

Are you ready?

# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

## Learning how to shelter in place

### At Home

The appropriate steps depend on the emergency situation. If you hear a warning signal, listen to local radio or television stations for further information. You will be told what to do, including where to find the nearest shelter if you are away from your "shelter-in-place" location.

If you are told to "shelter-in-place," act quickly. Follow the instructions of local authorities. In general:

Bring children and pets indoors immediately. If your children are at school, do not try to bring them home unless told to. The school will shelter them.

Close and lock all outside doors and windows. Locking may provide a tighter seal.

If you are told there is danger of explosion, close the window shades, blinds, or curtains.

Turn off the heating, ventilation, or air conditioning system. Turn off all fans, including bathroom fans operated by the light switch.

Close the fireplace or woodstove damper. Become familiar with proper operation of flues and dampers ahead of time.

Get your disaster supplies kit, and make sure the radio is working.

The room should have 10 square feet of floor space per person in order to provide sufficient air to prevent carbon dioxide buildup for 5 hours. In this room, you should store scissors, plastic sheeting pre-cut to fit over any windows or vents and rolls of duct tape to secure the plastic. Access to a water supply is desirable, as is a working hard-wired telephone. Don't rely on cell phones because cellular telephone circuits may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency. Also, a power failure will render most cordless phones inoperable.

Take everyone, including pets, into an interior room with no or few windows and shut the door.

If you have pets, prepare a place for them to relieve themselves where you are taking shelter. Pets should not go outside during a chemical or radiation emergency because it is harmful to them and they may track contaminants into your shelter. The Humane Society of the United States suggests that you have plenty of plastic bags and newspapers, as well as containers and cleaning supplies, to help deal with pet waste.

If you are instructed to seal the room, use duct tape and plastic sheeting, such as heavy-duty plastic garbage bags, to seal all cracks around the door into the room. Tape plastic over any windows. Tape over any vents and seal electrical outlets and other openings. As much as possible, reduce the flow of air into the room.

Make sure all family members know what to do in an emergency whether they are at home, school, work, or outdoors. This includes knowing the number of an out-of-town friend or relative who has agreed to serve as an emergency contact. It can be easier to reach someone out of town during an emergency than to reach someone locally, including family members. The contact can collect the information on where and how everybody is and help reassure and reunite families.

Call your emergency contact and keep the phone handy in



case you need to report a life-threatening condition. Otherwise stay off the phone, so that the lines will be available for use by emergency responders.

Keep listening to your radio or television until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Do not evacuate unless instructed to do so.

When you are told that the emergency is over, open windows and doors, turn on ventilation systems, and go outside until the building's air has been exchanged with the now clean outdoor air. Follow any special instructions given by emergency authorities to avoid chemical or radiological contaminants outdoors.

### At School

The appropriate steps depend on the emergency situation. If you hear a warning signal, listen to local radio or television stations for further information. You will be told what to do, including where to find the nearest shelter if you are away from your "shelter-in-place" location.

Check with the school or day-care center to learn their plans for dealing with a hazardous materials emergency. Their "shelter-in-place" plans should include the following:

Close the school. Activate the school's emergency plan. Follow reverse evacuation procedures to bring students, faculty and staff indoors.

If visitors are in the building, provide for their safety by asking them to stay.

Ideally, have access to the school-wide public address system in the room where the top school official takes shelter.

Have at least one telephone line under the school's listed telephone number in one of the shelter rooms available for a designated person to answer the calls of concerned parents. If time permits, it is not possible for a person to monitor the telephone and the school has voicemail or an automated attendant, change the recording to indicate that the school is closed and that students and staff are remaining in the building until authorities say it is safe to leave.

Classrooms may be used if there are no windows or the windows are sealed and cannot be opened. Large storage closets, utility rooms, or meeting

rooms could be used. A gymnasium without exterior windows would also work well. Access to bathrooms is a plus.

Have all children, staff and visitors take shelter in pre-selected rooms that have phone access and stored disaster supplies kits and, preferably, access to a bathroom. Shut the doors.

Have all shelter rooms closed. Lock all windows, exterior doors and any other openings to the outside.

If told there is danger of explosion, make sure window shades, blinds or curtains are closed.

Turn off heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems. Systems that automatically provide for exchange of inside air with outside air must be turned off, sealed or disabled.

If instructed by officials, use duct tape and plastic sheeting to seal all cracks around the door(s), windows and vents into the room. As much as possible, reduce the flow of air into the room.

If children have cell phones, allow them to use them to call a parent or guardian to let them know that they have been asked to remain in school until further notice and that they are safe. This may reduce the potential number of incoming calls.

Schools should assign one or two people to collect information on who is in the building when an emergency happens so that first responders can know everyone is accounted for, if necessary

One teacher or staff member in each room should write down the names of everyone in the room and call the school's designated emergency contact to report who is in that room.

Everyone should stay in the room until school officials, via the public address system, announce that all is safe or say everyone must evacuate.

Once the word has been given that all is safe, everyone should go outside when the building's ventilation systems are turned back on. Follow any special instructions given by emergency authorities to avoid chemical and radiological contaminants outdoors.

### In the Workplace

The appropriate steps depend on the emergency situation. If you hear a warning signal, listen to local radio or television stations for further information. You will be told what to do, including where to find the nearest shelter if you are away from your "shelter-in-place" location.

