

# REGION 6 LEPC Update



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This month, we provide an article on school cleanouts, as well as an article from Fred Cowie, our adopted Poet Laureate. In addition, we have included an article on decreasing holiday stress.

As always, if you received this Update from someone else, and would like to be added to the email list, just email us at one of the emails above.

Have a merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year !!

Steve & Angie

## *Schools Chemical Cleanout Campaign (SC3)*

From elementary school maintenance closets to high school chemistry labs, schools use a variety of chemicals. When they are mismanaged, these chemicals can put students and school personnel at risk from spills, fires, and other accidental exposures. Chemical accidents disrupt school schedules and can cost thousands of dollars to repair.



The Schools Chemical Cleanout Campaign (SC3) aims to ensure that all schools are free from hazards associated with mismanaged chemicals. SC3 gives K-12 schools information and tools to responsibly manage chemicals.

By using the tools provided in this article, and pulling together a team with a variety of perspectives, expertise, and resources, an LEPC can develop a successful chemical management program.

Schools, parents, and local response/planning organizations can partner to create a chemical management program that meets the unique needs of their schools.

### Schools

While every school is unique, all schools can benefit from a comprehensive chemical management program to ensure they are safe from chemical risks.

A school or school district does not need to immediately implement every aspect of a chemical management program to see positive results.

Incrementally incorporating better chemical management into a school district's policies and procedures will lead to improvement as additional aspects are adopted.



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## What Can an LEPC Do?

Most schools need support to conduct a chemical cleanout and implement a prevention program.

Building partnerships with others in the community, especially state, tribal, and local government agencies, chemical suppliers and distributors, and waste handlers, is a necessary step in developing a successful chemical management program.



### To start a program:

- Assemble a team of teachers, facilities staff, school nurses, administrators, and community partners with technical expertise to assess chemical safety issues and set policy;
- Organize and build support for a chemical management program; and
- Foster frequent and open communication between team members.

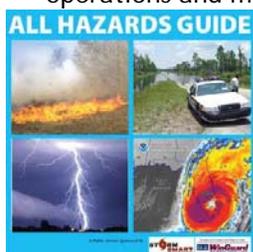
### ROLES OF TEAM MEMBERS:

#### Administrators

Administrators (e.g., school principals, superintendents, members of the board of education) are essential to the successful implementation of a chemical management program.

Administrators play an active role in addressing chemical mismanagement issues by executing the necessary steps to implement a program:

- Serve as a liaison between teachers, the school district, and community partners;
- Work with community partners (such as the Fire Departments, Local Emergency Planning Commission (LEPCs), or Boards of Health) to help develop and enforce policies;
- Implement policies regarding the purchase, inventory, use, management, storage, and disposal of chemicals in schools.
- Budget for a chemical inventory of all areas of the school;
- Arrange for appropriate expertise (i.e., they should have specific expertise in science lab stockrooms) to conduct a chemical inventory on-site and removal of unwanted and accumulated chemicals;
- Budget for periodic removal of on-site chemicals generated from science labs, art classrooms, vocational shops, facility operations and maintenance, and other areas with chemicals



- Provide chemical management training for teachers and staff:
  - Require annual chemical awareness and management training for all personnel throughout the school district who are involved in purchasing, use, and management of chemicals.
  - Ensure all chemical safety equipment is working and personnel and students, where appropriate, are trained in its use.
- Incorporate chemical management oversight into full facility assessments using tools such as the Healthy School Environments Assessment Tool.
- Consider contracting with vendors who provide Chemical and Resource Management Services (CRMS). CRMS has two components:
  - Chemical Management Services (CMS) - typically involves a long-term contract for provision of chemicals and assistance with associated management services (e.g. chemical tracking, regulatory compliance).
  - Resource Management Services (RMS) - providers haul waste and recycled goods, and also help adjust upstream activities to reduce the amount of material entering the waste stream.



## Innovative Pilot

EPA supported an innovative pilot with the Lansing Public School District (Michigan), combining Chemical and Resource Management Services (CRMS) to improve chemical and waste management in schools.



