



## Biological or Chemical Threat, Terrorism and Pandemic Flu

In cases of a biological or chemical threat, terrorism or pandemic flu, authorities may advise you to shelter in place. "Shelter in place" means to take immediate shelter where you are—at home, work, school, or in between. It may also mean

"seal the room;" in other words, take steps to prevent outside air from coming in if chemical or radiological contaminants are released into the environment. It is important to listen to TV or radio to understand whether the authorities wish you to merely remain indoors or to take additional steps to protect yourself and your family. *(The following information is provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.)*

### Before

#### At home

- ☐ Choose an internal room for your shelter, preferably one without windows and one on the highest level. A large room, preferably with a water supply, is desirable—something like a master bedroom that is connected to a bathroom.
- ☐ Contact your workplaces, your children's schools, nursing homes where you may have family and your local town or city officials to find out what their plans are for "shelter-in-place."
- ☐ Find out when warning systems will be tested. When tested in your area, determine whether you can hear or see sirens and/or warning lights from your home.
- ☐ Develop your own family emergency plan so that every family member knows what to do. Practice it regularly.
- ☐ Assemble a disaster supplies kit that includes emergency water and food supplies.

#### At work

- ☐ Help ensure that the emergency plan and checklist involves all employees. Safety volunteers or recruits should be assigned specific duties during an emergency. Alternates should be assigned to each duty.
- ☐ The shelter kit should be checked on a regular basis and batteries for the radio and flashlight should be replaced regularly.

### During

If you are told to "shelter-in-place," act quickly. 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 told to. 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 woodstove damper. Become familiar with proper operation of flues and dampers ahead of time.

- ☐ 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.
- ☐ The room should have 10 square feet of floor space per person in order to provide sufficient air to prevent carbon dioxide buildup for 5 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 land line telephone. Don't rely on cell phones because cellular telephone circuits may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency. Also, a power failure will render most cordless phones inoperable.
- ☐ 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 suggests that you have plenty of plastic bags and newspapers, as well as containers and cleaning supplies, to help deal with pet waste.
- ☐ 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 your emergency contact and keep the phone handy in case you need to report a life-threatening condition. Otherwise stay off the phone, so that the lines will be available for use by emergency responders.
- ☐ Keep listening to your radio or television until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Do not evacuate unless instructed to do so.

### After

- ☐ When you are told that the emergency is 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.