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The guide is intended to be a fast action guide for the various disasters that could happen in your area. I would recommend printing out the guide and putting it with your important papers. Of course, the location where you live may not experience every one of these types of events. But, weather and climate conditions are unpredictable, and as the saying goes...There's always a first time for everything...

Develop A Personal Evacuation Plan

Of course, much of this course on survival is based on you riding out the crisis in your residence. However, natural disasters often bring the need for people to evacuate. That is one reason Bug out bags are so important.

But equally important is making a plan for how to get out of your town if it becomes necessary for you and your family's survival.



The first thing you are going to need is some good old fashioned maps. Either buy some or print maps of your neighborhood, the area around your workplace, your children's school, an elderly relative's home or any other area you may need to get to in an emergency. Yes, we have all come to rely on our GPS in the car or on our phone, but there is no guarantee either will be functional in a crisis. So, we have to go low tech.

Most of us never really look at these areas with 'seeing eyes'. Because they are so familiar, we just pass through the streets on auto-pilot. During a crisis, your survival may depend on knowing the danger zones or chokepoints where you can get stuck in gridlock.

Much like we did when we gave you the exercise of noticing alternative sources of water in your neighborhood, you will want to make a written note of the following:

1. Concentrations of graffiti or gang activity.
2. Streets/roads/intersections that get congested easily.
3. Railroad tracks.
4. HC (Hazardous Cargo) routes on highways/interstates.
5. Locations of chemical plants, refineries, and fuel storage.
6. Other threats and dangers in your area.

There's another category of choke points that will also be an issue in disaster situations, and those would be bridges and canyons where an accident shuts down all traffic, places where the number of lanes of traffic goes down, and construction areas.

Did you know that many major cities have chokepoints engineered into the city's design? This is so that officials can control movement in and out during times of disaster or crisis. These areas can be blocked off or, in the case of bridges, blown up even.

An increasing number of smaller towns are pre-positioning concrete barricades or have heavy equipment ready to place barricades to block bridges and other choke points to keep "city people" from over-running them in the event of a local, regional, or national disaster. Through my survival groups I have personal knowledge of several towns across the country instituting these type of precautions. The point is that residents of small towns outside of large population centers know what's going to happen if there's a disaster. They read survival guides too, and they know that waves of people from the cities will be heading to their hills, and they don't want to deal with it. Their towns are incapable of dealing with it.

Small towns have small town infrastructure and aren't designed to handle a population explosion. They know that in order to survive, they're going to have to make the hard decision of turning away city people. Even city people who only want to get to their retreat locations. If you can leave the city before there's a problem, that's your best course of action but if you can't, you'd better be prepared to survive in place. The main, backup, and smaller routes to your rural retreat may not be passable due to rural people trying to protect their towns and families.



Railroad Tracks

If any of your locations are within a mile of any railroad tracks, you need to develop a plan to deal with the aftermath of a rail accident. Terrorist websites have been promoting the use of homemade thermite to cut rail lines or weld debris to rail lines in urban areas to derail trains suspected of carrying hazardous cargo. These sites are also promoting attacks on industrial chemical storage facilities. If you live/work near a rail line, you should know that a crash/toxic leak is a possibility and decide what your response would be if a large scale chemical release happens.

Buildings Likely To Become Shelters

Avoid large groups of people in need. In particular:

1. Stadiums
2. Homeless Shelters
3. Schools
4. Auditoriums
5. Any area designated as a Red Cross Shelter
6. Hospitals
7. Churches

After Katrina, many churches were forced by the city to provide services to whoever the city brought to them. This was fine when the churches had food, toiletries, and the plumbing worked. It wasn't fine when problems of long-term survival developed because of such a large group of people using facilities never intended for such use and the city wouldn't let the churches send people home. Many churches became a hotbed of crime.

