

***** **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** *****

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The Florida Division of Emergency Management and local government officials of Southwest Florida have declared the week of **January 22-28, 2012**, “**Hazardous Materials Awareness Week.**” Hazardous Materials Awareness week is conducted annually in Florida to emphasize the safe use of chemicals and to publicize the importance to plan and prepare for chemical incidents in order to protect public safety and welfare. The theme for this year is minimizing mercury releases.

The Southwest Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council will join emergency responders, government officials, and others to promote chemical safety during Hazardous Materials Awareness Week. Local emergency planning committees were established by the United State Congress to promote chemical safety in communities across America. In honor of Hazardous Materials Awareness Week, local governments across Southwest Florida will be promulgating resolutions and proclamations during their officials meetings to celebrate this period. Also, the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council will join the Southwest Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee in hosting a **How to Comply Workshop** (see attached flier) for the benefit of facilities with chemicals. The facility compliance workshop will be conducted January 27, 2012, 1:00 -3:00 p.m., at 1926 Victoria Avenue in Fort Myers. Individuals interested in learning more about chemical compliance and the reporting requirements associated with the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act are urged to attend the two-hour training event. For additional information regarding these events, please contact John Gibbons at the number provided above.