is used by responders to access information about hazardous chemicals in their communities, allowing them to plan for and effectively respond to potential chemical incidents. Data errors can lead to a lack of understanding regarding the risks involved during spill response for both the responders and their communities. Best case scenario, data errors could trigger financial/enforcement penalties from the EPA. Worst case scenario, errors such as inaccurate latitude/longitude coordinates, misspelled street addresses, and omission of chemical/quantities can lead to inaccurate response planning, delays in response times by responders, and an increased risk of miscommunication and potential injuries during a chemical release. Please review the list below of common EPCRA filing mistakes. Please note: the list below is not exhaustive.

Common EPCRA Filing Mistakes (listed in no particular order):

- Tier II Reports:
 - Inaccurate location information
 - Using abbreviations and/or special characters in the facility name field and address field (Note: These can make finding your data difficult for responders/regulators. It is best to avoid using abbreviations and any unnecessary special characters.)
 - Using a nickname or internal shorthand for the facility name (Note: The facility name should be the facility's legal name.)
 - Not listing a title next to the signature block of the person certifying the report (Note: The name and official title of the owner/operator or the owner/operator's authorized representative is required.)
 - Listing a future date or incorrect date in the date certified field
 - Using an older version of Tier2Submit (Note: New software must be downloaded annually.)
 - Submitting an unapproved format (Ex: Submitting a PDF or paper copy of the report is not acceptable)
 - Submitting a previous year's report
 - Leaving blanks, omitting data about the chemicals (Ex: No CAS number, days-on-site and chemical quantity left blank, appropriate hazard category not checked.)
 - Not updating contact information
 - Incorrect Master ID

- General EPCRA filing:
 - Not listing the facility name, document type, and Master ID in the subject line of EPCRA submission e-mails submitted to AL312@adem.alabama.gov.
 - Omitting data from Master ID requests (Note: facility name, lat/longs, address, county, zip are all required.)
 - Forgetting to attach documents to submission messages

If you have any questions, concerns, or topics that need to be brought up at the next AERC meeting, please contact [Beth Donaldson](#).

This newsletter brought to you by the Alabama Emergency Response Commission/ADEM
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Regulatory Updates



- The EPA made updates to its Consolidated List of Lists, including the addition of Clean Water Act (CWA) section 311(j)(5) hazardous substances threshold quantities under 40 CFR 118. The updated List of Lists can be found on the [EPA's List of Lists web page](#).
- The EPA has proposed adding additional Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) to the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI). Be sure to periodically check the “Recent/Ongoing Rulemakings” on the [TRI web page](#).
- The EPA established legally enforceable levels for six PFAS in drinking water on 4/10/2024 under the [National Primary Drinking Water Regulation \(NPDWR\)](#). They have announced there is new funding available to help states and territories implement PFAS testing and treatment at public water systems and to help owners of private wells address PFAS Contamination.
- The U.S. Chemical Safety Board (CSB) released [an update](#) on its investigation of a release of anhydrous ammonia at the Cuisine Solutions food processing plant in Virginia on 7/31/2024, which injured dozens of employees.
- The CSB released [an update](#) on its investigation of a release of toxic gas at the Bio-Lab, Inc. facility in Conyers, Georgia on 9/29/2024, which resulted in a massive fire and plume of smoke that threatened the surrounding community and the metropolitan Atlanta area.
- The CSB released [an update](#) on its investigation of a fatal release of hydrogen sulfide gas at the PEMEX Deer Park Refinery in Texas on 10/10/2024, which killed two workers and injured 13 others.

Reminders



- The ADEM [SARA Title III website](#) is updated periodically throughout the year and contains FAQs and useful information on EPCRA reporting requirements.
- The AERC requires all EPCRA correspondence to be submitted electronically either through AL312@adem.alabama.gov or [E-Plan](#). The only two acceptable forms of submission for Tier II reporting to the AERC are [Tier2Submit](#) or [E-Plan](#).
- For all EPCRA reporting, you must also check with your LEPC and Local Fire Department (if applicable) to see what format they require for compliance. Retain proof-of-receipt from all three entities.
- Tier II forms are due by March 1st. All forms received after March 1st are considered late.
- Verify all street addresses as well as latitude and longitude coordinates! If you do not have a street address, please register a 911 address so that First Responders can easily locate your facility.
Please note: if you submit a Tier II form that is lacking any required categories/fields or contains inaccurate information, it can be considered invalid and rejected. If a document is rejected, please make accurate and timely corrections as soon as possible, and resubmit.
- If using Tier2Submit to file a Tier II form, be sure to download the latest version from the [EPA's website](#).
- TRI forms are due July 1st and must be filed through EPA's [TRI-MEweb](#) system.
- Please note if you are filing a Trade Secret form for the TRI, you must mail the sanitized form to ADEM. This is the only EPCRA form that is allowed and required to be submitted by paper. Please do not include unsanitized forms. Address to SARA Title III Coordinator at 1350 Coliseum Blvd. Montgomery, AL 36110.

