



# WHEN SECONDS COUNT—PLANNING PAYS OFF

## IOWA’S PLANNERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS GET VITAL INFORMATION FROM E-PLAN

When disaster hits, emergency managers have seconds to act.

In the past, first responders could arrive at the scene not knowing the chemical hazard they faced. Sometimes they had to get someone out of bed and wait for them to run to the office and retrieve the information.

With [E-Plan](#), HAZMAT (hazardous materials) teams, fire departments, police and emergency managers rush to respond—retrieving chemical inventories on the way. By the time they arrive, they know what products are onsite and where they are stored.

### Overview

E-Plan provides online access to chemical inventories. The instant access protects the response team as they choose the gear and response they need. And, it protects the community.

Most of the time, local response agencies use E-Plan to prepare for events they hope will never happen. Planning ensures communities have the specific resources and training they need. Local emergency planning committees (LEPCs) use annual chemical inventory reports on the storage, use and releases of hazardous substances. Reporting is required under the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act ([EPCRA](#)).



*First responders use E-Plan, an online system, to figure out how to respond to a hazardous (Tier II) chemical release.*

When a company has hazardous chemicals, the owner or operator must collect [information](#) and submit a Tier II report with specific information about each chemical. Reporting is required for smaller amounts of extremely hazardous chemicals, such as ammonia. There are some exemptions such as food or food additives.

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*“The E-Plan system is more convenient and easy to use compared to the previous method of filing.”*

*—Mona Bond, facility submitter*

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### Why E-Plan is Essential

- Provides vital information for first responders
- Saves time. Saves lives.
- Always available—in seconds, 24/7
- Replaces thousands of paper records
- Essential for planning
- Ensures availability of proper equipment and training
- Helps determine adjacent vulnerable populations, e.g., schools
- Identifies physical and health hazards
- Efficient and cost-saving for 4,600 companies to report

E-Plan is a fast, accurate and convenient way to organize the annual reports required by state, federal and local governments. Chemical lists are available—at your fingertips—24/7 for first responders. E-Plan replaces piles of paper which previously had to be scanned and saved.

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*“The time savings are not insignificant. And, I suspect there are fewer errors...such as mailing them to the wrong county. The savings in paper, ink, envelopes and postage...must be huge as well.”*

*—Penny Vossler, Boone County GIS coordinator*

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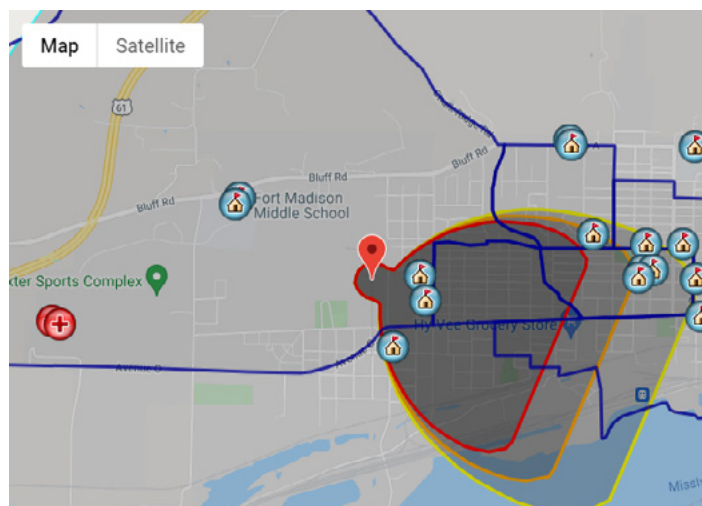
## Emergency Response

In addition to Tier II data, E-Plan instantly makes available other important information, such as:

- Maps of the area surrounding a fixed facility showing schools and hospitals
- Facility Emergency Response Plans including diagrams and floor plans
- Safety Data Sheets for thousands of chemicals
- Emergency Response Guidebook pages
- National Fire Protection Association codes.

*“Another feature I really like is the ability to demonstrate the ‘Plume’ scenarios. This will be the highlight of our first LEPC discussion, and this demonstration and discussion will develop into an actual tabletop exercise.”*

—Brian Hall,  
Emergency Management Coordinator,  
Louisa County



E-Plan creates maps of the spill site, including the locations of hospitals and schools where vulnerable populations may need to be evacuated. The maps incorporate wind speed and direction to show three plumes--from the likely most contaminated area to the least.

## Reporting

Approximately 4,600 Iowa businesses have been using E-Plan since 2019. While there's a mix of companies including petroleum, chemical and manufacturing facilities, the most hazardous chemicals come from the agricultural, water and wastewater, and telecommunications sectors.

## Companies with Extremely Hazardous Substances

Company Type	Number of Companies	Top Three Extremely Hazardous Substances
Ag Co-ops	919	Ammonia
Drinking water and wastewater treatment plants	153	Chlorine
Manufacturing companies	> 2500	May have sulfuric acid in forklifts
Telecommunications, power companies and windfarms	854	Sulfuric Acid
Petroleum and Chemical	100	Varies

E-Plan has been a welcomed improvement—allowing companies to submit an electronic form to one website instead of mailing paper forms and Tier II HAZMAT sheets to DNR and multiple counties.

After two years, companies found using E-Plan was efficient, saving staff time and effort. One feature they really like is being able to replicate the previous year's submission and make minor changes at that time.

The DNR is providing E-Plan to these companies free-of-charge. However, DNR absorbs the administrative costs and annual costs of using E-Plan software.

*“This program has also allowed better access to important information needed by Local Emergency Planning Committees and HAZMAT Teams.*

—Doug Bahr, Cargill, EHS Professional

## Resources

For more information, check DNR's Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act webpage ([EPCRA](#)). Or, find information about [E-Plan](#).