Unless you're actively working at one in a relief capacity, you'll be better off avoiding the area around all of these facilities. Why? Well, it's where panicked people trying to get in will be. It's where people looking for handouts/victims will be hunting for their next mark. It's also where people who got kicked out of the facility for fighting or using drugs will be congregating. From Katrina we know drug dealers will be peddling to refugees from the shelters.

Your area may be different. If an emergency happens in your area and you decide to go to a church, listen to your gut. If it doesn't feel safe as you're approaching or while you're there, leave immediately.

Mark all the danger zones on your map and then come up with at least two alternate routes to evacuate.

Conduct practice drills to ensure that all members of your family are clear about what they need to do and where they need to go during a safety evacuation. Remember, disasters seldom happen when the family is all together in one place. You and your spouse could be at work, and your children could be in schools all over town.

- Secure your home. Just because you are evacuating doesn't mean you shouldn't secure and lock all doors and windows. Many homeowners return to find their house intact and damage free while the places half a block down are demolished. Plan to return, and that means securing valuables and entries.
- Unless you are telepathic and have anticipated the disaster, chances are you will be evacuating with many other people who all share the same goal as you. That is why it is so vital that you scout as many routes as possible beforehand to ensure you avoid crowded interstates and thoroughfares. The best time to investigate these routes is when there is no disaster. Pay especially close attention to potential choke points such as bridges.
- Keep at least one of your vehicles fueled at all times –don't be stuck in a line of motorists waiting for dwindling fuel supplies when you should be driving away. Longer you wait for gas the more chocked the roads will be by the time you finally get on the move again.
- Keep a bug out bag packed for each person in your family with at least 3 days worth of food and water per person, as well as handheld communications, personal protection weapons, and warm clothing.
- If there is something you can't live without, such as a precious heirloom, then pack it before hand if it is small enough. Realize that great grandpa's baby grand piano might not make it.
- Finally, **know where you are going.** You must have at least two planned rally destinations to evacuate to that are well outside of the hurricane's path of destruction, and also away from lines of drift that other refugees might take. Evacuating your home and having no plan for a place to go could potentially result in disaster. Plan this out long before the event happens.

Earthquakes

When most people think of earthquakes, they think of California and Alaska, but more and more states that have rarely experienced an earthquake are being hit by them. A new United States Geological Survey study has found that middle America between Alabama and Montana is experiencing an "unprecedented" and "almost certainly manmade" increase in earthquakes of 3.0 magnitude or greater. That happens to

coincide with increased oil and gas production using new extraction techniques in some parts of the area. So, just because you've never had an earthquake where you live does not mean you will never experience one.

Indoor Safety

If you are inside, stay inside. DO NOT run outside or to other rooms during shaking. In MOST situations, you will reduce your chance of injury from falling objects and even building collapse if you immediately:

- **DROP down onto your hands and knees** before the earthquake knocks you down. This position protects you from falling but allows you to still move if necessary.
- **COVER your head and neck** (and your entire body if possible) get down near an interior wall or next to low-lying furniture that won't fall on you, curl up, and cover your head and neck with your arms and hands.
- **HOLD ON to your shelter** (or to your head and neck) until the shaking stops.

Contrary to what you may have heard **DO NOT stand in a doorway.** You are safer under a table. In modern houses, doorways are no stronger than any other part of the house. The doorway does not protect you from the most likely source of injury, falling or flying objects. Most earthquake-related injuries and deaths are caused by falling or flying objects (e.g., TVs, lamps, glass, bookcases), or by being knocked to the ground.

You can take other actions, even while an earthquake is happening, that will reduce your chances of being hurt.

- If possible within the few seconds before shaking intensifies, quickly move away from glass and hanging objects, and bookcases, china cabinets, or other large furniture that could fall. Watch for falling objects, such as bricks from fireplaces and chimneys, light fixtures, wall hangings, high shelves, and cabinets with doors that could swing open.
- If available nearby, grab something to shield your head and face from falling debris and broken glass.
- If you are in the kitchen, quickly turn off the stove and take cover at the first sign of shaking.
- If you are in bed, roll off the end, curl up, and protect your head with a pillow. You are less likely to be injured staying where you are. Broken glass on the floor has caused injury to those who tried to get to doorways.

