

Be Prepared for a Hazardous Materials Incident

Before the Incident

- **Evaluate the risks to your household.** Determine how close you are to factories, freeways, or railroads that may produce or transport toxic waste. Remember that some toxic chemicals are odorless.
- **Choose and prepare your shelter-in-place room.**
- **Be ready to evacuate or shelter-in-place.**
- **Take your pets with you if you evacuate and keep them with you if you are sheltering in place.**

During a Hazardous Materials Incident

- **If you witness (or smell) a hazardous materials release, call 9-1-1 as soon as safely possible.**
 - **If you hear a warning, listen to a local radio or television station for further information.** Follow instructions carefully.
 - **Stay away from the incident site to minimize the risk of contamination.**
 - **If you are caught outside during an incident, try to stay upstream, uphill, and upwind.** Remember that gases and mists are generally heavier than air and hazardous materials can quickly be transported by water and wind. In general, try to go at least one half mile (10 city blocks) from the danger area; for many incidents you will need to go much farther.
 - **If you are in a motor vehicle, stop and find shelter in a permanent building if possible.** If you must remain in your car, keep the car windows and vents closed and shut off the air conditioner and heater.
 - **If asked to evacuate your home, do so immediately. Take your animals with you, but do not endanger yourself to do so.** If authorities indicate there is enough time, close all windows, shut vents, and turn off attic, heating, and air conditioning fans to minimize contamination.
- **If you are told to stay indoors (shelter-in-place) rather than evacuate:**
 - **Follow all instructions given by emergency authorities.**
 - **Get household members and pets inside as quickly as possible.**
 - **Close and lock all exterior doors and windows. Close vents, fireplace dampers, and as many interior doors as possible.**
 - **Turn off air conditioners and ventilation systems.**
 - **Go into the pre-selected shelter room** (below or above-ground room with the fewest openings to the outside). Three square feet of floor space per person will provide sufficient air to prevent carbon dioxide buildup for up to five hours.
 - **Be aware that, if there is a hazardous materials incident while your children are at school, you probably will not be permitted to pick them up.** Schools and other public buildings may institute procedures to shelter-in-place. Even if you go to the school, the doors will probably be locked to keep your children safe. Follow the directions of your local emergency officials.
 - **Take a battery-powered radio, water, sanitary supplies, a flashlight, and the shelter kit containing pre-cut plastic sheeting, duct tape, scissors, and modeling clay or other materials to stuff**



into cracks. Take your Disaster Supplies Kit.

- **Close doors and windows in the room and seal the room** using plastic sheeting, duct tape, and modeling clay or other material:

- Tape around the sides, bottom, and top of the door.

- Cover each window and vent in the room with a single piece of plastic sheeting, taping all around the edges of the sheeting to provide a continuous seal.

- If there are any cracks or holes in the room, such as those around pipes entering a bathroom, fill them with modeling clay or other similar material.

- **If authorities warn of the possibility of an outdoor explosion, close all drapes, curtains, and shades in the room.** Stay away from windows to prevent injury from breaking glass.

- **Remain in the room, listening to a local radio or television station until you hear that authorities advise you to leave your shelter.**

- **When authorities advise people in your area to leave their shelters, open all doors and windows and turn on the air conditioning and ventilation systems.**

These measures will flush out any chemicals that infiltrated the building.

- **Avoid contact with spilled liquids, airborne mists and powders, and condensed solid chemical deposits.** Keep your body fully covered to provide some protection. Wear gloves, socks, shoes, pants, and long-sleeved shirt. Prevent your animals from contacting any of these substances. Most animals will groom themselves by licking, and may ingest toxins more readily this way.

- **Do not eat food or drink water that may have been contaminated.**

- **Be prepared to turn off the main water intake valve in case authorities advise you to do so.**

After a Hazardous Materials Incident

- **Do not return home until local authorities say it is safe.**

- **Upon returning home, open windows and vents and turn on fans to provide ventilation.**

- **Be aware that a person or item that has been exposed to a hazardous chemical may be contaminated and could contaminate other people or items.**

- **If you or your animals have come in contact with or have been exposed to hazardous chemicals, you should:**

- Follow decontamination instructions from local authorities.** (Depending on the chemical, you may be advised to take a thorough shower, or you may be advised to stay away from water and follow another procedure.) Get medical treatment for unusual symptoms as soon as possible.

- If medical help is not immediately available and you think you might be contaminated, remove all of your clothing and shower thoroughly (unless local authorities advise you to do otherwise).** Change into fresh, loose clothing and get medical help as soon as possible.

- Place exposed clothing and shoes in tightly sealed containers,** for example plastic bags with twist-ties. Do not allow them to contact other materials. Call local authorities to find out about proper disposal.

- Advise everyone who comes in contact with you that you may have been exposed to a toxic substance.**

- **Find out from local authorities how to clean up your land and property.**

- **Report any lingering vapors or other hazards to your local emergency services office.**