

# Your Guide

DISASTER  
SUPPLIES  
KIT

EVACUATION  
ROUTE  
9-1-1

To  
**HOME  
CHEMICAL  
SAFETY**  
And  
**EMERGENCY  
PROCEDURES**

EMERGENCY  
BROADCAST  
SYSTEM

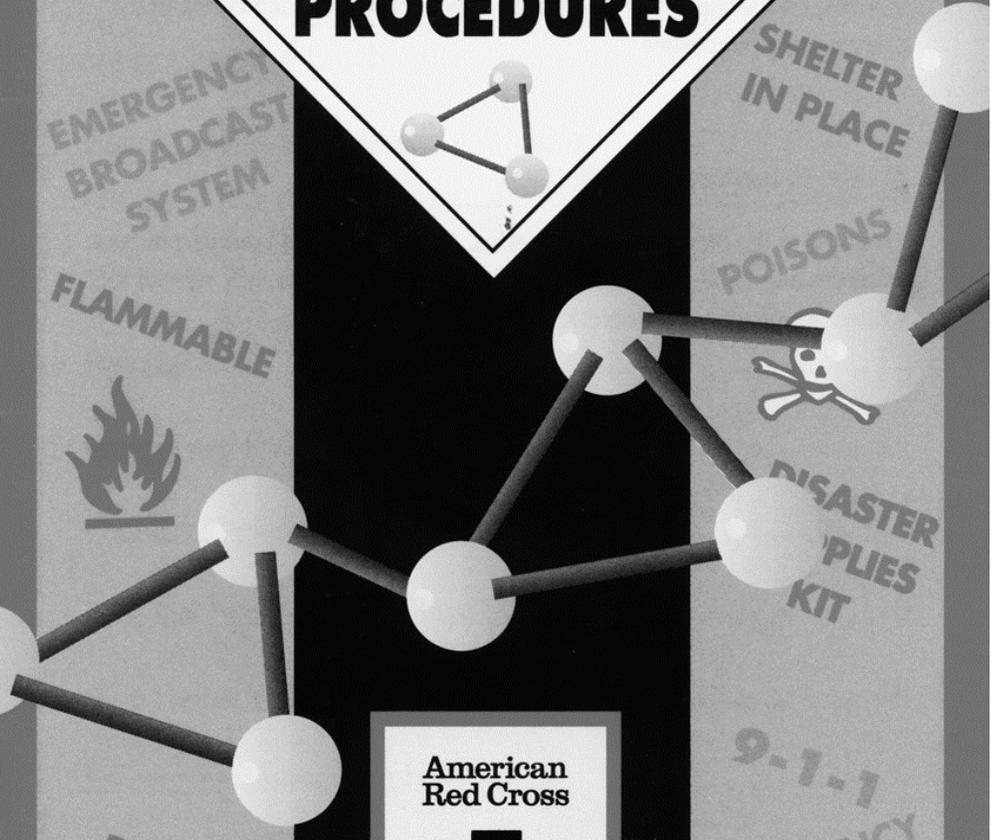
SHELTER  
IN PLACE

FLAMMABLE

POISONS

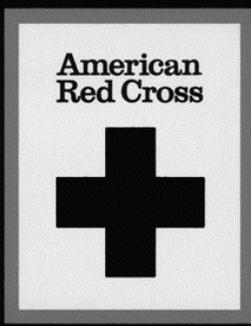


DISASTER  
SUPPLIES  
KIT



FAMILY  
DISASTER  
PLAN

9-1-1  
EMERGENCY  
BROADCAST  
SYSTEM



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## **Chemicals Are an Important Part of life**

Chemicals are a natural and important part of our environment. Even though we often don't think about it, we use chemicals every day. Chemicals help keep our food fresh and our bodies clean. They help our plants grow and fuel our cars. And chemicals make it possible for us to live longer, healthier lives.

Under certain conditions, chemicals can be poisonous or have a harmful effect on your health. Some chemicals which are safe, and even helpful in small amounts, can be harmful in larger quantities or under certain conditions.

Chemical accidents do happen . . . at home and in the community, and the American Red Cross wants you to be prepared.



## **How You May Be Exposed to a Chemical**

You may be exposed to a chemical in three ways:

1. Breathing the chemical
2. Swallowing contaminated food, water, or medication
3. Touching the chemical, or coming into contact with clothing or things that have touched the chemical.

