



## **Torrance County**

### **Local Emergency Planning Committee**

*Chair: Dr. Philip Terry-Smith*

*Vice-Chair: David Dean*

*Secretary: Maria Martinez*

*Information Coordinator: Amy May*

*Emergency Manager: Samantha O'Dell*

This meeting will be available via Zoom. The link may be found on the Torrance County website at [torrancecountynm.org/calendar](http://torrancecountynm.org/calendar).

#### **GENERAL MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, April 28, 2026 @ 9:00am  
205 S. Ninth Street, Estancia, NM 87016

1. Call to Order
  - a. Meeting was called to order by Chair at 9:00am.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Welcome and Introductions
  - a. See sign-in sheets for attendance.
4. Determination of Quorum
  - a. There was not a quorum.
5. Approval of Agenda
  - a. Deferred due to no quorum.
6. Approval of Minutes
  - a. March  
Deferred due to no quorum.
7. Presentation
  - a. Propane Dangers – Dennis South  
Mr. South played a YouTube video titled “Devastating Kingman Explosion”. Mr. South spoke about the potential of what could happen with propane

incidents with all the rail cars moving through the county. It was noted that an incident was rare but would be an extremely bad situation if it did occur. A bleve can happen in any size tank (grass fire reaching a propane tank, BBQ bottle in garage of structure fire, etc.). Mr. South shared pictures and spoke of some of the dangerous situations that he has seen. He recognized that people may be low income and can't afford to fix things properly, so they make do with what they can. Southwest Propane does have a charity fund to assist where they can, but it is limited. Leak checks and safety checks are required but not all companies always perform them. Propane is heavier than air and will travel to any crack it finds. Mercaptan is added to propane at plants before it is ever transported. This is what gives the "rotten eggs smell".

Propane techs are liable for anything that happens related to propane. Techs can face involuntary manslaughter if someone dies due to a propane incident. Mr. South shared handout titled "Propane Service Manager Convicted After Home Explosion".

Mr. South advised that he has invited every fire department in the area of each of their facilities to tour their facility, train with them, see where emergency shutoffs are, etc. He reported that unfortunately none of the fire departments have been willing to participate. Chief Smith advised that he would like to set something up with Mr. South for fire department training.

Mr. South advised that as of April 1, 2026, he is no longer the General Manager of Southwest Propane. Val Lucero is the new General Manager and Mr. South will remain part-time as a consultant.

#### 8. Hazmat Horizon Newsletter

##### a. Leveraging the LEPC

Hidden Hazards, Clear Clues. Samantha spoke about the newsletter article and the relationship with the pipeline companies in the area. Many are attending LEPC on a regular basis.

#### 9. Recent Events

- a. Commissioner Jaramillo asked who was responsible for cleaning up after the recent structure fire in Estancia. Chief Smith expressed concerns about the building having underground areas that could have been dangerous to firefighters had they entered the building. They were not aware of this until after the fire was extinguished.
- b. Samantha recently spoke at the State Rural Water Annual Conference on the importance of water systems having an emergency plan in place and

knowing when to contact the emergency manager. The Socorro County LEPC Chair was also in attendance due to the importance of water and wastewater systems taking part in LEPC. There was discussion about getting invites out to the local water systems and wastewater systems.

- c. Chief Smith advised that there have been multiple grass fires over the past few weeks and the burn ban is still in place.

#### 10. Agency Updates

- a. Debby Maberry advised of an upcoming free diabetic cooking class. Flyers were handed out.

#### 11. Public Forum

- a. There were questions regarding how long the Torrance County Burn Ban was in effect. Chief Smith advised it was put in place for 60 days and the situation would be reevaluated at that time.
- b. Chair Dr. Phil Terry-Smith thanked everyone for attending and understanding the importance of LEPC meetings.

#### 12. Next Meeting – May 26, 2026

#### 13. Adjourn Meeting

- a. Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:05am.