Rather than placing additional burden on teachers and other school personnel, CRMS uses suppliers and their expertise to achieve comprehensive, long-term, cost-effective improvements. CMS and RM are preference based contracts where suppliers (or service providers), under performance-based contracts, transform from product sellers to product service providers.



For Lansing, all their chemical and waste management is handled under a single contract using the service provider's expertise to improve chemical and waste management without additional cost to Lansing.

The contract contains provisions that ensure continual improvement and environmental gains. General Motors, Chemical Strategies Partnership, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and EPA partnered to make this pilot a success.

For more information please read the Lansing K-12 School District: Chemical and Resource Management Services (CRMS) Case Study at: <http://www.chemicalstrategies.org/pdf/index/Lansing.pdf>

Teachers:

Teachers can reduce the environmental and health hazards in their school by ensuring that classroom chemicals are managed in a responsible manner and working collaboratively to help implement a chemical management program by:



- Learning about chemical hazards, safety practices, and requirements for handling chemicals;
- Obtaining and maintaining Material Safety Data Sheets;
- Working with chemical management professionals to identify and remove chemical hazards in your school;
- Educating students about the proper handling of chemicals and safety procedures;
- Ensuring that your lab or classroom is equipped to handle potential mishaps associated with chemicals;
- Keeping chemicals in a locked, restricted area, away from students and potential vandals;
- Taking into account the toxicity and quantity of chemicals used to clean and maintain classrooms, and teach science, the arts, and vocational sciences;
- Evaluating all chemicals coming into the school, including donations, for risk, storage and disposal requirements, need, and existing stocks before accepting;
- Centralizing your classroom's chemical inventory;
- Building awareness of the issue with others in the school system;
- Obtaining support at all levels within the school, from the principal to custodian, to address chemical use and management; and
- Working cooperatively with district wide contacts (superintendent, facility manager, etc.).



## Facilities and Maintenance Personnel

Facilities personnel (e.g., facilities managers, custodians, and anyone dealing with cleaning and maintenance supplies) are instrumental in a chemical management program.

It is important for personnel to be trained on proper chemical management because a successful program is not limited to chemicals used in the classroom, but also includes chemicals found in maintenance and cleaning supplies.

Facilities personnel can help implement and maintain a chemical management program by:





- Complying with state and local purchasing, use, storage and disposal guidelines;
- Ensuring that all facility maintenance staff members receive effective training and have the tools needed to keep school facilities in good condition;
- Building awareness of the issue with others in the school system;
- Obtaining support at all levels within the school to address chemical use and management;
- Working cooperatively with district wide contacts (superintendent, facility manager, etc.);
- Becoming involved in policy development associated with chemicals; and
- Purchasing and using less toxic cleaners. Visit the Resources page for more information on safer cleaning products.

## School Nurses

As school personnel and medical professionals, nurses have a special interest in keeping students healthy and safe. Nurses can:

- Be prepared to recognize and treat injuries resulting from chemical exposures or accidents;
- Educate students and staff about the importance of responsible chemical management from a health perspective; and
- Evaluate your office for potentially dangerous materials, such as:
  - Thermometers containing mercury
  - Blood pressure gauges (sphygmomanometers) containing mercury
  - Nasal sprays and contact lens solutions that contain thimerosal, phenylmercuric acetate, or phenylmercuric nitrate
  - Pharmaceuticals



## Accidents - What To Do



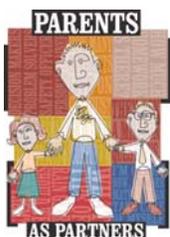
Call your poison control center at 1-800-222-1222 for specific information on what to do if someone is exposed to a chemical. You can also call 911 or your local ambulance number.

For more information on poison prevention or your local poison control center, please visit the State and Regional Poison Control Centers Web site at:  
<http://npic.orst.edu/poison.htm>

Your phone book may list your local poison control center on its inside cover or first pages.