Training Opportunities



- E-Plan offers free training [webinars](#) in January and February.
- Tier2Submit 2024 tutorial is available [here](#).
- Free [resources](#) are available for emergency response planning for facilities.
- The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) ChemLock program provides the *ChemLock: Secure Your Chemicals Security Planning Training Course, Virtual*. This course walks through how to create a tailored, scalable security plan that meets the business model and unique circumstances of a facility. Participants will learn the key elements of a chemical security plan and benefit from examples, lessons learned, and best practices. The course runs 2-3 hours in length and is designed to help leadership, facility security personnel, and other applicable personnel understand, develop, and implement a facility security plan.
 - [Register for February 18, 2025 - 12-3 p.m. ET](#)
 - [Register for May 21, 2025 - 10a.m.-1 p.m. ET](#)
 - [Register for August 21, 2025 - 1-4 p.m. ET](#)

- *ChemLock: Introduction to Chemical Security Training Course, Virtual.* This course provides an introduction to identifying, assessing, evaluating, and mitigating chemical security risks. This easy-to-understand overview identifies key components and best practices of chemical security awareness and planning to help kickstart chemical security discussions at a facility. This course runs 1-2 hours in length and is appropriate for all personnel regardless of their level of involvement with dangerous chemicals.
 - [Register for January 15, 2025 - 1-3 p.m. ET](#)
 - [Register for April 15, 2025 - 11 a.m.-1 p.m. ET](#)
 - [Register for July 17, 2025 - 2-4 p.m. ET](#)
 - For more information or to request specific training for your facility, please visit the [ChemLock Training webpage](#).
- The CSB released a free safety training application focused on agency findings from the 2005 BP Texas City explosion and fire and how they relate to OSHA’s Process Safety Management (PSM) standard. The PSM standard outlines requirements for the management of hazards associated with highly hazardous chemicals. The training covers all 14 elements of PSM using the 2005 explosion as a model.
 - The desktop training application is available for download [here](#). The application recreates the details of the Texas City refinery and takes the viewer through interactive training modules on each element of PSM. At the end of each module there is an opportunity to test your knowledge.
 - For feedback or assistance on the application, please email assistance@csb.gov.

Voices from Industry

Voices from Industry is a segment that allows industry representatives to suggest a topic that might be valuable to others. This year’s article requester would like to remain anonymous, but they wanted us to highlight the importance of the Chemical Safety Board (CSB). The CSB is an independent federal agency tasked with investigating chemical incidents and determining their probable cause. They also issue recommendations with the intention of increasing future accident prevention. Their mission is to, “Drive chemical safety excellence through independent investigations to protect communities, workers, and the environment”. Their vision is, “A nation free from chemical disasters”.

While the United States has made progress reducing the frequency and severity of chemical disasters, we are not yet fully free. At least 270 incidents involving chemical releases occurred in 2023 and at least 18 people lost their lives. The CSB has hope that we can improve these statistics. When the CSB opens an investigation, they will post a notice of the accident and basic details to the “[Current Investigations](#)” dropdown menu. After the CSB has completed their incident investigation they upload their findings publicly to the “[Completed Investigations](#)” dropdown menu. While the CSB does not have regulatory or enforcing authority, they do work closely with other agencies providing them with a list of [recommendations](#) that could be made to the regulations to help improve safety and minimize the damage from these types of events. Ultimately, their goal is to help identify what safety issues, procedural steps, and mechanical weaknesses exist at the facility and how they could be improved upon to make that facility, its community, and other facilities that are similar, safer and less likely to experience that same type of failure again.

The CSB has over 100 videos in their “[Video Room](#)” on their web page which contains re-enacted chemical accident scenarios and provides history about the facility as well as relevant findings found during the investigations. The videos are concise, detailed and easy to follow and understand. They can easily be shown at meetings or training sessions. UCLA’s Labor Occupational Safety & Health Program created an excellent guide, [Using CSB Reports and Videos](#) which is organized by special topics. Each topic provides links to safety videos, sources, and relevant reading materials. It also provides possible discussion points and summarizes what key issues and recommendations were discovered during the CSB investigation. The CSB also has their own YouTube Channel. The video list below highlights a few of their most watched videos:

- [Reflections on Bhopal After Thirty Years](#): *On the 30th anniversary of fatal chemical release that killed thousands in Bhopal, India, CSB safety message warns it could happen again.*
- [Transient Hazards- Explosion at the Husky Superior Refinery](#): *Safety video about the April 2018 explosion and fire at the Husky Superior Refinery in Superior, Wisconsin. The incident injured 36 workers, caused roughly \$550 million in damage to the facility, and released 39,000 pounds of flammable hydrocarbon vapor into the air.*
- [Filling Blind](#): *Safety Video on the 2009 explosion at the Caribbean Petroleum, or CAPECO, terminal facility near San Juan, Puerto Rico. The incident occurred when gasoline overflowed and sprayed out from a large aboveground storage tank, forming a 107-acre vapor cloud that ignited. While there were no fatalities, the explosion damaged approximately 300 nearby homes and businesses and petroleum leaked into the surrounding soil, waterways and wetlands.*
- [The Danger of Popcorn Polymer- Incident at the TPC Group Chemical Plant](#): *Safety video on the November 2019 incident at the TPC Group Chemical Plant in Port Neches, Texas. A series of explosions destroyed a portion of the TPC facility, damaged nearby homes and businesses, and prompted a mandatory evacuation of residents living within four miles of the plant. Several workers and members of the public reported injuries and fires burned at the facility for over a month.*

If you have a topic that you think should be included in the next issue of the newsletter, please submit all suggestions to [Beth Donaldson](#). Topic suggestions can remain anonymous and all ideas are welcome for consideration.