Outdoor Safety

If you are outside, stay outside, and stay away from buildings. The area near the exterior walls of a building is the most dangerous place to be. Windows, facades and architectural details are often the first parts of the building to collapse. Also, shaking can be so strong that you will not be able to move far without falling down, and objects may fall or be thrown at you. Stay inside if you are inside; outside if you are outside.

If outdoors, move away from buildings, utility wires, sinkholes, and fuel and gas lines. The greatest danger from falling debris is just outside doorways and close to outer walls. Once in the open, get down low (to avoid being knocked down by strong shaking) and stay there until the shaking stops.

Automobiles

If you are in a moving automobile, stop as quickly and safely as possible. Move your car to the shoulder or curb, away from utility poles, overhead wires, and under or overpasses. Stay in the car and set the parking brake. Turn on the radio for emergency broadcast information. A car may jiggle violently on its springs, but it is a good place to stay until the shaking stops. If a power line falls on the car, stay inside until a trained person removes the wire.

When you drive on roads and freeways, watch for hazards created by the earthquake, such as breaks in the pavement, downed utility poles and wires, rising water levels, fallen overpasses and collapsed bridges.

Afterwards

1. Help anyone that is injured. Do not move them until help arrives unless there is a likelihood that they will be hurt by damaged building parts.
2. Check for gas and water leaks. You should have tools to turn off your utilities stored near your shut-off valves.
3. Avoid using anything that causes a spark until you are sure you do not have any leaking gas.
4. If you turned your gas off, do not turn it back on. You need the gas company to do it.
5. Don't use the phone unless you need assistance. If you do not have service, send someone for help.
6. Remember that it may be some time before help arrives.
7. If you are trapped, stay still and keep your mouth and nose covered to avoid breathing too much dust.

8. Tap on walls or metal pipes to attract attention. Shouting will exhaust you quickly and you will breath in dust that may be toxic.

Tsunami

A tsunami is a series of destructive and very dangerous waves that result from earthquake activity or some other type of underwater disturbance.

1. Move inland, and to high ground. Immediately leave the coast, lagoons or other bodies of water next to the coast. This means going up to higher ground and even into hills or mountains. Always head away from the coast and keep moving inland.
2. Climb high. If you cannot head inland because you are trapped, head to the top of the structure.
3. Climb a sturdy tree. As a very last resort, if you find yourself trapped and unable to move inland or climb a high building, find a strong and tall tree and climb up it as high as you can.

If you are caught up in the water:

- Grab onto something that floats.
- Abandon belongings. Save lives, not possessions.
- Keep away until the "all clear" signal is broadcast.
- Try to get reliable information. Listen to the radio for updates; do not trust word of mouth.

Safety authorities may not have a chance to get warnings and evacuation procedures implemented. Be responsible and do your best to keep yourself and your family, friends and colleagues safe. Natural signs that herald the possibility of a coming tsunami include:

1. An earthquake. If you live in a coastal zone, the occurrence of an earthquake should be immediate cause for alarm and evasive action.
2. A rapid rise and fall in coastal waters. If the sea suddenly recedes (draws back), leaving bare sand, this is a major warning sign that there is about to be a sudden surge of water inland.
3. Animal behavior changes. Watch for animals leaving the area or behaving abnormally, such as trying to seek human shelter or grouping together in ways they would not normally.

Floods

Many are surprised to learn that flash floods are the top weather related cause of deaths. Flooding occurs in every state, and life-threatening floods are not limited only to areas that have been designated high risk areas. While there may be warning for some flooding, flash floods occur very quickly, making this type of flooding the most dangerous.