## Parents

Healthy school settings enhance the learning environments for students. Parents can help their school create a healthy learning environment by:



- Learning about Healthy School Environments;
- Working as part of a team with school administrators, teachers, and others to identify priority issues and address environmental health issues;
- Identifying and recommending community partners who may be able to lend expertise to address the issue of chemicals in schools; and
- Evaluating the chemicals (i.e., art supplies, cleaners, etc.) you contribute to the school environment for risk and necessity.

## Partners (for Facilities and LEPCs)

Schools cannot undertake chemical cleanout and management programs without the support of facilities and LEPC members.

Consider what your business or organization can contribute to school chemical management.

Trade/Professional organizations, chemical suppliers and manufacturers, waste handlers, educational institutions, private businesses, and social service organizations are some examples of businesses and organizations that have the resources and expertise to share with a school or school district.

As a local business or organization, you can play an important role in creating a safe and healthy environment in your local school.

Join with school personnel and other community partners to pool your expertise and resources to develop a program with these goals in mind:



- Remove potentially dangerous, unknown, outdated, and unnecessary dangerous chemicals from K-12 schools;
- Implement practices to safely manage chemicals and prevent future accumulations; and
- Raise awareness of the issues related to responsible chemical management in schools.

Becoming an SC3 Partner is a win-win proposition for you and the schools you assist. Your organization can benefit from becoming involved in school chemical management in the following ways:

### Benefits to a Partner Organization

- Organizational pride and satisfaction from improving school health and safety
- Enhanced image as a leader in the community
- Recognition that comes with being part of a federal campaign that has the backing of the EPA and other agencies
- Heightened organizational visibility via recognition on high-traffic Web sites, in the media, and at recognition events

### Benefits of Partnering with a School

Your organization may choose to partner with a school or school district and/or with EPA. Partnering with a school or school district can have its own set of benefits for your organization.



There are a number of ways a school or school district may choose to publicly recognize your organization's efforts to make schools safer:

- Presenting an award to partner at a public ceremony or school board meeting;
- Drafting a press release or contacting local media outlets to inform them of a partner's efforts;
- Publicizing a partner's assistance in a school newspaper or Web site; and
- Informing the U.S. EPA of a partner's successful collaboration.

### Benefits of Partnering with SC3

In addition to partnering with a school, your organization may want to consider signing an EPA SC3 Partnership Agreement, which you can find at: <http://www.epa.gov/waste/partnerships/sc3/part-agree.htm>.

EPA helps partners find schools and offers guidance on how to work effectively with schools.

The agency also offers a number of ways to recognize a partner's efforts:

- EPA will recognize your commitment to promoting responsible chemical management in K-12 schools by presenting your organization with a plaque at a recognition event attended by the press and other media.
- EPA will add your organization to the Current Partners and Accomplishments Page on the SC3 Web site as an official national partner. A success story about your partnership with a school or school district will be posted so other schools, partners, and the public can learn about your achievements.
- EPA will routinely hold recognition events to recognize schools and partners in the coming years.
- EPA will include your organization in its national partner network where you will have the opportunity to:
  - Learn about and share best practices and solutions to overcoming barriers in SC3 partnerships; and
  - Build valuable business relationships with other partners.



- Periodic SC3 Partnership Meetings will give you a chance to provide input to EPA on the direction of the national program.
- EPA will work with your organization to incorporate your contributions into articles placed in trade association journals and related publications.

## Becoming a Partner

Consider the following steps in preparation for partnering with a school, school district, and/or EPA in an SC3 program.

Approach your management to determine whether school chemical management is an area they are willing to volunteer staff time, money, and/or resources.



Be prepared to discuss the following:

- The ways your organization can benefit as a partner;
- The benefits to the school, district, and community;
- The ways your organization can help; and
- The level of investment your organization can make.

With management's approval, you will want to determine the types and level of support they are willing to provide:

- Will you want to assist on a single project with a defined start and end date (e.g., an inventory or training)?
- Will you want to provide ongoing sustainable support to a school (e.g., annual training for teachers and other staff)?
- Will you provide services in the event of an emergency or natural disaster?