Remember, you may be exposed to chemicals even though you may not be able to see or smell anything unusual.

## **Chemical Accidents Can Be Prevented**

Many people think of chemicals as only those substances used in manufacturing processes. But chemicals are found everywhere--in our kitchens, medicine cabinets, basements, and garages. In fact, most chemical accidents occur in our own homes. And they can be prevented.



## Children and Poisoning

The most common home chemical emergencies involve small children eating medicines. Experts in the field of chemical manufacturing suggest taking hazardous materials out of sight could eliminate up to 75 percent of all poisoning of small children.

Keep all medicines, cosmetics, cleaning products, and other household chemicals out of sight and out of reach of children. If your child should eat or drink a non-food substance, find any containers immediately and take them to the phone. Call the Poison Control Center or Emergency Medical Services (EMS), or 9-1-1, if you have it in your area, or call the operator giving this information. Follow their instructions carefully. Often the first aid advice found on containers may not be appropriate. So, do not give anything by mouth until you have been advised by medical professionals.



## Home Product Precautions

Other home accidents can result from trying to improve the way a product works by adding one substance to another, not following directions for use of a product, or by improper storage or disposal of a chemical.

The first precaution you can take is to avoid mixing common household chemical products. Some combinations of these products, such as ammonia and bleach, can create toxic gases.

A second important precaution is to always read the directions before using a new product. Some products should not be used in a small confined space to avoid inhaling dangerous vapors. Other products should not be used without gloves and eye protection to help prevent the chemical from touching your body. Read and follow the directions.

Another effective way to protect yourself and your family is to store chemical products properly. Non-food products should be stored tightly closed in their original containers so you can always identify the contents of each container and how to properly use the product.

Never smoke while using household chemicals. Don't use hair spray, cleaning solutions, paint products, or pesticides near the open flame of an appliance, pilot light, lighted candle, fireplace, wood burning stove, etc. Although you may not be able to see or smell them, vapor particles in the air could catch fire or explode.



If you should spill a chemical, clean it up immediately with some rags, being careful to protect your eyes and skin. Allow the fumes in the rags to evaporate outdoors in a safe place, then dispose of them by wrapping them in a newspaper and then placing them in a sealed plastic bag. Dispose of these materials with your trash. If you don't already have one, buy a fire extinguisher that is labeled for A, B, and C class fires and keep it handy.

Buy only as much of a chemical as you think you will use. If you have product left over, try to give it to someone who will use it. Take care to dispose of it properly. Improper disposal can result in harm to yourself or members of your family, accidentally contaminate our local water supply, or harm other people.

It is also important to dispose of products properly to preserve our environment and protect wildlife. Plus, some products can be recycled and further protect our environment.



Many household chemicals can be taken to your local household hazardous waste collection facility. Many facilities accept pesticides, fertilizers, household cleaners, oil-based paints, drain and pool cleaners, antifreeze, and brake fluid. If you have questions about how to dispose of a chemical, call the facility or the environmental or recycling agency to learn the proper method of disposal.

## **Family Disaster Plan**

Making a Family Disaster Plan will help each family member to stay calm in an emergency. But most important, planning ahead can save the lives of the people you love. The plan should include what task each family member is responsible for during an emergency, where supplies are kept, how family members will let one another know where they are going if they are evacuated, and where everyone will meet when the disaster is over. A brochure describing how to make a Family Disaster Plan is available from your local Red Cross chapter.



## Family Disaster Supplies Kit

A Family Disaster Plan should include a Family Disaster Supplies Kit.

Let each member of the family help put it together. The kit should include:

- A first aid kit
- A battery-operated radio, flashlight, and extra batteries
- Bath size towels
- Plastic garbage bags
- Wide tape
- A county map
- Bottled water (at least 3 gallons of water per person)
- Non-perishable snack food
- List of family medications, eyeglasses, hearing aids



Ask one person to be responsible for replacing water every three months and food every six months. Batteries should also be replaced on a regular basis.

Tape the call letters and frequency numbers of your emergency alert radio stations (EAS) on the radio and make sure everyone knows how to work the radio and put in fresh batteries. Also tape the channel number of the television emergency broadcast stations on your TV



Every member of the family should know where the Family Disaster Supplies Kit is located--it should be stored within easy reach.