Flood Warning Terms

One of the ways that you can stay safe during potential flooding is to understand the information that is being presented by authorities. Below is a list of some flood warning terms that you should understand.

Flash Flood Watch: This means that all of the conditions necessary to produce a flash flood exist. If you hear a flash flood watch is in effect you should start paying very close attention to your NOAA radio or your local news station.

Flash Flood/Flood Warning: A flood warning is issued when flooding is going to happen within 6 hours. This means that a flood is imminent.

Flood Hazard: You may hear the authorities discussing flood hazards. This is the degree to which damage or loss of life is likely.

There are 3 basic types of evacuation orders. Your local radio station will keep you advised of flood warnings as well as evacuation orders.

Voluntary: A voluntary evacuation means that flooding is not imminent, but that conditions exist that could cause flooding. This type of evacuation order leaves room for your own discretion and can be updated to a mandatory evacuation order should the conditions change.

Mandatory: When a mandatory evacuation order is issued that means that flooding is imminent. If such an order is issued for your area, it means that your home is potentially in the path of the flooding. While you will not be forcibly removed from your home, should you choose to stay no assistance will be provided by local police or fire departments.

Forced: This type of evacuation is rarely ordered, but when it is you should definitely leave. By the time a forced evacuation is issued, ALL people, including first responders,

are told to leave. If you leave, shut off your electricity at the meter. Shut the gas off only if the authorities advise you to do so.

Usually there are free sandbags available to keep the floodwaters out of your house. If a flood is likely to block off all of the routes in and out of your neighborhood, it is best to evacuate. Even if your home incurs no damage, you could be trapped with no way to leave for several days or weeks after the flood.

Before the water comes seal off all hazardous chemicals you may have in your sheds or garage.

This is common sense, but if you or someone in your home has a medical condition, is elderly, or if there are small children in your home then you should err on the side of caution and evacuate. Even if your home does not flood, a flood in the surrounding areas could make it difficult to get medical attention for days or even weeks following a flood.

Side Effects Of Flooding

By now you have realized all disasters are usually accompanied by other 'gotcha' type of events that disrupt normal life and can threaten your family's survival. The side effects can be just as dangerous as the flooding itself. Here are some examples.

- Contaminated water: If your area has flooded – even if your street has not – the water could very well be contaminated. Do NOT drink the water until you get an ok from officials that it is safe to do so.
- Closed roads: If the roads in your community are closed due to damage from flooding, then trucks will not be able to make their deliveries. You will not be able to buy food and the other things that you need.
- Limited access to medical care and public safety services: This could be due to closed roads or simply that the hospitals, police and fire departments are overwhelmed and cannot keep up with all of the regions need. During Sandy in New York City many hospitals were forced to close because the flooding kept their emergency generators from functioning.
- Being homebound: Even if your home doesn't flood, you could still be homebound for several days. Experts say that you shouldn't try to wade through flood water unless absolutely necessary. You also shouldn't drive through flooded streets – even if the water doesn't appear to be very deep. Looks can be deceiving and many people have died trying to drive through flood waters that appeared quite shallow.

- Sanitation concerns: Your septic system could be flooded. Flushing a toilet could be a disaster. Following a flood it is a good idea to have your septic system checked out before you begin using it again.

While you should have a preparedness plan that covers many types of disasters, there are some things to keep in mind that are specific to flooding.

1. Keep part of your stockpile of food, water and other supplies in the highest part of your home. Should you need to quickly move to the higher floors – or to the attic – you will at least have some supplies with you.
2. Keep tools that will allow you to cut through the ceiling and roof. There are many instances of people dying because they moved to the attic and became trapped. Many of these could have been saved if they had the right tools with them.

If You Are On The Road

- 6" of water will be high enough to begin seeping into the interior of most cars. This could cause your engine to stall. A foot of water can pick your car up and cause it to float. If the water is quick moving and 2' deep, even most trucks and SUVs can be washed away.
- If the water is rising and your car stalls, abandon it and get to dry land.

