



Shelter-in-Place Guide for Emergency Managers

To “shelter in place” is to take shelter or refuge at your current location (e.g. house, business, public building) from potential hazards or exposure to radiation.

Sheltering is a temporary protective action that can be implemented immediately. It provides equal or greater protection than evacuation for incidents depending upon the type of release, shelter available, duration of the plume phase and weather conditions.

What Residents Should Do

If you have been notified to shelter in place (e.g. Emergency Alert System [EAS] by radio, television, Integrated Public Alert & Warning System [IPAWS]), follow the instructions given by local and state authorities.

Secure Your Location

- Stay calm -- don't panic.
- Go indoors and stay inside.
- Close all vents, doors and windows.
- Seal gaps with wet towels, plastic, waxed paper, aluminum wrap or duct tape.
- Turn off fans, air conditioning, furnaces, fireplaces and other systems that draw in outside air.
- Use electrical sources for heating.
- Stay in a below-ground basement if possible (they provide the best shelter).
- Otherwise, stay in an above-ground interior rooms, away from windows.
- Don't leave your shelter or evacuate unless told to do so.
- Keep family and pets indoors.
- Post a “NOTIFIED” sign on the front door for authorities to see.

Secure Your Health

- If you must go outdoors, limit your time to one hour or less and cover your nose and mouth with a wet cloth.
- Upon returning indoors, remove clothing and place in a plastic bag and take a shower to remove any potential contamination.
- Avoid eating home-grown vegetables, fruits or berries; instead eat canned or prepackaged foods.
- Prepare items for possible evacuation of you and your pet(s).
- Ensure essential supplies are available (e.g. food, water, medications, personal hygiene items, first aid kit, flashlight, portable radio, extra batteries).
- During a general emergency, administer potassium iodide (KI) when directed and if available.

Potassium Iodide

Potassium iodide is a supplemental protective action to support sheltering in place. Taken orally, KI protects the thyroid gland from exposure to radioactive iodine.

School Children

Children attending school will be sheltered in place and cared for through their school's emergency preparedness procedures.

Special Needs

Local emergency management officials should be notified in advance on sheltering in place for people with special needs. This includes the elderly, physically challenged, hearing impaired, blind or people with other special needs.

This fact sheet is designed to augment planning for an emergency response to an incident at a nuclear generating plant; it does not supersede any plans, procedures or guidelines currently in use.