If you are a parent, don't assume that you will always be with your children in an emergency. Make sure they know how to protect themselves if you are not available to help.

At the beginning of the school year, take time to study the school or day care center emergency protective action plan, and discuss it with your children and their babysitters.

## **Major Chemical Emergencies**

A major chemical emergency is an accident that releases a hazardous amount of a chemical into the environment. Accidents can happen underground, on railroad tracks or highways, and at manufacturing plants. These accidents sometimes result in a fire or explosion, but many times you cannot see or smell anything unusual.



## **How You May Be Notified of a Major Chemical Emergency**

In the event of a major chemical emergency, you will be notified by the authorities. To get your attention, a siren could sound, you may be called by telephone, or emergency personnel may drive by and give instructions over a loudspeaker. Officials could even come to your door.

Listen carefully to radio or television emergency alert stations (EAS), and strictly follow instructions. Your life could depend on it.

You Will Be Told:

- The type of health hazard
- The area affected
- How to protect yourself
- Evacuation routes (if necessary)
- Shelter locations
- Type and location of medical facilities
- And the phone numbers to call if you need extra help.

Do not call the telephone company, and do not call EMS, 9-1-1, or the operator for information. Dial these numbers only for a possible life-threatening emergency.



## Shelter in Place

One of the basic instructions you may be given in a chemical emergency is to "shelter in place". This is a precaution aimed to keep you and your family safe while remaining in your home. If you are told to shelter in place, take your children and pets indoors immediately.

While gathering your family, you can provide a minimal amount of protection to your breathing by covering your mouth and nose with a damp cloth.

- Close all windows in your home.
- Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems
- Close the fireplace damper
- Go to an above-ground room (not the basement) with the fewest windows and doors.
- Take your Family Disaster Supplies Kit with you.
- Wet some towels and jam them in the crack under the doors.
- Tape around doors, windows, exhaust fans or vents. Use the plastic garbage bags to cover windows, outlets, and heat registers.
- If you are told there is danger of explosion, close the window shades, blinds, or curtains. To avoid injury, stay away from the windows.
- Stay in the room and listen to your radio until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate.



## Evacuation

Authorities may decide to evacuate an area for your protection. Again, it is important to stay calm, listen carefully and follow all instructions.

If you are told to evacuate, listen to your radio to make sure the evacuation order applies to you and to understand if you are to evacuate immediately or if you have time to pack some essentials. Do not use your telephone.

If you are told to evacuate immediately:

- Take your Family Disaster Supplies Kit and medications
- Close and lock your windows
- Shut off all vents
- Lock the door
- Move quickly and calmly

If the authorities tell you to evacuate because of a possible chemical emergency, take your Family Disaster Supplies Kit

- A change of clothing for each member of the family
- Medication, eyeglasses, hearing aids or dentures, or things like canes and walkers
- Personal items such as toothbrushes, deodorant, etc.
- Items for your baby such as diapers, formula, or baby food
- Books, puzzles or cards and games for entertainment.



Do not assume that a shelter will have everything you need. In most cases, the shelters will provide only emergency items such as meals, cots, and blankets.

You don't need to turn off your refrigerator or freezer, but you should turn off all other appliances and lights before locking your home as you leave.

Check on neighbors to make sure they have been notified, and offer help to those with disabilities or other special needs. If you need a ride, ask a neighbor. If no neighbor is available to help you, listen to the emergency broadcast station for further instructions.

Take only one car to the evacuation site.

Close your car windows and air vents and turn off the heater or air conditioner.

Don't take shortcuts because a shortcut may put you in the path of danger. For your safety, follow the exact route you are told to take.



## **Emergency Procedures for School Children**

In an emergency, your children may be sheltered in place or evacuated from school. If protective actions are being taken at your children's school, do not go to the school. School personnel are trained to handle emergencies.

Do not call your child's school. You could tie up a phone line that is needed for emergency communications.

For further information, listen to local emergency radio and TV stations to learn when and where you can pick up your children.

## **Chemical Poisoning**

There are several symptoms of chemical poisoning whether by swallowing, touching, or breathing:

- Difficulty breathing
- Changes in skin color
- Headache or blurred vision
- Dizziness
- Irritated eyes, skin, throat
- Unusual behavior

Clumsiness or lack of coordination

Stomach cramps or diarrhea

If you think you have been exposed to a toxic chemical, call the poison control center, EMS, or 9-1-1, or the operator, whichever applies to your area.



