

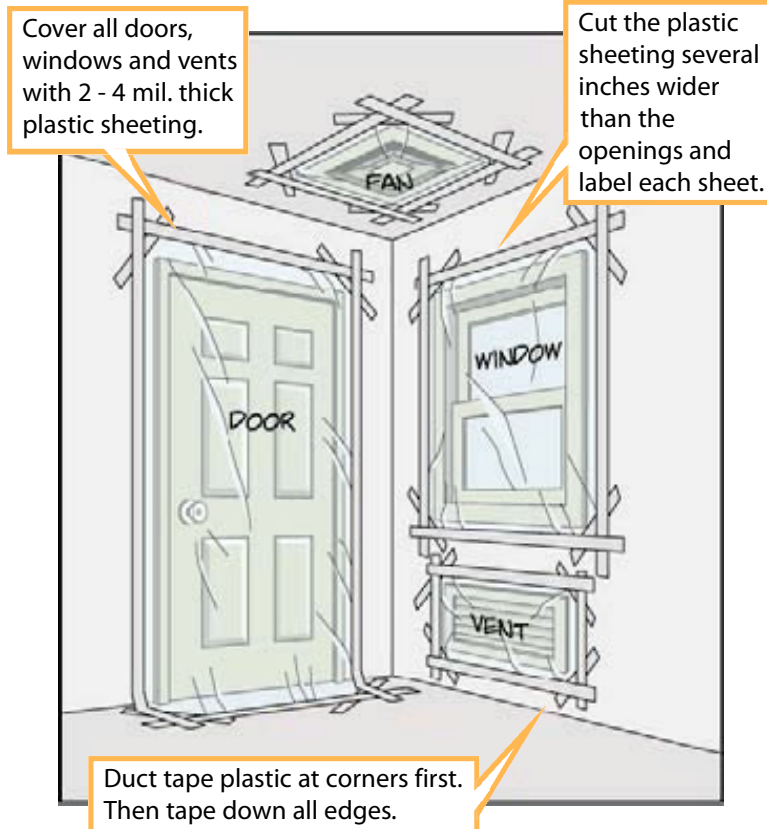


Chemical Safety

March 2009



Diagram for Making a Shelter-in-Place



Stay or Go?

Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the disaster, the first important decision after an incident occurs is whether to shelter-in-place or evacuate. Understand and plan for both possibilities in advance by developing clear, well thought out plans.

- Have an Evacuation Plan and a Shelter-in-Place Plan.
- In any emergency, local authorities may or may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should monitor TV or radio news reports for information or official instructions as they become available.
- If you are specifically told to evacuate, shelter-in-place or seek medical treatment, do so immediately.
- Use common sense and available information to determine if there is immediate danger. For example, if your building is damaged you will typically want to evacuate.

Building or Moving to a New Location?

If you are in the process of expanding, changing locations or building new facilities, consider constructing a special shelter-in-place room, also called a safe room. For more information, go to [FEMA- Safe Rooms](#) on the web.



Every Business Should Have a Plan.

Download the brochure from the [ready.gov](#) website.



Racine County Office of Emergency Management
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Shelter-in-Place Planning

Make a Shelter-in-Place

There may be situations when it's best to stay where you are to avoid any uncertainty outside. There are other circumstances, such as during a tornado or a chemical incident when specifically how and where you take shelter is a matter of survival.

The following instructions will help you, your employees and customers stay safe when you need to stay where you are during a chemical emergency.

If you are instructed by local authorities to take shelter, do so immediately.

1. If feasible, develop a system for knowing who is in your building in case there is an emergency.
2. Establish a warning system.
 - Test systems frequently.
 - Plan to communicate with people with hearing impairments or other disabilities or who do not speak English.
3. Account for all workers, visitors and customers as people arrive in the shelter.
 - Take a head count.
 - Use a prepared roster or checklist.
 - In general, employees cannot be forced to shelter. However, there are circumstances when local officials will order everyone to stay put. It is very important to speak with your co-workers in advance about sheltering to avoid confusion and allow for cooperation in the event you need to shelter-in-place.
4. Assign specific duties to employees in advance; create checklists for each specific responsibility. Designate and train employee alternates in case the assigned person is not there or is injured.
5. Get emergency supply kits and keep them in your shelter locations.
6. Practice your shelter-in-place plan on a regular basis.

Seal the Room

If local authorities believe the air is badly contaminated with a chemical, you may be instructed to take shelter and "seal the room." The process used to seal a room is considered a temporary protective measure to create a barrier between your people and potentially contaminated air outside. It is a type of sheltering that requires preplanning.

1. Identify a location to seal the room in advance.
 - If feasible, choose an interior room, such as a break room or conference room, with as few windows and doors as possible.
 - If your business is located on more than one floor or in more than one building, identify multiple shelter locations.
2. To seal the room effectively:
 - Close the business and bring everyone inside.
 - Lock doors, close windows, air vents and fireplace dampers.
 - Turn off fans, air conditioning and forced air heating systems.
 - Take your emergency supply kit unless you have reason to believe it has been contaminated.
 - Go into an interior room, such as a break room or conference room, with few windows, if possible.
 - Seal all windows, doors and air vents with plastic sheeting and duct tape. Measure and cut the sheeting in advance to save time. (See the diagram on the front page of this newsletter.)
 - Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to seal gaps so that you create a barrier between yourself and any contamination.
 - Local authorities may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet often for official news and instructions as they become available.

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