### Contact EPA (if applicable) for help getting started on an SC3 project.

If your organization does not have an existing relationship with a school or school district that may benefit from a chemical management project, contact the EPA SC3 Account Manager responsible for your region to help identify a school or school district in need of help.

Region 6

Headquarters Contact: Kristina Meson (meson.kristina@epa.gov)

(703) 308-8488

Either your EPA SC3 Account Manager or regional SC3 lead can provide guidance with the following:

- Identifying schools which may need assistance;
- Brainstorming ways your organization can assist a school; and
- Forming teams to make the project a success.



If you decide to become an EPA partner, you will be asked to sign an SC3 Partnership Agreement.

This agreement indicates your organization is committed to promoting responsible chemical management in K-12 schools and does not impose specific requirements upon your organization.

Once signed, EPA will help you arrange an SC3 project that matches your organization's unique resources and expertise.

## Develop a relationship with your SC3 project school or school district.

When you begin to work with a school or school district on an SC3 project, it is important to gauge how familiar the school is with developing and implementing a chemical management plan.

Be prepared to provide the school with some background on the topic and how your organization can help meet their needs. Tie your services to tangible benefits, such as:

- Saving money on purchasing and disposing of chemicals;
- Reducing the use of dangerous chemicals in schools;
- Reducing liability and loss of public confidence; and
- Making the school safer for students and staff.



Your organization and the school or school district may find it helpful to prepare a partnership agreement, a team charter, or some other document that outlines the roles, responsibilities, and limitations involved in the project.

Whatever form the document may take, it should address the specific tasks your organization and the school and/or district intend to perform, as well as a proposed schedule for agreed upon activities. Maintain an open dialogue with your partnering school and adjust formal agreements, as necessary.

### Sustaining Your Partnership

Near the end of your organization's initial project, you will probably ask, "What's next?" Below you will find examples of steps you can take to answer that question and continue to find ways to improve school chemical safety:

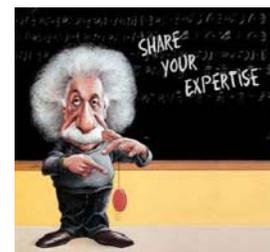
- Periodically revisit and reassess any agreements with your partnering school. Adjusting commitments as they evolve over time will help your organization meet its needs as well as those of your partnering school.
- Keep open communication with the school's project team, especially the SC3 champion. Agree on a time to catch up and inquire about other projects, initiatives, and plans, and explore the school's receptiveness to your organization's assistance.
- Achieve results and communicate them to your management and the SC3 project team. Record the types and levels of assistance your organization provided so your organization can make informed decisions about partnering with other schools or school districts.
- Engage EPA for guidance. The EPA Account Manager and regional SC3 lead are valuable sources to contact. Don't hesitate to contact them with your questions.



- Have a plan for issue resolution, should that become necessary. Consider developing a procedure ahead of time for addressing problems that may arise and consult it when necessary.
- Consider helping other schools. Other schools in your area may be in need of the resources and expertise your organization has to offer regarding responsible chemical management.
- Consider assisting when there is an emergency. Consider how your organization may be of assistance when there is a natural disaster or other emergency.

### Lessons Learned from Successful Practices

- Assemble a team that has expertise in different areas of chemical knowledge and management;
  - Seek support from upper-level management and decision makers who have an influence on a school and/or district's budget;
  - Conduct a walkthrough of your school to assess current and potential chemical management concerns;
  - Establish achievable short term goals to help build momentum; and
  - Develop a long-term plan for responsible chemical management that sustains the successes achieved in your initial efforts to address chemicals in your school.
- Give schools an incentive to participate. This will generate positive interest in the program and increase the likelihood of schools committing to the program.



- Make program outreach accessible. Whether through a Web site, conference/workshop attendance, or one-on-one interaction, the more informed a school is about its options, the more likely it will make the best choices.
- Encourage schools to take responsibility for chemical management costs, whether in full or as a percentage of the total cost. Schools are more likely to sustain their programs if they are financially invested in them.
- Emphasize prevention; it is the only way to sustain current efforts in the future.