Hurricanes

Hurricanes that make landfall in populated areas are nearly always destructive, and the consequences from the event remain long after the hurricane has dissipated, and skies have cleared. A hurricane has two major impacts – an immediate impact, and a post disaster phase that depending on the damage, could last years. The immediate impact of a hurricane packs a tremendous punch:

- High Winds
- Rainfall causing inland flooding
- Storm Surge
- Marine hazards
- Tornadoes

Hurricanes are equal opportunity destroyers. The only successful strategy for surviving an incoming hurricane is evacuation, which works essentially 100% of the time.

There are a couple of conditions where evacuation is a no brainer. If you live in a mobile or manufactured home. If you live in a high rise building. The winds only get stronger the higher you are off the ground. Living right on the shore, near a river or on an inland water way is another reason to leave.



If you decide to stay, your first priority is to counteract the effects of hurricane force wind and debris. On a practical level, this means reinforcing doors so that they remain shut, using metal door jambs on exterior doors, and also sealing up all window openings. Window shutters need to be made well in advance of an approaching storm and pre-fitted to ensure they fit. In a pinch, they are usually made of 1/2" or thicker plywood and

screwed to the window frames. A much better solution in areas frequently visited by storms are rolling metal storm shutters.

Identify on the property where the gas, power and water utility shutoffs are. Have tools readily available and on hand to shut these valves off – check in advance to see if they fit.

Plan for water intrusion and flooding. This means moving water sensitive items to the second floor or attic. Keep in mind that in a heavy flood situation, you yourself might be moving into the second floor or attic, and this means storing a minimum of an axe or sledge hammer inside the home for use as an escape tool in case the waters rise and you are trapped within.

Identify an area inside the home that will be safe to shelter in during the worst of the storm. This means a place with no exterior windows, like an interior hallway or closet.

You should have as much food and water on hand as is possible. Remember, you're riding out a hurricane at home – when it's passed, your neighborhood will never look the same. Riding out the storm means being in the worst parts of both phases– immediate damage and reconstruction phase.

Keep plenty of tarps, lumber, and construction material on hand to repair damage temporarily after the storm passes. Your home might survive, but a six foot hole in the roof or side of the house when the rain is coming down in buckets doesn't match anyone's definition of fun.

During the hurricane:

1. If you have a safe room, this is one of the eventualities you created it for.
2. Close all interior doors and brace the exterior ones.
3. If not, take refuge in an interior room without windows on the lower floor. Not the basement.
4. Don't go out until you hear the "All Clear" from NOAA. Hurricanes have an eye that often comes with no wind and bright sunshine. The rest of the storm is still coming.

Afterwards, all the warnings about watching out for downed power lines, gas leaks, damaged trees and/or buildings apply.

Tornadoes

One of the main problems that you may face as you work to prepare for a tornado is that this type of storm often comes with very little warning. Still, there are steps that you can take to ensure that you and your family will survive a tornado and that you will have what you need to get by in the weeks that follow.

Tornadoes do not just follow a straight path. If they did, it would be easy to determine exactly where the tornado was going next and to evacuate everyone in the tornado's path. Instead, tornadoes can move in any direction. They can change direction and even backtrack over a spot where the storm has already caused damage. This makes it much more difficult to predict exactly where a tornado may cause damage.

Invest in a weather radio that can be operated from various power sources such as battery, hand cranking and solar power. As we mentioned, your phone can receive these weather alerts as well.

If you live in an area where tornadoes are more common, you may need to consider installing a storm shelter. If your home is solidly built and has a concrete basement, that can serve as your storm shelter.

Tornado Danger Signs

- Dark sky with a greenish tinge.
- Large hail.
- A large cloud descending from the cloud cover. This may or may not be showing signs of rotation.
- Loud rumbling or roar like a freight train.

