

May 5, 1999

Dear LEPC Information Coordinator:

The State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) has determined that one of the more efficient methods of providing LEPCs with prompt access to information it wishes to share, is through the Internet. There may be savings realized through reduced printing, handling and postage costs. Due to the limited funding to support the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Program, careful decisions about appropriate spending need to be made.

This letter is being sent to clarify the SERC's decision to allow Internet access charges to be paid from your LEPC's budget. If persons other than LEPC employees are provided access, the LEPC should only be responsible for their apportioned amount. This apportioned amount would also apply to those individuals who are part-time LEPC employees. Examples would be: There are four individuals in your EMA office, you are the only LEPC employee; or you are only scheduled to be the LEPC employee for two hours each eight-hour day; under both scenarios, your LEPC share would be 25% of the monthly Internet service charge.

Costs associated with upgrading the LEPC computer to provide access, are also allowable LEPC expenses. Appointed individuals, such as the LEPC Chair, the information coordinator, and the emergency coordinator, are those for whom Internet access may be deemed appropriate. The payment for installation of hardware or software on a "non LEPC computer" is not appropriate.

The selection of the company to provide Internet access to your LEPC should be determined by your county's purchasing process. For the State of Ohio, this would mean that all potential bidders would be asked to provide a quote for services. The scope of service, initial installation and monthly charges would be evaluated for the best overall package. While cost is usually the determining factor, some low bidders are occasionally passed over because the services provided will not meet the minimum needs.

We hope that this action by the SERC to encourage LEPC Internet access, will help improve the information shared with the emergency response and preparedness community in the State of Ohio.

Sincerely,

Raymond Roe  
Ohio EPA Co-Chair

James R. Williams  
Ohio EMA Co-Chair