For more information regarding this program, please visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/waste/partnerships/sc3/index.htm>

## Have a Great Conference

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Below you will find a very popular newsletter article which I wrote after designing and bringing to successful conclusion dozens of conferences while working in the emergency management field, and after speaking and training at maybe a hundred more conferences nationwide.



Great conferences, the ones people hear about and are sorry they missed, are the key to success for geographically dispersed groups. Any conference will fulfill some basic socialization needs and bring participants physically together, but only a great conference will recharge their batteries and send them home ready to work for another year.

You can't afford to sponsor mediocre conferences, for they become Petri dishes for bitching sessions and revolutions. No, the only conference worth having is a great conference and great conferences are purposefully designed and managed to be great using precise rules.

**#1: Know who is the boss!** One person, no joint command. You can have a committee to help get you support and funding; you can have a policy making group to help get you administrative support; and you can have help. What you cannot have is rule by group, it turns into pooled ignorance. The Pope may have his College of Cardinals and all bishops, but he is still *primus inter pares*. There is no real joint incident command, there is an incident commander where the buck stops and all the rest put in their two cents worth. You need someone to make quick, firm, good decisions, period!

**#2: The boss has a vision!** There are no thrown-together great conferences, but I have been to innumerable thrown-together conferences. But once in a great while I will go to a well conceived conference, one with a definite flow, one with a definite wholeness. When that happens I hunt down the conference manager and congratulate her/him. It is so great to have someone come up to me and say "This is the best conference of any kind that I have been to!" But it is even greater when they say "I know what it takes to design a great conference and I want to congratulate you!"



A vision is a driving force with sequencing and time-management overtones, that allows the manager to do what physicists call a thought experiment and see if a participant will walk away excited, motivated and thrilled to have attended. There are no non-visionary managers of great conferences. Or putting it another way, most bureaucrats make poor conference managers.



**#3: Think years ahead!** Thinking years ahead is the norm for long range planners, and that is what a conference manager is, a long range planner with a specific plan.

Planning two or three years out (provided rule one is in effect and you have power in your hands and it does not reside one echelon above reality, i.e., with your boss; and rule two is in effect, you have a vision that encompasses two or three conferences), allows several things to happen simultaneously.



Second, it cuts your frustration level to its lowest possible point. Last minute glitches are rarely problems when you've been in management mode for a year.

Third, it allows you ample time for repeat visits to the facilities, during which you befriend the staffs and they become familiar with you and your conference.

Fourth and finally, all learning takes place in the space between the activities, so you will have plenty of down time when your non-conscious brain can sift through the web of possibilities and allow you to have creative insights that push your conference to the great level.

**#4: Have a good, dedicated staff on board from day one!** During the conference itself, the manager has no specific duties, everything is handled by staffs, yours and the facilities'.

In order for the staff to be the best, the key players (whoever is handling the registration desk and whoever is taking care of the rooms, audio/visuals and the speakers) have to be on board from the beginning and must have the vision in their heads.



This familiarity allows them to make decisions on their own, decisions that will guarantee that the vision becomes reality. Many conferences, even mine, have faltered because bosses have pulled my dedicated staff and have thrown whomever is left in the office at me for conference staff at the last minute (that is why I now insist on rule number one).

There are too many participant (and even speaker) substitutions and no-shows; too many sleeping and training room problems; too many audio/visual failures; and far too many whiners and complainers and prima donnas at any conference to rely on temps or uncaring staff. Lieutenants (coming from the French for place-takers) should be able to take your place should you die en route to the conference, that defines good staff.



**#5: Storyboard the conference!** One time I worked with an award-winning cinematographer (one who used only real film, not videotape), who insisted on "storyboarding" every scene. I thought he was nuts, until I started using the concept for conferences and training sessions.

Storyboards are cartoonish diagrams of the scene, with players, dialogue, etc. If the vision concretizes the strategy, it is the storyboards or the three-by-five cards that bring the tactics to the reality level.

