

SHELTER IN PLACE

For chemical releases of limited duration, it is faster and usually safer to shelter in place than to evacuate and expose people to more danger by being outside. In an emergency, a "Shelter-In-Place" order should only last a few hours, not days or weeks.

One of the instructions you may be given in an emergency when chemical, biological, or radiological contaminants have been released into the atmosphere is to "shelter-in-place". This is a precaution aimed to keep you safe while remaining inside your home or office and protect yourself there.

There are six basic steps in the "shelter-in-place" process designed to protect individuals against potentially harmful contaminants that could be present in an emergency. If you are told to shelter-in-place, follow these steps:

1. Move or stay inside a dwelling such as a house or office building.
 - The idea is to prevent exposure to air-borne contaminants, which may be inhaled or absorbed through the skin. You are waiting for the hazardous release to blow over or dissipate.
 - A "shelter-in-place" order should last only for a few hours.
 - Select some small, interior room(s), at or above ground level, with no or few windows for refuge.
2. Close and lock all windows and doors. Turn on your "outside porch light".
 - Rooms should have adequate space for everyone to be able to sit. Large storage closets, utility rooms, pantries, copy and conference rooms without exterior windows will work well.
 - This will restrict chemical contaminants from seeping into the home or building.
 - The "burning porch light" will alert local officials that someone is sheltering inside at that location.
 - If there is danger of explosion, close window shades, blinds, or curtains.
3. Turn off all fans, heating and air-condition systems.
 - It won't help if contaminated air is drawn inside and circulated through the building.
 - Close fireplace dampers (if present) to keep from drawing in outside air.
4. Enter and seal the room(s) to prevent contaminants from seeping in.
 - Gather disaster supplies, such as nonperishable food, bottled water, battery-powered radios, first aid supplies, flashlights, batteries, duct tape, plastic sheeting, and plastic garbage bags.
5. Listen to the radio or television for further emergency instructions.
 - Seal all cracks around the door and vents into the room with duct tape, towels, and plastic sheeting (heavier than food wrap).
 - Would be ideal to have a "hard-wired" telephone in the room being occupied.
 - Listen to radio and/or TV emergency broadcast stations for official information regarding the "all clear" signal before ending the sheltering.
 - The dial settings of emergency broadcast system stations should be known before an actual emergency.
 - Local officials may order an evacuation of specific areas in the community at greatest risk.
6. Do not use the phone unnecessarily - responders will need the phone lines.
 - Call your selected "out-of-town" contact and report who is "sheltering-in-place" at your location.
 - Keep phone available if you need to report a life-threatening condition.
 - Fire Department, police, and emergency responders need all available telephone lines to initiate rescue procedures.

*Whitfield County Local Emergency
Planning Committee*

The Whitfield County Local Emergency Planning Committee is working with the local emergency response agencies, companies and transporters of chemicals in the community to prevent chemical releases in the community. As part of our work, we are providing this information to the community to help inform the public about the Sheltering in Place program.

In Case of an Emergency Call: 911

WHITFIELD COUNTY
LOCAL EMERGENCY
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Shelter – in - Place