Check with your workplace to learn their plans for dealing with a hazardous materials emergency. Their "shelter-in-place" plans should include the following:

Employers should close the office, making any customers, clients or visitors in the building aware that they need to stay until the emergency is over. Close and lock all windows, exterior doors and any other openings to the outside.

Avoid overcrowding by pre-selecting several interior rooms with the fewest number of windows or vents. The appropriate location depends entirely on the emergency situation. If a chemical has been released, you should take shelter in a room above ground level, because some chemicals are heavier than air and may seep below ground. On the other hand, if there are radioactive particles in the air, you should choose a centrally located room or basement. Knowing what to do under specific circumstances is an important part of being prepared. The rooms should have adequate space for everyone to be able to sit, including an estimated number of visitors. Large storage closets, utility rooms, pantries, break rooms and copy and conference rooms without exterior windows would work well. Access to bathrooms is a plus. It is ideal to have hard-wired telephones in the rooms you select; use cordless phones (but not cell phones—the system may be overloaded in an emergency), if necessary. The rooms should be equipped with a disaster supplies kit.

A knowledgeable person should use the building's mechanical systems to turn off all heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems. The systems that automatically provide for exchange of inside air with outside air, in particular, need to be

turned off, sealed or disabled.

Unless there is an imminent threat, employers should ask employees, customers, clients and visitors to call their emergency contacts to let them know where they are and that they are safe.

If time permits and it is not possible for a person to monitor the telephone, turn on call-forwarding or alternative telephone answering systems or services. If the business has voicemail or an automated attendant, it should be switched to a recording that indicates that the business is closed and that staff and visitors are remaining in the building until authorities advise it is safe to leave.

If you are told there is danger of explosion, close any window shades, blinds or curtains near your workspace.

Take your workplace disaster supplies kits and go to your pre-determined sheltering room(s) and, when everyone is in, shut and lock the doors. There should be radios or TVs in the room(s).

Turn on the radios or TVs. If instructed to do so by officials, use duct tape and plastic sheeting, such as heavy-duty plastic garbage bags, to seal all cracks around the door(s) and any vents into the room. Seal any windows and/or vents with sheets of plastic and duct tape. As much as possible, reduce the flow of air into the room.

Businesses should assign one or two people to collect information on who is in the building when an emergency happens so that first responders can know everyone is accounted for, if necessary.

One person per room should write down the names of everyone in the room. Call your business-designated emergency contact to report who is in the room with you and their affiliation with your business (employee, visitor, client, customer).

Keep listening to the radio or watching TV for updates until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate.

When you are told that all is safe, open windows and doors, turn on heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems and go outside until the building's air has been exchanged with the now-clean outdoor air. Follow any special instructions given by emergency authorities to avoid chemical or radiological

contaminants outdoors.

### In a Vehicle

Admittedly, taking shelter in a vehicle may be an uncomfortable experience, particularly in very hot or very cold weather. Still, such discomfort is safer than possibly exposing yourself to chemical or radiological contaminants in the outside air. Having a portable disaster supplies kit in your vehicle could make the experience less unpleasant.

The appropriate steps depend on the emergency situation. If you hear a warning signal, listen to local radio or television stations for further information. You will be told what to do, including where to find the nearest shelter if you are away from your "shelter-in-place" location.

If you are very close to home, your workplace or a public building, go there immediately and go inside. Follow the "shelter-in-place" recommendations for that location.

If you are unable to get indoors quickly and safely, then pull over to the side of the road. Stop your vehicle in the safest place possible. If it is sunny outside, it is preferable to stop under a bridge or in a shady spot to avoid being overheated.

Turn off the engine. Close windows and vents. If possible, seal the heating, ventilating, and air conditioning vents with duct tape or anything else you may have available.

Listen to the radio periodically for updated advice and instructions. (Modern car radios consume very little battery power and should not affect your ability to start your car later.)

Stay where you are until you are told it is safe to get back on the road. Be aware that some roads may be closed or traffic detoured. Follow the directions of law enforcement officials.

Supplies for your vehicle could include:

Bottled water and non-perishable foods such as granola bars.

Seasonal supplies: Winter - blanket, hat, mittens, shovel, sand, tire chains, windshield scraper, florescent distress flag; Summer - sunscreen lotion (SPF 15 or greater), shade item (umbrella, wide brimmed hat, etc).

Flashlight, extra batteries, and maps.

Disasters are hard to predict and usually are out of your control. But you can take steps to keep you and your family safe.



#### Preparing for disaster

Learn about specific health threats and what you can do to reduce the risk to your health and safety. Make an emergency plan. Learn basic first aid skills such as CPR. Always look to local authorities and health experts for specific, up-to-date information for your area.

We're here to help when you need us.



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Cottage Grove  
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## PUT TOGETHER A PLAN

Make sure all the pieces are in place to render you and your family prepared in the event of a natural disaster.

- Listen to radio or television newscasts for the latest weather information, and follow all evacuation directions and suggestions.
- Keep a stock of non-perishable food items as well as bottled water on hand inside your home.
- Keep a 72 Hour Kit on hand inside your home that is easy to get to in the event of a disaster.

For more information and tips on disaster response and preparedness, contact your local emergency services center.

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