When you can verbally, visually and emotionally become one with every aspect of your conference, then you not only anticipate and eliminate problems, but you are so comfortable with the real thing that real-time management at the conference is simple, because you've done it all before dozens of times in your head.

This also allows you to brief, with visuals, both extra staff and bosses. For those of us in emergency management, this rule encompasses tabletop and functional exercises, allowing for ease of management of actual events.

**#6: Have a data sheet for speakers!** As a speaker at hundreds of conferences, what I appreciate most is a sheet that meets both my needs and the needs of the conference organizer. That sheet should have all the pertinent data for the speaker and conference personnel: name and date of conference; name of speaker, conference point of contact (POC) and hotel; 24-hour phone numbers for speaker, hotel and POC; location of conference if not at hotel; name of speaker's session/s and its time and place; audio/visual (and other) equipment needs of the speaker; handouts (including, number, who is printing, when camera-ready copy is due to get to conference personnel, etc.); dates of sleeping room reservations; day of arrival; transport too and from airport; any disability-based or dietary considerations; anything else that either the speaker or the conference folks might need to know.



These items need to be double-checked a week or two before the conference. Both as conference manager and speaker, I have found that agenda changes, flight cancellations, family problems and any variety of things have forced specifics to change and there has been a lack of communication that has almost torpedoed a great conference. With e-mail this only take a minute and you will be surprised at the "thanks" you will get because speakers forgot something important.



**#7: Feed them well!** Nothing can ruin a conference quicker than bad food and bad service. Ask the hotel what their most popular items are, then get them. Find a sponsor for the dinner, find grants, find the money somewhere. If necessary charge them.

My rule was “no one leaves the conference from eight to five.” Not that I cared or I counted, but getting hundreds of people out of the conference hall for lunch and back into the conference rooms to start afternoon sessions on time never, ever worked, not even once. So I always provided lunch, a good lunch. If time is a real problem, use the sit-down-approach, otherwise I always used the buffet-approach.

It allowed for greater food variety, while providing another opportunity for networking. For breaks, keep coffee coming all day, at least till three in the afternoon, there are die-hard coffee drinkers out there. Have decaf, hot water for regular and herbal teas, even some juices. Have dietary options. In fact, in your pre-registration, registration and opening remarks, find out if anyone has personal audio/visual, dietary or other disability-related needs that you can help with. An array of juices and sodas in the afternoon, with cookies too, makes for a great afternoon break, as long as there is still coffee!



**Rule Number Eight: Charge them!** Nothing keeps the whole registration process manageable more than a fee. I used to have a lot of no-shows until I started charging non-refundable fees.

They could always send a replacement, but the non-refundability clause sure kept things simple and easy.

It requires having a legal process to take and store money (I did not have one when I started and often used a local affiliated organization’s bank account and then reimbursed them for time and effort).

No credit cards, just checks and purchase orders that would produce checks in due time, no direct deposit. The second advantage of charging a fee (beyond that of stabilizing pre-registration) is having a pool of money from which to buy coffee and snacks, giveaways, prizes, etc. Federal grants will not allow any of that, so registration fees are a necessity.

It is possible to find local funding from interested companies or organizations to cover amenities and complementary food, but that still doesn’t cover the “earnest money” aspect of the registration fee. If it’s worth coming to, it’s worth paying for. You can always use “scholarships” to cover the registration fees of those who cannot afford the registration fee.

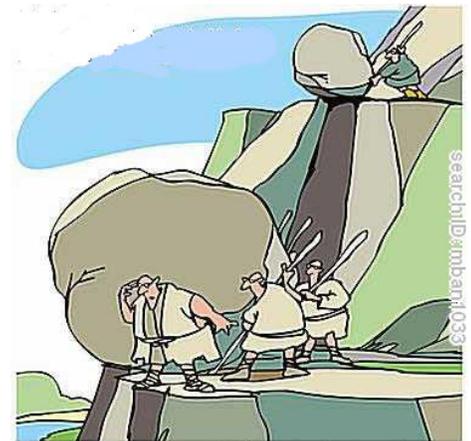
**#9: Always have a backup plan!** If possible, never use a backup speaker, but always have one. And that backup speaker needs to be high quality, high energy and with a message that fits the vision. Always the braggart and showman, that backup person at my conferences was always me.

