

SHELTERING AT WORK, SCHOOL OR IN YOUR VEHICLE

At Work:

Have employees familiar with your building's mechanical systems turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems. Some systems automatically provide for exchange of inside air with outside air—these systems in particular need to be turned off, sealed or disabled.

Gather essential disaster supplies such as nonperishable food, bottled water, battery-powered radios, first aid supplies, flashlights, batteries, duct tape, plastic sheeting and plastic garbage bags.

Select interior room(s) with the fewest windows or vents. The room(s) should have adequate space for everyone to be able to sit. Avoid overcrowding by selecting several rooms if necessary. Large storage closets, utility rooms, pantries, copy rooms and conference rooms without exterior windows will work well. Avoid selecting rooms with mechanical equipment like ventilation blowers or pipes, because this equipment may not be able to be sealed from the outdoors.

Have a hard-wired telephone in the room(s) you select if possible. Call emergency contacts and have the phone available if you need to report a life-threatening condition. Cellular telephone equipment may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency.

Use duct tape and plastic sheeting (heavier than food wrap) to seal all cracks around the door(s) and any vents into the room.

Bring everyone into the room(s). Shut and lock the door(s).

Write down the name of everyone in the room, and call your business-designated emergency contact to report who is in the room with you, and their affiliation with your business (employee, visitor, client, customer).

Keep listening to the radio or TV until you hear the “all clear” or are told to evacuate. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community (ARC, 2011).

At School:

Unless you are told to do so, do not try to get to the school to bring your children home. Taking them from the school will put them, and you, at increased risk (CDPH, 2011).

All schools and daycare facilities should be locked down. Adults and children in those facilities should take the same protective actions you are taking – and they should not be released to go outside for any reason until they are instructed to do so by emergency responders. If your children are at school, they will be sheltered there.

Close the school. Activate the school's emergency plan. Follow reverse evacuation procedures to bring students, faculty and staff indoors.

Provide for the safety of visitors in the building by asking them to stay – not leave. When authorities provide directions to shelter-in-place, they want everyone to take those steps now, where they are, and not drive or walk outdoors.

Provide for answering telephone inquiries from concerned parents by having at least one telephone with the school's listed phone number available in the room selected to provide shelter. Have the school secretary or other designated person answer these calls. This room should also be sealed.

Have a way to communicate among all rooms where people are sheltering-in-place in the school. Ideally, provide for a way to make announcements over the school-wide public address system from the room where the top school official takes shelter.

Allow children with cell phones (if working) to call parents or guardians to let them know that they have been asked to remain in school until further notice, and that they are safe.

If the school has voice mail or an automated attendant, change the recording to indicate that the school is closed, students and staff are remaining in the building until authorities advise that it is safe to leave.

Close and lock all windows, exterior doors and any other openings to the outside.

Close window shades, blinds or curtains if you are told there is danger of explosion.

Have employees familiar with your building's mechanical systems turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems. Some systems automatically provide for exchange of inside air with outside air – these systems, in particular, need to be turned off, sealed, or disabled.

Gather essential disaster supplies, such as nonperishable food, bottled water, battery-powered radios, first aid supplies, flashlights, batteries, duct tape, plastic sheeting and plastic garbage bags.

Select interior room(s) above the ground floor, with the fewest windows or vents. The room(s) should have adequate space for everyone to be able to sit. Avoid overcrowding by selecting several rooms if necessary. Classrooms may be used if there are no windows or the windows are sealed and cannot be opened. Large storage closets, utility rooms, meeting rooms and even a gymnasium without exterior windows will also work well.

Have a hard-wired telephone in the room(s) you select if possible. Call emergency contacts and have the phone available if you need to report a life-threatening condition. Cellular telephone equipment may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency.

Bring everyone into the room. Shut and lock the door.

Use duct tape and plastic sheeting (heavier than food wrap) to seal all cracks around the door(s) and any vents into the room.

Write down the name of everyone in the room, and call your schools' designated emergency contact to report who is in the room with you.

Listen for an official announcement from school officials via the public address system, and stay where you are until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community (ARC, 2011).

In Your Vehicle:

If you are driving and hear advice to "shelter-in-place" on the radio, take these steps:

If you are very close to home, your office, or a public building, go there immediately and go inside. Follow the shelter-in-place recommendations described above for the place you pick.

If you are unable to get to a home or building quickly and safely, pull over to the side of the road. Do not attempt to drive through smoke or fumes. Stop your vehicle in the safest place possible. If it is sunny, it is preferable to stop under a bridge or in a shady spot, to avoid being overheated.

Turn off the engine.

Close all doors, windows and vents.

Seal the heating/air conditioning vents with duct tape if possible.

Listen to the radio for updated advice and instructions.

Stay where you are until you are told it is safe to get back on the road. Be aware that some roads may be closed or traffic detoured. Follow the directions of law enforcement officials (ARC, 2011).