

## WHEN TO SHELTER IN PLACE

If you hear the outdoor warning siren, go indoors, tune in to local media for instructions. If you smell a strong or unusual odor and are unsure where it's coming from, go inside and begin Shelter in Place procedures.

Listen to the radio or television for further information. DO NOT call 911 to inquire about the emergency.

Keep listening to the radio or television until you are told it is safe to return to normal activity or told to evacuate. Officials may call for evacuation in your community.

Local officials on the scene are the best source of information for any particular situation. Following their instructions during and after emergencies regarding sheltering, food, water, and clean up methods is your safest choice.

### Why not just evacuate?

In some cases, evacuation is the best thing to do. However, evacuation could increase your chances of being exposed to an airborne chemical hazard. Evacuation is also more time consuming.



Communities use several different means to warn the public of impending danger, such as the Outdoor Warning Sirens, the Emergency Alert System (EAS), or NOAA Weather Radio. Once you have been notified of an emergency you should tune to a local radio or television station for further details.

One of the instructions you may be given is to Shelter in Place. This is a precaution aimed to keep you safe by remaining indoors. This is not the same thing as going to a shelter in case of a storm. Shelter in Place means selecting a small, interior room, with no or few windows and taking refuge there.

Remember that instructions to Shelter in Place are usually provided for the duration of a few hours, not days or weeks. For this amount of time there is little danger that you will run out of air or suffocate.

**Disaster can happen anywhere at any time.**

**BE PREPARED!**

## Shelter in Place

Sheltering in an emergency where hazardous materials may have been released into the atmosphere and evacuating may not be practical.



**Laramie County Emergency  
Management Agency**

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Shelter in Place is a concept developed to protect you, your family and coworkers when faced with a situation that prompts the necessity to protect yourselves without leaving your home or office.

Shelter in Place may be the only practical action to take in certain types of emergencies. YOU may be one of the most effective tools your family, coworkers or neighbors have in averting disaster. Public knowledge and quick action can stand as a force against needless loss of life and property during disasters. You can become part of the solution by becoming more informed.

In a chemical release of hazardous materials incident, you may be told to seal windows, doors and other openings. Have a "Shelter in Place Kit" available for this purpose.

It is important that you have both a "Family Disaster Kit" and a "Shelter in Place Kit" available at all times. You may obtain information on how to prepare a "Family Disaster Kit" by either contacting Laramie County EMA or by visiting the American Red Cross web site [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).

A "Shelter in Place Kit" should contain:

- Duct tape
- Plastic Sheeting
- Towels
- Water to be used to wet towels
- Battery operated radio
- Flashlight
- Fresh batteries

What should you do if you are told to **Shelter in Place** in a hazardous materials emergency?

- **GO** inside a building. Listen to TV or radio for information.
- **CLOSE** and lock all doors and windows. Seal with duct tape or wet cloth.
- **TURN OFF** air conditioners, furnaces, and fans.
- **DO NOT USE** fireplaces. Extinguish fire and close damper.
- Get your **Shelter in Place Kit** and make sure the radio is working.
- Go to an interior room without windows that's above ground. In case of a chemical threat, an above ground location is preferable as some chemicals are heavier than air and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed.
- Bring your pets with you and be sure to have additional food and water supplies for them.
- It is ideal to have a hard wired telephone in the room you select in case you need to report a life-threatening condition.

## What about Children at School?

While it is only natural to want to get your children in the event of an emergency, attempting to do so during a chemical emergency could make matters worse. You and your children could experience exposure to a much greater chemical hazard while traveling to or from school.

Local schools participate in Shelter in Place procedures. These are designed to ensure your children will be safe at school during a chemical emergency. Talk with your child's school to gain as much understanding as possible about their procedures.