In the beginning, I trained at my own conferences. Then I learned, my job as conference manager was to have no assigned duties on conference days (see Rule Number Four) and leave the work to the staff. That, fortunately, allowed me to be the backup speaker and I always had a talk ready, since I am a professional speaker and was managing conferences in my areas of expertise.

Before that, however, I always contacted one or two of the conference attendees whom I knew to be great presenters and asked if they would consent to be backup if someone didn’t show. With two people I usually had a variety of talks to fill in. I just had them bring their CDs or laptops, just in case.

Out of fifty conferences, we only had to revert to backups once. But the interesting thing is, I always tell conference managers who hire me that I would be more than willing to be their backup if someone doesn’t show (for no extra charge, of course), and my offer has been taken up quite a few times, even if just to fill time till a speaker arrives from the airport after a flight delay.

**# 10: If possible, have a “by invitation only” conference!** This rule got me in more trouble in ten years than anything else I ever did concerning conferences. But let’s face it, you know when you run a conference that a bunch of slackers will come.



“Don’t worry. The boss said if we miss the target he’s got a backup plan.”

They want to get out of the office or get out of town or something equally offensive to workaholics who run conferences. Find a nice reasonably-sized conference hall (I shoot for 120 maximum, fire marshal capacity).

That alone will cap your conference size. Your vision will define your target audiences. You know you need a good mix. Mine groups were fire, law, EMS, public health, public works and emergency management at the tribal, city, county, state and federal levels.

That meant that I had a potential audience base of many thousands even in Montana. In order to justify "by-invitation-only" I merely had to refine my targeting, by including rural/urban, east/west, north/south, paid/volunteer, etc./etc.

That meant that participation would have to be "controlled" or "managed" in order to have an optimum, appropriate, representative participation, thus giving me "reasonable cause" or justification to invite only people who would add something to the mix. The slackers and whiners always complained, but I guarantee you, no one at the conferences ever complained.

**#11: Pay your speakers well and quickly!** As a professional speaker, this may look like it's purely mercenary, well it's not. Sure, it's mercenary, but not purely! The most speakers' complaints and requests I received as a conference manager were about prompt payment.

I am as guilty as every other conference manager for not following up on the paperwork to make sure that the finance personnel process the checks for the speakers as quickly as possible. Private organizations always pay at the conference, governmental entities don't have that option. Federal contractors and some conferences don't even start processing the paper for thirty days.



Honesty, upfront honesty, is the best rule here. If you know, tell the truth; if you have to guess, guess longer than you expect, add a week or two. Cash flow management is the hardest part of being an independent contractor and professional speaker. Help us out here.

Also, the conferences at which I and all of my speaker friends work at can be evaluated almost exactly by pay scale, good managers find the money to pay good speakers.

When we find someone trying to fudge with the pay scale, then we know that excellence is not main conference criterion and this will be a less than excellent experience. Unfortunately, the participants pick up the same vibes. Misers are no fun!



**#12: If you are going to give a gift, make it memorable!** Cups are cool, clocks are cool, but a good friend of mine got a \$50.00 gift for a pro-bono talk, that was memorable to him (as he told me).

I got a great soft cooler full of Cajun foods and a coffee thermos to drink coffee from as I ate the food, that truly was memorable.

Golf shirts and collared dress-type shirts are memorable. Don't give something they won't remember you by, it is counterproductive. There are probably twelve more rules and maybe I'll write another essay later, but for now, these eleven will help anyone interested design and manage a great conference.

**#13: Be A Time Keeper!** To honor all presenters, and to keep in line, in tow, all those presenters who do not have enough self discipline and respect for the system to keep themselves on schedule, be that person that who politely and gracefully says, "You have five minutes left, Lefty."

