

Shelter-in-Place

Questions and Guidelines

Does Shelter-in-Place really work?

Yes it does. Shelter-in-Place has been shown to be a safe response to a hazardous material release of three hours or less. In fact, during the 1992 Gulf War, Israeli citizens used Shelter-in-Place techniques to protect themselves against the threat of chemical weapons carried by Saddam Hussein's SCUD missiles. Houses built for winter conditions are especially suited for Shelter-in-Place.



For the most part, they are tightly constructed and provide a good protective barrier against airborne chemicals. Shelter-in-Place techniques are also effective because they are easily and quickly accomplished. In a matter of moments, you can be safe inside your pre-selected room should a chemical emergency occur in your area.

Is Shelter-in-Place something new?

No, sheltering in place has been used by emergency management officials for many years. It was actually developed by fire departments as a way for the public to protect themselves during a chemical release until help arrives. Sheltering in place has been practiced in many communities with large chemical or nuclear facilities.

When should I Shelter-in-Place?

If you hear the Shelter-in-Place instruction on the radio or TV, or if you smell a strong or unusual odor or notice an unexplainable cloud and you don't know where it's coming from, go inside and begin Shelter-in-Place procedures while you listen to the radio for information. You will be advised of the nature of the emergency and the steps you will need to take to ensure your safety. This information would be broadcast over radio stations: WTIC-AM (1080 AM), WTIC-FM (96.5), WRCH-FM (100.5) and WZMX-FM (93.7), as well as cable television channel 14.

Why not just evacuate?

In some cases, evacuation is the better thing to do. However, evacuation could increase your chances of being exposed to the airborne chemical hazard. Evacuation is also more time consuming. The decision to evacuate or Shelter-in-Place will be made by Manchester's Emergency Management Team.



What about My Children at School?



While it is only natural to want to get your children from school in the event of an emergency, attempting to do so during a chemical emergency could just make matters worse. You and your children could experience exposure to a much greater chemical hazard while traveling to or from school. The Manchester Public Schools have developed emergency plans. Included in these emergency plans are Shelter-in-Place procedures. These are designed to ensure that your children would be safe at school during a chemical emergency. As a parent you should talk with school leaders and gain as much understanding of these Shelter-in-Place procedures as possible.

Town of Manchester, Connecticut

Shelter-in-Place

Questions and Guidelines

Shelter-in-Place Kit

We suggest you put the following items along with a roll of duct tape and plastic sheeting in a storage bin or cardboard box in a pre-selected room in your house that can be easily sealed.

- A small, reliable, battery powered radio with a spare battery.
- A few non-perishable food items - snack bars, candy, etc.
Tip: A Shelter-in-Place emergency will probably last only a few hours at most so enough food for a week is not necessary.
- A few gallons of fresh water and some cups.
Tip: The containers you chose for the water may not fit in the kit but should be stored in the pre-selected room.
- A flashlight with some extra batteries.
- A towel for sealing the bottom of the door.
Tip: If your pre-selected room does not have an adjoining bathroom, place a towel, large enough for the bottom of the door, in the kit. Make sure you have enough water for drinking and for wetting the towel.
- A game, some toys or a coloring book with crayons for your children.
Tip: Sheltering-in-Place will be easier for everyone with a diversion to help pass the time.
- Infant supplies.
Tip: If you have a baby, you might consider including a few spare diapers, along with a can of formula and a bottle or some baby food.
- Electrical outlets.
Tip: If any of the walls of your pre-selected room are exterior walls, you may want to cover the electrical outlets in those walls with 2 short strips of duct tape. If you must use the covered outlets, just push the plug through the tape.

Town of Manchester, Connecticut

Shelter-in-Place

Questions and Guidelines

Things to do to Shelter-in-Place:

Do not wrap your home in plastic to protect against a chemical hazard. A wrapped up home can pose a serious threat of carbon monoxide poisoning. Do not seal your room until instructed to do so by your Emergency Management Team.

- go indoors and stay there.
- close all outside doors and every door inside the building.
- close all windows.
- do not use kitchen vents or bathroom vents.
- set thermostats so air conditioner furnaces and hot water heaters will not come on.
- do not use fire places, close all dampers.
- do not operate close dryer.
- shelter inside room away from windows and doors if possible.
- breathe through a wet towel to filter the air.
- reduce or avoid smoking as it contaminates the air.
- do not leave the building until told to do by your Emergency Management Team.
- stay tuned to local television or radio for information.
- do not use the telephone to get information, it may tie up the phone lines.
- the roll of duct tape and plastic sheeting may be used to cover the inside of drafty windows or kitchen and bathroom vents.

A well weather stripped building slows the movement of air into the building and any hazardous material that does enter is weakened when it mixes with the indoor air. It is imperative that you stay indoors and especially if you see a cloud, vapor or smoke from the hazardous material outdoors or if you can smell it indoors. **You will be safer indoors.**

Continue to listen to the radio or television, when the hazardous material conditions have cleared you will be notified. This information would be broadcast over radio stations: WTIC-AM (1080 AM), WTIC-FM (96.5), WRCH-FM (100.5) and WZMX-FM (93.7), as well as cable television channel 14.

At this time remove any sealing materials that were placed over doors, windows or vents.

Town of Manchester, Office of Emergency Management
75 Center Street
Manchester, CT 06040
860-647-5259