Taking it one step at a time.

SHELTERING IN-PLACE

Although your first instinct may be to get away as far and as fast as possible from a hazardous materials accident, evacuation is not always the safest option.

Your home or workplace can be a safe haven during a hazardous materials emergency. Up-front preparations are the key to your safety.

- *"Sheltering In-Place"* simply means staying put inside your home, workplace, or other building until the emergency passes and the "all clear" signal is given. Local officials, especially the fire department, are best qualified to recommend protective actions against hazardous materials accidents. Sheltering in-place is most often your safest option.
- Hazardous materials are all around us at home, work, and school, in industrial and commercial buildings, and on the highways. When properly handled, they pose no health threat. When improperly transported, stored, or used, or when accidentally released, however, there is a potential for devastating damage.
- During an accidental release of hazardous materials, air quality may be threatened. Evacuation may take you through a plume of toxic chemicals, leading to serious, long-term health risks or even death. Sheltering in-place can be a viable alternative which keeps you inside a protected environment.
- Preparedness is the key to surviving any emergency, especially a hazardous materials accident. Toxic releases can come without warning and allow only minutes to respond.
- Shelter in-place preparations complement your other family emergency preparedness efforts.

Toxic releases can come without warning!

PREPARE YOUR HOME BEFORE DISASTER STRIKES

- ☐ ***Choose a room:*** The ideal room has few windows, is large enough to house your whole family or co-workers comfortably, and preferably has access to water. A bedroom with adjoining bath, a large restroom, or an employee break room may be good choices.
- ☐ ***Prepare window coverings:*** When the room is used as a shelter, the windows must be sealed against any outside air entering. Measure all window openings in the room, then add a generous six inches on all sides of each window measurement. Don't forget the skylights. Cut plastic sheeting according to the measurements. Label each sheet to show which window it covers. Store enough rolls of duct tape to go around all the windows completely.
- ☐ ***Prepare vent and door coverings:*** Just as you did for the windows, measure each air vent, door, and any other openings leading outside the room. Cut and label plastic sheeting for each opening. Storing multiple rolls of tape allows more than one person to work at a time.
- ☐ ***Assemble shelter in-place supplies:*** Your supplies should be stored in the chosen shelter room. Put the plastic sheets, duct tape, and other recommended supplies (see list on reverse) together in one container. An under-the-bed box works well, or use a container that fits on a closet shelf or in a cabinet.

SHELTERING IN-PLACE SUPPLIES

- ☐ Cut and labeled plastic sheeting for each window, door, air vent, or other opening (See reverse for preparation instructions.)
- ☐ Multiple rolls of duct tape for sealing plastic sheeting (allows more than one person to work at the same time)
- ☐ Towel for under the door to seal against outside air
- ☐ Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries; battery-powered or cellular phone (if no phone in room)
- ☐ Snack foods, canned juices or other drinks, pet foods
- ☐ Games and books to pass the time

Preparing now can buy time later!

SHELTERING IN-PLACE PROCEDURES

- Stay inside an enclosed building, such as your home or workplace. If possible, bring your pets inside. *Do not* risk your safety for your pet.
- Close and lock all windows and doors to the outside. Close drapes or shades over all windows. Push wet towels under the doors to help seal against outside air.
- Turn off heating/air conditioning systems, and switch inlets or vents to the "closed" position. Close all fireplace dampers.
- Use tape and pre-cut and labeled plastic sheeting to seal around doors and windows, heating vents, skylights, or any opening which could let air in (in shelter room only).
- Seal bathroom exhaust fans or grills, range vents, dryer vents, and other openings (in shelter room only).
- . While sheltering in-place, stay away from windows.
- If there is no phone in your designated shelter room, bring along a battery-operated or cellular phone.
- Listen to the Emergency Alert System radio messages and follow the message instructions. The primary alerting station for the Portland metro area is KXL (750 AM); KGON (92.3 FM) is the alternate alerting station. Other local radio stations may also carry the news story.
- Do not go outside or attempt to drive unless you are specifically told to do so. Evacuation procedures may vary by community.
- Once the emergency has passed, ventilate your entire house to remove any residual hazardous fumes.

SHELTER IN-PLACE "NO-NOs"

DO NOT:

- Call the school or try to pick up your children. They will be safer sheltering in-place at school than they would be riding in your vehicle.
- Leave your shelter until the "all clear" signal is sounded.
- Risk your safety for your pets. If they can't be found within a minute or two, you'll have to shelter in-place without them.
- Wait until the disaster strikes to prepare... ***It's never too early!***

Portland Office of Emergency Management

503-823-3738