During A Tornado

1. Go to your shelter, basement or safe room.
2. Put as many walls between you and the outside as possible.
3. Cover your body with a blanket or mattress and your head and neck with your hands. If you have a bicycle helmet, so much the better.
4. Keep windows closed.

Buildings like malls, auditoriums, and the like are particularly dangerous during tornados because their roofs are supported primarily by the outside walls. The force of the tornado usually causes them to collapse. If you are in one of these buildings when a tornado is imminent, stay away from the windows. Get to the bottom level, preferably the basement. Take shelter behind something that will deflect the debris around you. Remember to protect your head.

If you are in a vehicle, do not try to out run a tornado. It can pick your car up like a toy. Mobile homes are another problematical situation. They offer little protection and are easily pulled off their foundations. You are almost better off outside.

Wildfires

More and more people are making their homes in woodland settings, in or near forests, rural areas, or remote mountain sites. There, homeowners enjoy the beauty of the environment but face the very real danger of wildfire.

Practice Wildfire Safety

People start most wildfires - find out how you can promote and practice wildfire safety.

- Make sure that fire vehicles can get to your home. Clearly mark all driveway entrances and display your name and address.
- Report hazardous conditions that could cause a wildfire.
- Teach children about fire safety. Keep matches out of their reach.

- Ensure adequate accessibility by large fire vehicles to your property.
- Plan several escape routes away from your home - by car and by foot.
- Talk to your neighbors about wildfire safety. Plan how the neighborhood could work together after a wildfire. Make a list of your neighbors' skills such as medical or technical. Consider how you could help neighbors who have special needs such as elderly or disabled persons. Make plans to take care of children who may be on their own if parents can't get home.

Create A Safety Zone Around Your Home

Within this area, you can take steps to reduce potential exposure to flames and radiant heat. Homes built in pine forests should have a minimum safety zone of 100 feet. If your home sits on a steep slope, standard protective measures may not suffice.

Plan your water needs

1. Identify and maintain an adequate outside water source such as a small pond, cistern, well, swimming pool, or hydrant.
2. Have a garden hose that is long enough to reach any area of the home and other structures on the property.
3. Install freeze-proof exterior water outlets on at least two sides of the home and near other structures on the property. Install additional outlets at least 50 feet from the home.
4. Consider obtaining a portable gasoline powered pump in case electrical power is cut off.

When Wildfire Threatens

- Back your car into the garage or park it in an open space facing the direction of escape. Shut doors and roll up windows. Leave the key in the ignition. Close garage windows and doors, but leave them unlocked. Disconnect automatic garage door openers.
- Confine pets to one room. Make plans to care for your pets in case you must evacuate.

- Arrange temporary housing at a friend or relative's home outside the threatened area.

Ice Storms

Extremely cold temperatures often accompany a winter storm, so you may have to cope with power failures and icy roads. Many homes will be too cold—either due to a power failure or because the heating system isn't adequate for the weather. When people must use space heaters and fireplaces to stay warm, the risk of household fires increases, as well as the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Prepare Your Home for Winter

If you plan to use a fireplace or wood stove for emergency heating, have your chimney or flue inspected each year. If you use a fireplace, wood stove, or kerosene heater, install a smoke detector and a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector near the area to be heated. Test them monthly, and replace batteries twice a year. Do not burn paper in a fireplace.

Your ability to feel a change in temperature decreases with age, and older people are more susceptible to health problems caused by cold. If you are over 65 years old, place an easy-to-read thermometer in an indoor location where you will see it frequently, and check the temperature of your home often during the winter months.

If there is a power failure:

- Use battery-powered flashlights or lanterns rather than candles, if possible.
- Never leave lit candles unattended.

Cooking:

- Never use a charcoal or gas grill indoors—the fumes are deadly.
- Never use an electric generator indoors, inside the garage, or near the air intake of your house because of the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Plug in appliances to the generator using individual heavy-duty, outdoor-rated cords.
- Do not use the generator or appliances if they are wet because of the risk of electrocution.
- Do not store gasoline indoors where the fumes could ignite.