If you think you have been exposed to a toxic chemical, call the poison control center, EMS, or 9-1-1, or the operator, whichever applies to your area.

If you see or smell something that you think may be dangerous, or find someone who has been overcome with toxic vapors, your first job is to make sure that you don't become a victim. If you remain in a dangerous area and become injured or unconscious, you cannot help yourself or any victims.

Because chemical poisoning can be a life-threatening emergency:

1. Send someone to call EMS, immediately.
2. Tell the operator the location of the emergency and the phone number from where you are calling.
3. Describe what has happened, how many people are involved, and what is being done to help.
4. Stay on the phone until the operator tells you to hang up.

If you are trained in CPR or first aid, and feel confident that you are not in danger, check the person for life-threatening injuries. Administer appropriate treatment, and then deal with the chemical injuries.

If you have not recently taken a course in CPR or first aid, contact your local Red Cross for course information and schedules.



## **First Aid Treatment for Chemical Burns**

A chemical burn can be minor or life threatening, but proper treatment can reduce the chance of infection and the damage caused by contact with the chemical.

Remove any affected clothing or jewelry from the injury. Use lots of cool running water to flush the chemical from the skin until emergency help arrives. The running water will dilute the chemical fast enough to prevent the injury from getting worse.

Use the same treatment for eye burns and remove any contact lenses. Be careful to flush the eye from the nose outward.

If no large amount of clean water is available, gently brush the chemical off the skin and away from the victim and you´



If the chemical is on the face, neck, or shoulders, ask the victim to close his or her eyes before brushing off the chemical.

Cover the wound very loosely with a dry, sterile or clean cloth so that the cloth will not stick to the wound. Do not put any medication on the wound. Seek medical attention immediately.

If you believe you have been contaminated with a chemical, call the Poison Control Center, EMS, 9-1-1, or the operator immediately. If medical help is not immediately available, remove your clothing starting from the top and working your way down to your socks. Take care not to touch your contaminated clothing to your bare skin. Place your clothing in a plastic bag so it cannot contaminate other people or things. Take a thorough shower to wash any chemical away. Re-dress in clean clothing and go for medical help at your first opportunity



## **Who Helps in a Chemical Emergency**

There are many organizations that help the community in an emergency, such as police, fire, and sheriff departments, the American Red Cross, and government agencies. All these groups coordinate their activities through the local office of emergency management. In many areas there are local Hazardous Materials, or Haz-Mat Teams, who are trained to respond to chemical accidents. In the event of a chemical emergency, it is very important that you follow the instructions of these highly trained professionals. They know best how to protect you and your family.

### **Important Points To Remember:**

1. Chemicals are everywhere. They are an important part of life.
2. The most common chemical accidents occur in our own homes and can be prevented.
3. The best ways to avoid chemical accidents are to read and follow the directions for use, storage, and disposal of the product.
4. Don't mix products, especially household cleaning products.
5. Develop a Family Disaster Plan and pack a Family Disaster Supplies Kit.



6. In the event of an emergency, follow the instructions of the authorities carefully. Listen to your emergency broadcast stations on radio and TV.
7. Use your phone only in life-threatening emergencies, and then call the Poison Control Center, EMS, 9-1-1, or the operator immediately.
8. If you are told to "shelter in place", go inside, close all windows and vents and turn off all fans, heating or cooling systems. Take family members and pets to a safe room, seal windows and doors, and listen to emergency broadcast stations for instructions.
9. If you are told to evacuate immediately, take your Family Disaster Supplies Kit. Pack only the bare essentials, such as medications, and leave your home quickly. Follow the traffic route authorities recommend. Don't take short cuts on the way to the shelter.
10. If you find someone who appears to have been injured from chemical exposure, make sure you are not in danger before administering first aid.
11. And lastly, remember, the best way to protect yourself and your family is to be prepared.



The **American Red Cross** is an organization managed by volunteers from your community. Although it receives no money from the government, it is chartered by the U.S. Congress to provide disaster relief. All help given to people during a chemical, house fire, storm, or other emergency is free of charge and supported through charitable contributions and the United Way.

Emergency help may include shelter, meals, replacement of essential medication, and personal hygiene supplies. The Red Cross may also help reunite families by staying in touch with all evacuation sites.

