SHELTER IN PLACE

[This handout discusses on disasters that can contaminate your environment, such as chemical or radiation emergency, in addition to natural disasters.

If you are told to "shelter-in-place," act quickly and 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 advised. 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 wood stove damper.
- Get your disaster supplies kit and make sure the radio is working.
- Take everyone, including pets, into an interior room with no or few windows and shut the door.
- 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.
- Call you emergency contact and keep the phone handy in case you need to report a lifethreatening condition. Otherwise, stay off the phone so that the lines will be available for use by emergency responders.
- Keep listening to your radio / television until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Do not evacuate unless advised to do so.
- When you are told that the emergency ids 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.

Pets:

• 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.

--- in your vehicle

- 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, pull over to the side of the road and 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 of 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 may be delayed or detoured.
- Follow the directions of law enforcement officials.

--- at work

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 int he 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.

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- 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 calloforwarding 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 int he room(s) and they should be monitored for information and instructions.
- 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. As much as possible, reduce the flow of air into the room.
- 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 your are told to evacuate.
- When you are told that it 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.

Where to Shelter-in-Place

*an interior room

The room should have ten square feet of floor space per person in order to provide sufficient air to prevent carbon dioxide buildup for the five 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 hardowired telephone, a battery-operated radio and television. Don't rely on cell phones because cellular telephone circuits may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency.

*sheltering room(s)

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. If you do not equip this room with a disaster supplies kit, make sure you take your home, office or vehicle kit with you to the area in which you shelter.

*business-designated emergency contact

Businesses & schools should assign 1 or 2 people to collect information on who is in the building when an emergency happens so they can be accounted for by first responders if necessary.

*pre-selected rooms

Classrooms may be used if there are no windows or the windows are sealed and cannot be opened. Large storage closets, utility rooms and meeting rooms could be used. A gymnasium without exterior windows would also work well.