

What To Do If You Are Notified of a Hazardous Chemical Emergency

The following guidelines have been developed for you in the event of a hazardous chemical emergency. If a hazardous chemical emergency does occur, you may be asked to do one of two things:

SHELTER IN-PLACE OR EVACUATE

SHELTER IN-PLACE MEANS TO STAY INDOORS

When there is a release of hazardous chemicals into the air, it means the air outside may contain toxins, poisonous substances that may make you sick. Inside your home you have clean air to breathe, but you must make sure that the harmful air doesn't get in. Here is what you should do:

- 1) Go inside your home. Shut all doors and windows. Cover cracks along doors and windows with tape, wet rags or towels. Go to the room in your home that has the fewest number of doors and windows.
- 2) Turn off all heating and cooling systems such as air conditioners, and window and exhaust fans. These appliances blow air from outside into your home and blow air from your home outside.
- 3) Listen to your local radio stations for further instructions.
- 4) Keep your pets with you.
- 5) If you are disabled or need medical attention, call 9-1-1 to let the Police and Fire Departments know you need special help.
- 6) You may be told to cover your mouth and nose with a wet cloth or handkerchief.
- 7) It will be announced on the radio when the emergency is over. Only then should you open all doors and windows to let fresh air into your home.

EVACUATE MEANS THAT YOU MUST LEAVE

The Police and Fire Departments think it is too dangerous for you to stay in your home. The Police and Fire Departments will take actions to make your neighborhood safe. Here is what you should do:

- 1) Don't panic. Do exactly what you are told to do.
- 2) Listen to your local radio station for instructions.
- 3) Prepare to evacuate. Gather clothes, medicines, baby supplies, a portable radio, flashlight, checkbook, and credit cards in case the emergency lasts two or three days.
- 4) Stay inside your home until you are told to leave. Lock all doors and windows. When told, leave in an orderly fashion. Tie a white rag around

- your doorknob when everyone is out. This will let the Police know that everyone is out safely and to watch your home.
- 5) If you are disabled or need medical attention, call 9-1-1 to let the Police and Fire Departments know you need special help.
 - 6) You may be asked to drive your car, go with a neighbor, or go to a place to get on a bus.
 - 7) Other family members who are not home may call the Red Cross to find out where you are.
- *Whether you are told to Shelter In-Place or Evacuate will depend upon the conditions expected in your area. If you do not receive instructions, then you should shelter in-place.*
 - *Prepare now in case a hazardous chemical emergency should occur. Keep duct tape, a portable radio, flashlights and a fresh supply of batteries in your home.*
 - *For more information about what to do during a hazardous chemical emergency, call the Luzerne County Emergency Management Agency at 1-800-821-3716*

Chemicals are part of our daily lives. We use them to purify our water, make fuel for our vehicles, and make most of the things we use in our homes (like household products), at our jobs, and for fun.

Companies that manufacture or store these chemicals may be in your community or the chemicals may be transported through your community. Although these companies take safety precautions when handling chemicals, accidents can happen which may cause a hazardous chemical release or spill. Some chemicals can be dangerous if you inhale them or if they get on your skin.

Call **9-1-1** if you observe damaged and/or leaking chemical containers-stored, abandoned or illegally disposed.

*Special thanks to the PLEPC for a copy of this information.