Keep a Water Supply

This part seems counterintuitive, but extreme cold can cause water pipes in your home to freeze and sometimes rupture.

When very cold temperatures are expected:

- Leave all water taps slightly open so they drip continuously.
- Keep the indoor temperature warm.
- Improve the circulation of heated air near pipes. For example, open kitchen cabinet doors beneath the kitchen sink.

Black Outs

A black out is serious because it usually is a consequence of equipment breaking down or being damaged. This can be as simple as downed power lines from winds or other natural weather conditions or as complex as a terrorist attack that damages the workings of the grid.

The main issue during an outage that lasts a long time is food storage. Your refrigerator will gradually get warmer and your freezer will defrost.

- Refrigerated will spoil the fastest. It should be consumed within 4 hours.
- Frozen food typically will hold for 2-3 days. If it still has ice crystals, it is still safe to eat.
- Meat and dairy products that have been at room temperature for 4 hours should be trashed.
- Never refreeze food that has been thawed.

Chemical Spills

Preparing a Shelter in Your Home

The safest place in your home during an radiation emergency is a centrally located room or basement. This area should have as few windows as possible. The further your shelter is from windows, the safer you will be.

Preparation is the key. Store emergency supplies in this area. An emergency could happen at any time, so it is best to stock supplies in advance and have everything that you need stored in the shelter.

Every 6 months, check the supplies in your shelter. Replace any expired medications, food, or batteries. Also, replace the water in your shelter every 6 months to keep it fresh.

Make sure that all family members know where the shelter is and what it is for. Caution them not to take any items from that area. If someone “borrows” items from your shelter, you may find that important items are missing when they are most needed.

If you have pets, prepare a place for them to relieve themselves in the shelter. Pets should not go outside during a radiation emergency because they may track radioactive materials from outside into the shelter. Preparing a place for pets will keep the radioactive materials from getting inside the shelter.

Tips Before Entering A Shelter

If you are outside when the alert is given, get inside a stable building as soon as you can. Remove clothing, shoes, and accessories before entering your shelter area. During severe weather, such as extreme cold, remove at least the outer layer of clothes before entering the home to avoid bringing radioactive material into your shelter. Leave clothing and shoes outside. Shower and wash your body with soap and water.

Removing clothing can eliminate up to 90% of radioactive contamination. By taking this simple step, you will reduce the time that you are exposed and also your risk of injury from the radiation.

Before entering the shelter, turn off fans, air conditioners, and forced-air heating units that bring air in from the outside. Close and lock all windows and doors, and close fireplace dampers.

When you move to your shelter, use duct tape and plastic sheeting to seal any doors, windows, or vents for a short period of time in case a radiation plume is passing over (listen to your radio for instructions). Within a few hours, you should remove the plastic and duct tape and ventilate the room. Suffocation could occur if you keep the shelter tightly sealed for more than a few hours.



Keep your radio tuned to an emergency response network at all times for updates on the situation. The announcers will provide information about when you may leave your shelter and whether you need to take other emergency measures.

What “Sheltering In Place” Means

Some kinds of chemical accidents or attacks may make going outdoors dangerous. Leaving the area might take too long or put you in harm’s way. In such a case, it may be safer for you to stay indoors than to go outside.

“Shelter in place” means to make a shelter out of the place you are in. It is a way for you to make the building as safe as possible to protect yourself until help arrives. You should not try to shelter in a vehicle unless you have no other choice. Vehicles are not airtight enough to give you adequate protection from chemicals.

Every emergency is different and during any emergency people may have to evacuate or to shelter in place depending on where they live.

How To Prepare To Shelter In Place

Choose a room in your house or apartment for the shelter. The best room to use for the shelter is a room with as few windows and doors as possible. A large room with a water supply is best—something like a master bedroom that is connected to a bathroom. For most chemical events, this room should be as high in the structure as possible to avoid vapors (gases) that sink. This guideline is different from the sheltering-in-place technique used in tornadoes and other severe weather and for nuclear or radiological events, when the shelter should be low in the home.