The strength of the Red Cross is its core of volunteers who work in all levels of the organization. If you would like more information about becoming a Red Cross volunteer, either in Disaster Services, Health and Safety, Blood Services, or community programs, call your local Red Cross chapter



# **IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

## **EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE: 9-1-1**

If your area does not have 9-1-1 service, write down the local EMS number here:

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If an accident involving hazardous materials occurs, you will be notified by the authorities as to what steps to take, You may hear a siren, be called by telephone, or emergency personnel may drive by and give instructions over a loudspeaker. Officials could even come to your door,

If you hear a warning signal, you should go indoors and listen to a local Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) station for emergency instructions from county or state officials. Ask your local office of emergency management or Red Cross chapter which stations carry official messages in your community. Write them down here:

### **EBS stations that serve my area:**

<b>Station call letters</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>AM/FM</b>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

It is also important to write down the number of the Poison Control Center that serves your area:

**Poison Control Center:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other important numbers:**

**Local office of emergency management:**

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**Local Red Cross chapter:**

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For further information about how to prepare for natural and technological disasters or to arrange for a speaker to make a presentation on family and individual preparedness, call your local American Red Cross chapter.

The American Red Cross is not a government agency and does not receive funding from the government. Funding for American Red Cross programs is a gift of the American people, provided through generous donations to the United Way and the Combined Federal Campaign, and by direct donations to your local Red Cross. Your support of your local Red Cross is sincerely appreciated

**Your local Red Cross contact is:**

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# FACT SHEET



Federal Emergency Management Agency

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS IN THE HOME

Nearly every household uses products containing hazardous materials. Although the risk of a chemical accident is slight, knowing how to handle these products and how to react during an emergency can reduce the risk of injury.

Contact authorities on hazardous household materials, such as the American Red Cross or the Environmental Protection Agency, for information about potentially dangerous household products and their antidotes. Ask about the advisability of maintaining antidotes in your home for:

- Cleaners and germicides
- Deodorizers
- Detergents
- Drain and bowl cleaners
- Gases
- Home medications
- Laundry bleaches
- Liquid fuels
- Paint removers and thinners

Store household chemicals according to the instructions on the label.

Read instructions on how to dispose of chemicals properly. Small amounts of the following products can be safely poured down the drain with plenty of water:

- Antifreeze
- Bathroom and glass cleaner
- Bleach

- Drain cleaner
- Fertilizer
- Household disinfectant
- Laundry and dishwashing detergent
- Rubbing alcohol
- Rug and upholstery cleaner
- Toilet bowl cleaner

Small amounts of the following products should be disposed by wrapping the container in newspaper and plastic and placing it in the trash:

- Brake fluid
- Car wax or polish
- Dish and laundry soap
- Drain cleaner
- Fertilizer
- Furniture and floor polish
- Insect repellent
- Nail polish
- Oven cleaner
- Paint thinners and strippers
- Pesticides
- Powder cleansers
- Toilet bowl cleaner
- Water-based paint
- Wood preservatives

Dispose of the following products at a recycling center or a collection site:

- Kerosene
- Motor or fuel oil
- Car battery or battery acid
- Diesel fuel
- Transmission fluid
- Large amounts of paint
- Thinner or stripper
- Power steering fluid
- Turpentine
- Gun cleaning solvents
- Tires

### Disposing of Medicines and Spray Cans

Flush medicines that are no longer being used or that are out-dated down the toilet and place the empty container in the trash.

Empty spray cans by pressing the button until nothing comes out and then place the can in the trash. Do not place spray cans into a burning barrel, incinerator, or trash compactor because they may explode.

Keep fire extinguishers in home and car.

Post the number of the nearest poison control center by the telephone.

Learn to recognize the symptoms of toxic poisoning.

- Difficulty in breathing
- Irritation of the eyes, skin, throat, or respiratory tract
- Changes in skin color
- Headache or blurred vision
- Dizziness
- Clumsiness or lack of coordination
- Cramps or diarrhea

If there is danger of a fire or explosion, get out of the house immediately.

If there is a fire or explosion, call the fire department after you get out.

Stay away from the house to avoid the possibility of breathing toxic fumes.

Wash hands, arms, or other parts of the body that may have been exposed to the chemical.

Discard any clothing that may have been contaminated.

Administer first aid treatment to victims of chemical burns.

■ Call 9-1-1 for emergency help.

■ Remove clothing and jewelry from around the injury.

