

What is Shelter-in-Place?

Means:

One of the instructions you may be given in an emergency where hazardous materials may have been released into atmosphere or when there is a threat of criminal violence is to shelter-in-place. This is a precaution aimed to keep you safe while remaining indoors. (This is not the same thing as going to a shelter in case of a storm.) Shelter-in-place means selecting a small, interior room, with no or few windows, and taking refuge there. It does not mean sealing off your entire home or office building. If you are told to shelter-in-place, follow the instructions provided in this guide.

Why You Might Need to Shelter-in-Place:

Chemical, biological, or radiological contaminants may be released accidentally or intentionally into the environment. Should this occur, information will be provided by local authorities on television and radio stations on how to protect yourself and others. Because information will most likely be provided on television and radio, it is important to keep a TV or radio on, even during the workday. The important thing is for you to follow instructions of local authorities and know what to do if they advise you to shelter-in-place.

How to Shelter-in-Place

On Campus:

- Campus will be closed and our emergency plan will be activated. Follow reverse evacuation procedures to bring students, faculty, and staff indoors.
- If there are visitors in the building, provide for their safety by asking them to stay – not leave. When authorities provide directions to shelter-in-place, they want everyone to take those steps now, where they are, and not drive or walk outdoors.
- Provide for answering telephone inquiries from concerned parents by having at least one telephone with the department's listed telephone number available in the room selected to provide shelter for the person designated to answer these calls. This room should also be sealed. There should be a way to communicate among all rooms where people are sheltering-in-place in the facility whenever possible. However, if communications are not readily available, time should not be taken to accomplish this task.
- Ideally, provide for a way to make announcements over the public address system if available.
- If individuals have cell phones, allow them to use them to call to call their emergency contact to let them know where they are and that they are safe.
- If the facility has voice mail or an automated attendant, change the recording to indicate that the facility is closed and that students, faculty and staff are remaining in the building until authorities advise that it is safe to leave.
- Provide directions to close and lock all windows, exterior doors, and any other openings to the outside.

- If you are told that there is danger of explosion, direct that window shades, blinds, or curtains be closed and stay away from the windows.
- Have employees familiar with your building's mechanical systems turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems. Some systems automatically provide for exchange of inside air with outside air – these systems, in particular, need to be turned off, sealed, or disabled.
- If possible and/or prudent, gather essential disaster supplies, such as nonperishable food, bottled water, battery-powered radios, first aid supplies, flashlights, batteries, duct tape, plastic sheeting, and plastic garbage bags.
- Select interior room(s) above the ground floor, with the fewest windows or vents. The room(s) should have adequate space for everyone to be able to sit in. Avoid overcrowding by selecting several rooms if necessary. Classrooms may be used if there are no windows or the windows are sealed and cannot be opened. Large storage closets, utility rooms, meeting rooms, and even a gymnasium without exterior windows will also work well.
- It is ideal to have a hard-wired telephone in the room(s) you select. Call emergency contacts and have the phone available if you need to report a life-threatening condition. Cellular telephone equipment may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency.
- Bring everyone into the room. Shut and lock the door.
- Use duct tape and plastic sheeting (heavier than food wrap) to seal all cracks around the door(s) windows and any vents into the room.
- Write down the names of everyone in the room, and call your designated emergency contact to report who is in the room with you, and their affiliation with your business (students, faculty, staff and visitors).
- Keep listening to the radio or television until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community.

At Home:

- Close and lock all windows and exterior doors.
- If you are told there is danger of explosion, close the window shades, blinds, or curtains.
- Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems. Close the fireplace damper.
- Get your family disaster supplies kit <http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/supplies.html>, and make sure the radio is working.
- Go to an interior room without windows that's above ground level. In the case of a chemical threat, an above-ground location is preferable because some chemicals are heavier than air, and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed.
- Bring your pets with you, and be sure to bring additional food and water supplies for them.
- It is ideal to have a hard-wired telephone in the room you select. Call your emergency contact and have the phone available if you need to report a life-threatening condition. Cellular telephone equipment may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency.

- Use duct tape and plastic sheeting (heavier than food wrap) to seal all cracks around the door and any vents into the room.
- Keep listening to your radio or television until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community.

In Your Vehicle:

If you are driving a vehicle and hear advice to “shelter-in-place” on the radio, take these steps:

- If you are very close to home, your office, or a public building, go there immediately and go inside.

Follow the shelter-in-place recommendations for the place you pick described above.

- If you are unable to get to a home or building quickly and safely, and 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/air conditioning vents with duct tape.
- Listen to the radio regularly for updated advice and instructions.
- 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.

General Information:

Follow the directions of law enforcement officials.

Local officials on the scene are the best source of information for your particular situation. Following their instructions during and after emergencies regarding sheltering, food, water, and cleanup methods is your safest choice.

Remember that instructions to shelter-in-place are usually provided for durations of a few hours, not days or weeks. There is little danger that the room in which you are taking shelter will run out of oxygen and you will suffocate.

Threats of or Acts of Violence:

Another emergency that may require shelter-in-place is a threat of criminal violence or actual acts. This is a precaution aimed to keep you safe while remaining in your facility. Shelter-in-place in this case means securing your current location by use of locks, barricades, or means to restrict access to your location. Follow these instructions when notified of such an incident.

- When an alert is made secure your room by locking the door, barricades, or other means to restrict access to your area. You should avoid using methods involving using your person to restrict access.

- Avoid windows.
- Stay low to the floor.
- Listen to the radio, check text messages, or email for specific details.
- If you are outside, take cover where you are until it is safe to enter a facility.
- 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.
- Campus Police will respond with rapid deployment of officers to address the incident.