You might not be at home if the need to shelter in place ever arises

Most likely you will only need to shelter for a few hours.

- If there is a “code red” or “severe” terror alert, you should pay attention to radio and television broadcasts to know right away whether a shelter-in-place alert is announced for your area.
- You will hear from the local police, emergency coordinators, or government on the radio and on television emergency broadcast system if you need to shelter in place.

What to do

Act quickly and follow the instructions of your local emergency coordinators such as law enforcement personnel, fire departments, or local elected leaders. Every situation can be different, so local emergency coordinators might have special instructions for you to follow. In general, do the following:

- Go inside as quickly as possible. Bring any outdoor pets indoors.
- If there is time, shut and lock all outside doors and windows. Locking them may pull the door or window tighter and make a better seal against the chemical. Turn off the air conditioner or heater. Turn off all fans, too. Close the fireplace damper and any other place that air can come in from outside.
- Go in the shelter-in-place room and shut the door.
- Turn on the radio. Keep a telephone close at hand, but don't use it unless there is a serious emergency.
- Sink and toilet drain traps should have water in them (you can use the sink and toilet as you normally would). If it is necessary to drink water, drink stored water, not water from the tap.
- Tape plastic over any windows in the room. Use duct tape around the windows and doors and make an unbroken seal. Use the tape over any vents into the room and seal any electrical outlets or other openings.
- If you are away from your shelter-in-place location when a chemical event occurs, follow the instructions of emergency coordinators to find the nearest shelter. If your children are at school, they will be sheltered there. Unless you are instructed to do so, do not try to get to the school to bring your children home. Transporting them from the school will put them, and you, at increased risk.
- Listen to the radio for an announcement indicating that it is safe to leave the shelter.
- When you leave the shelter, follow instructions from local emergency coordinators to avoid any contaminants outside. After you come out of the shelter, emergency coordinators may have additional instructions on how to make the rest of the building safe again.

Your Emotional Well-Being

After a disaster, such as any of these we discussed, you may feel sad, mad, guilty, or numb. You may have trouble sleeping, be constantly “on the lookout” for danger, or be jumpy, irritable, or angry. Contact with certain people, sights or sounds may bring back bad memories or an overwhelming sense of grief. These are all normal reactions to stress. This is a difficult time, but there are things you can do to help cope with the stress and stay healthy even during the cleanup time that follows.

- Stay Active - Volunteer for work in a shelter, community, school, or faith-based organization.
- Help with cleanup and repair if it is safe to do so.
- Spend time with others.
- Participate in activities you enjoy.
- Take breaks from the cleanup efforts.
- Exercise (indoors if air quality is not acceptable).
- Keep a journal.
- Talk about your feelings.

Keep in mind that returning to the way you felt before the disaster may take some time. If you are having trouble managing your feelings, completing daily tasks, or caring for your family, talk to a psychologist, social worker, or professional counselor.

Your Physical Well-Being

Protect yourself from injuries during cleanup.

- **Drive safely:** Be alert for broken stop lights and missing street signs. Watch out for trash and debris on the road.
- **Stay safe around damaged buildings or structures:** Wait to return to buildings during daylight hours, when it is easier to avoid hazards, particularly if the electricity is off and you have no lights.
- **Be alert to gas leaks:** If you smell gas or suspect a leak, leave the house immediately.
- **Stay safe during cleanup:** Wear hard hats, goggles, heavy work gloves, and watertight boots with steel toe and insole (not just steel shank).

- **Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning:** Never use generators, pressure washers, grills, camp stoves, or other gasoline, propane, natural gas, or charcoal-burning devices inside your home.
- **Avoid electrical hazards:** Never make contact with power lines, regardless of whether they are on the ground or intact.