Announce at the beginning of the conference that you will be doing that, and maybe even have one of your cohorts do it to you at the beginning of the conference, to level that playing field.

The caterers, the conference staff and all the attendees who have e-mails to check and calls to make will thank you.





**#14: Don't let "contractors" or "program managers" drone on!** These people are not "speakers" or "trainers," they are middle-management or ex-middle-management drones and they will drone on. Hire speakers! Hire trainers! Hire professionals whose job it is to make a difference.

No one in a local community wants to hear a federal official talk about what's going on at Headquarters—or even worse, how they are going to reorganize. No one wants to look at a slide with the whole thousand words of the new regulation. Send those people to the office to help program people. Conferences are to inspire, embolden, motivate—not deaden the senses, glaze over the eyes, and make you wish you were back home.

## *Tips To Decrease Holiday Stress ... and Increase Holiday Joy*

Nearly half of all people in the U.S. experience heightened stress during the holidays and they are less likely to manage that stress in healthy ways, according to a national survey by the American Psychological Association.

If you are prone to experiencing greater stress during the holiday season, consider the suggestions below to lessen holiday stress and increase your enjoyment of the season:



**1. Develop realistic expectations about the holidays.** It is easy to expect too much of the holidays.

When we have expectations which are not met (regardless if they are realistic or not), we may feel disappointed, upset or worse. This contributes to holiday stress.

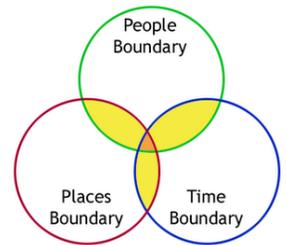
Keep expectations for the holiday season manageable by not trying to make the holidays "perfect." Think about what was stressful last year and how that could be different this year.

**2. Do more of what you enjoy.** Which parts of the holiday season do you want in your life? Which parts would you prefer to do without? Figure out what you want and plan for more of that part in your life.

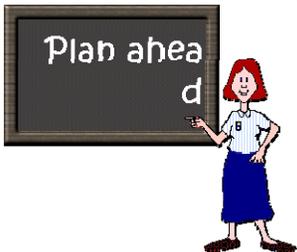
**3. Set boundaries and limits.** Be realistic about what you actually have time for.

Make a list and prioritize the most important activities. Always think before committing to any responsibility or social event.

Learn to say "no" politely but firmly to keep your holiday time manageable.



**4. Develop a holiday budget that is based on what you can afford.** Remind yourself that it is possible for your family to have memorable holiday experiences without spending a great deal of money. Be sure to include all holiday spending in your budget, including big family dinners, wrapping paper, decorations, parties, etc. Stick to your budget.



**5. Plan ahead for potential problems.** Make a list of the problems that continually happen every year.

Then, plan ahead how you are going to handle them.

If your brother and brother-in-law have never gotten along and frequently argue at holiday gatherings, plan ahead how you will respond to this situation.

HAS YOUR LEPC:



- Established a permanent address for facilities, the SERC, and EPA to mail required forms and information;
- Notified the SERC of any changes to the LEPC structure, especially a change in the chair or address;
- Provided EPCRA training to emergency responders, specifically local fire departments who often can provide information to facilities during fire inspections and police departments who respond to haz-mat incidents?
- Established a 24-hour manned emergency phone number (i.e., sheriff's office, 911, fire department) for facilities to make release notifications -- an answering machine is not sufficient

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• Please consult the applicable regulations when determining compliance.  
• Mention of trade names, products, or services does not convey, and should not be interpreted as conveying official EPA approval, endorsement, or recommendation.

**Region 6 Emergency Notification Numbers**

Arkansas Dept. of Emergency Management	800-322-4012
Louisiana State Police	877-925-6595
New Mexico State Police	505-827-9126
Oklahoma Dept. of Environmental Quality	800-522-0206
Texas Environmental Hotline	800-832-8224
*****	
National Response Center	800-424-8802
EPA Region 6	866-372-7745
CHEMTREC	800-424-9300