■ Pour clean, cool water over the burn for 15-30 minutes.

■ Loosely cover the burn with a sterile or clean dressing. Be sure that the dressing will not stick to the burn.

■ Refer victim to a medical professional for further treatment.

### Eye Contact with a Hazardous Substance

If a hazardous substance comes in contact with an eye, it is important to take immediate action. Delaying first aid can greatly increase the likelihood of injury. Flush the eye with clear, lukewarm water for a minimum of 15 minutes. Continue the cleansing process even if the victim indicates he or she no longer is feeling any pain, then seek medical attention.

# FACT SHEET



Federal Emergency Management Agency

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS ACCIDENTS

A hazardous materials accident can occur anywhere. Communities located near chemical manufacturing plants are particularly at risk. However, hazardous materials are transported on our roadways, railways, and waterways daily, so any area is considered vulnerable to an accident.

Learn to detect the presence of a hazardous material.

Many hazardous materials do not have a taste or an odor. Some materials can be detected because they cause physical reactions such as watering eyes or nausea. Some hazardous materials exist beneath the surface of the ground and can be recognized by an oil or foam-like appearance.

Contact your Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) or local emergency management office for information about hazardous materials and community response plans.

Find out evacuation plans for your workplace and your children's schools.

Be ready to evacuate. Plan several evacuation routes out of the area.

Ask about industry and community warning systems.

Have disaster supplies on hand.

- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Portable, battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- First aid kit and manual
- Emergency food and water
- Nonelectric can opener
- Essential medicines
- Cash and credit cards
- Sturdy shoes

Develop an emergency communication plan.

In case family members are separated from one another during a hazardous materials accident (this is a real possibility during the day when adults are at work and children are at school), develop a plan for reuniting after the disaster.

Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to serve as the "family contact."

After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Make sure everyone knows the name, address and phone number of the contact person.

If you hear a siren or other warning signal, turn on a radio or television for further emergency information.

### IF CAUGHT AT THE SCENE OF AN ACCIDENT

If you see an accident, call 9-1-1 or the local fire department to report the nature and location of the accident as soon as possible.

Move away from the accident scene and help keep others away.

Do not walk into or touch any of the spilled substance. Try not to inhale gases, fumes, and smoke. If possible, cover mouth with a cloth while leaving the area.

Stay away from accident victims until the hazardous material has been identified.

Try to stay upstream, uphill, and upwind of the accident.

**IF ASKED TO STAY INDOORS  
("IN-PLACE SHELTERING")**  
Seal house so contaminants cannot enter.

- Close and lock windows and doors.
- Seal gaps under doorways and windows with wet towels and duct tape.
- Seal gaps around window and air conditioning units, bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans, and stove and dryer vents with duct tape and plastic sheeting, wax paper, or aluminum wrap.
- Close fireplace dampers.
- Close off nonessential rooms such as storage areas, laundry rooms, and extra bedrooms.
- Turn off ventilation systems.

**Assisting  
Accident Victims**

Don't try to care for victims of a hazardous materials accident until the substance has been identified and authorities indicate it is safe to go near victims. Then you can move victims to fresh air and call for emergency medical care. Remove contaminated clothing and shoes and place them in a plastic bag. Cleanse victims that have come in contact with chemicals by immediately pouring cold water over the skin or eyes with running water for at least 15 minutes, unless authorities instruct you not to use water on the particular chemical involved.

**Bring pets inside.**

Immediately after the "in-place sheltering" announcement is issued, fill up bathtubs or large containers for an additional water supply and turn off the intake valve to the house.

If gas or vapors could have entered the building, take shallow breaths through a cloth or a towel.

Avoid eating or drinking any food or water that may be contaminated.

Monitor the local Emergency Broadcast System station for further updates and remain in shelter until authorities indicate it is safe to come out.

**Evacuation**

Authorities will decide if evacuation is necessary based primarily on the type and amount of chemical released and how long it is expected to affect an area. Other considerations are the length of time it should take to evacuate the area, weather conditions and the time of day.

**IF ASKED TO EVACUATE**

Stay tuned to a radio or television for information on evacuation routes, temporary shelters, and procedures. Follow the routes recommended by the authorities — shortcuts may not be safe. Leave at once.

If you have time, minimize contamination in the house by closing all windows, shutting all vents, and turning off attic fans.

Take pre-assembled disaster supplies.

Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance — infants, elderly people and people with disabilities.

Return home only when authorities say it is safe.

Follow local instructions concerning the safety of food and water.

Cleanup and dispose of residue carefully. Follow instructions from emergency officials concerning clean-up methods.

# HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

## EMERGENCY INFORMATION

1. Hazardous materials in various forms can cause death, serious injury, long-lasting health effects, and damage to buildings, homes, and other property. Many products containing hazardous chemicals are used and stored in homes routinely. These products are also shipped daily on the nation's highways, railroads, waterways, and, pipelines.
2. Varying quantities of hazardous materials are manufactured, used, or stored at an estimated 4.5 million facilities in the United States — from major industrial plants to local dry cleaning establishments or gardening supply stores.
3. The *Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act* requires that detailed information about hazardous substances in or near communities be available at the public's request. The law provides stiff penalties for companies that fail to comply and allows citizens to file lawsuits against companies and government agencies to force them to obey with the law.

MODE OF TRANSPORTATION	NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS	ASSOCIATED DEATHS	ASSOCIATED INJURIES
AIR	1,220	0	153
HIGHWAY	41,781	79	1,569
RAILWAY	7,886	1	423
WATER	83	1	35
OTHER	29	0	2
TOTAL	50,999	81	2,182

Hazardous Materials Incidents by Transportation Mode (totals, 1983 thru 1990\*)

Between 1982 and 1991, there were an annual average of 6,774 hazardous materials transportation incidents. In 1991, there were 9,069 transportation incidents that resulted in 10 deaths and 436 injuries.

## WHAT ARE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS?

*Hazardous materials are chemical substances, which if released or misused can pose a threat to the environment or health. These chemicals are used in industry, agriculture, medicine, research, and consumer goods. Hazardous materials come in the form of explosives, flammable and combustible substances, poisons, and radioactive materials. These substances are most often released as a result of transportation accidents or because of chemical accidents in plants.*

## HELP YOUR COMMUNITY GET READY

The media can raise awareness about hazardous materials by providing important information to the community. Here are some suggestions:



1. Publish a special section in your local newspaper with emergency information on hazardous materials. Localize the information by printing the phone numbers of the local poison control center, emergency services offices, the American Red Cross, and hospitals.

2. Interview a member of your community's Local Emergency Planning Committee about what hazardous substances may be in your community, and by what routes they are transported through the area.



3. Publish a chart of warning symbols and terms.

4. Publish a series on hazardous materials that can be found in the home and the proper antidotes for them.



5. Stage a demonstration to show people how to properly seal off their homes by working with emergency building materials such as sandbags, plywood, and plastic sheeting.

## DID YOU KNOW...

- Most victims of chemical accidents are injured at home. These incidents usually result from ignorance or carelessness in using flammable or combustible materials.
- As many as 500,000 products pose physical or health hazards and can be defined as "hazardous chemicals." Each year, over 1,000 new synthetic chemicals are introduced.
- More than 30 states have passed laws giving workers and citizens access to information about hazardous substances in their workplaces and communities.
- The Department of Transportation regulates routes and speed limits used by carriers and monitors the types of hazardous materials crossing state lines.
- In an average city of 100,000 residents, 23.5 tons of toilet bowl cleaner, 13.5 tons of liquid household cleaners, and 3.5 tons of motor oil are discharged into city drains each month.

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS WARNING PLACARDS

The U.S. Department of Transportation employs a labeling and placarding system for identifying the types of hazardous materials that are transported along the nation's highways, railways, and waterways. This system enables local emergency officials to identify the nature and potential health threat of chemicals being transported into your community. Were a chemical accident to occur in your community, local emergency officials and the fire department would be able to determine the proper emergency response procedures for the situation by the type of placard or warning label.

## LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEES

In 1986, Congress passed the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) of 1986. Title III of this legislation requires that each community establish a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) to be responsible for developing an emergency plan for preparing for and responding to chemical emergencies in that community.

This emergency plan must include the following: an identification of local facilities and transportation routes where hazardous materials are present; the procedures for immediate response in case of an accident (this must include a community-wide evacuation plan); a plan for notifying the community that an incident has occurred; the names of response coordinators at local facilities; and a plan for conducting exercises to test the plan. The plan is reviewed by the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) and publicized throughout the community. The LEPC is required to review, test, and update the plan each year.