

Shelter in Place

What is sheltering in place?

"Shelter in Place" is one of the basic instructions you may receive from public safety officials during a chemical emergency in your community. Sheltering in place during a chemical emergency offers you and your family immediate protection for a short time in your home.

Here and all across the nation, emergency officials may advise sheltering in place in any one of these conditions:

- A chemical leak is expected to last for a short time,
- A chemical has a low health hazard and its release does not warrant an evacuation,
- There is not time to evacuate,
- Chemical fumes could quickly overtake you if you are outside.

If you are told to shelter in place, take your children and pets indoors immediately.

In the event of a chemical emergency at the Umatilla Chemical Depot, people in Oregon who are within 10 miles of the Depot would be advised to shelter in place. This area is called the [Immediate Response Zone \(IRZ\)](#). People outside these areas, would not need to shelter in place.

[Click here to see some examples of where shelter in place has been used.](#) Information provided by the National Institute for Chemical Studies (NICs). Visit them online at <http://www.nicsinfo.org/>

The following general information is a guide on how you can be ready and set to act quickly in a chemical emergency.

Before a chemical emergency

A chemical emergency may occur anywhere hazardous materials are manufactured, stored or transported. Chemical plants are obvious sources of potential accidents. Less obvious are highways, railways and storage containers at places such as swimming pools (chlorine). Study your surroundings for fixed and mobile sources of hazardous materials.

At home:

- Find out how you would be alerted in the event of a chemical emergency. Learn about the public warning systems where you live and work. These systems will be tested on a regular schedule. Learn when the tests are conducted. [Click here to learn about the warning systems that are located near the Umatilla Chemical Depot.](#)
- Keep your shelter-in-place kit in an easily accessible place. The kit should contain duct tape for sealing cracks around doors and windows; plastic to cover windows and the door; scissors and a battery operated AM/FM radio. You may also want to add these items: a flashlight with fresh batteries; bottled water; toys for young children; candles; matches; first aid kit; medicine and other items essential for your family's comfort.

- If your home or business is located in Hermiston, Stanfield, Echo, Umatilla, Irrigon or Boardman -- free shelter in place kits can be picked up at your City Hall or the OutReach Office located at 190 E. Main in Hermiston.
- For more information:
 - In Umatilla County (Oregon) -- Cheryl Humphrey at (541) 966-3703
 - In Morrow County (Oregon) -- Maureen Roxbury at (541) 481-3424
 - In Benton County (Washington) -- Steve Sautter at (509) 628-2600
- For a place to shelter, select a room in your home or business that has few or no windows. The room should have a telephone, although you should use it only for emergency calls. If you use it otherwise, you may be taking up a line needed by emergency response officials.
- Measure the window(s) and door and cut pieces of plastic to fit them. *Hint: Cut the plastic at least 6 inches wider than the actual size. This makes it easier to put the plastic up if needed.* Use a marker to write on the individual sheets and where they go. Fold and place back in your shelter in place kit.
- Ensure everyone in your family knows where they kit is stored.
- Check the kit every six months to make sure all the supplies are still there and that they are fresh.
- Local radio and television stations usually carry emergency broadcasts. In some communities, cable companies have also agreed to carry emergency messages. Information **will not** be broadcast on satellite based services that do not carry local programming. [Radio stations that will broadcast information in a Umatilla Chemical Depot emergency.](#)
- Ensure all family members know what to do in a chemical emergency, whether they are at home, school, work or outdoors.
- Review your plan periodically and conduct drills.

Businesses: Check out this [Model Shelter-in-Place Plan for Businesses](#) from the National Institute for Chemical Studies. You can use this model plan to craft a shelter in place program for your office building. A plan agreed to ahead of time by all employees will help insure smooth enactment of protective measures if there is a nearby chemical emergency. The plan is 14 pages. PDF format.

NOTE: If you have a home, business, class, club or group who would like to have a presentation about sheltering in place or how to prepare for a possible emergency at the Umatilla Chemical Depot please contact us!

In Umatilla County, Oregon	(541) 966-3703	or
Umatilla County email		
In Morrow County, Oregon	(541) 481-3424	or
Morrow County email		
In Benton County, Washington	(509) 628-2600	or
Benton County email		

During a chemical emergency

You may hear about a chemical emergency or severe weather condition through the Emergency Alert System, community warning sirens, highway message reader boards, or tone alert radios. People in Oregon who are in the Immediate Response Zone would be advised to shelter in place.

- **Listen to make sure that you are in the area that is being asked to shelter.**
- Take visiting friends, pets and/or fellow workers immediately indoors.
- Close and lock all windows and doors. Locking makes a better seal.

- Shut off heating / air-conditioning systems and fans that draw air from the outside. Close vents.
- If you have a fireplace, put out the fire and close the damper.
- Go to the room you have chosen as your shelter. Bring your shelter kit, enough food and water for a few hours, your Tone Alert Radio and a portable AM/FM radio into this room.
- Shut and seal the door to the rest of the house with plastic and duct tape. Put duct tape on electrical outlets and vents. Use duct tape and plastic to cover any windows.
 - NOTE: You will not run out of air in a shelter room. Sealing the room just slows the flow of air from the outside, protecting you longer from possible exposure.
- Turn on your radio and listen for further information and instructions provided by your Tone Alert Radio or one of the following Umatilla County radio stations:

EAS RADIO Stations			
If you are in Oregon tune to:		If you are in Washington tune to:	
AM Stations	FM Stations	AM Station	FM Station
1360 KOHU	107.7 KUMA	610 KONA	105.3 KONA
1240 KTIX	100.5 KQFM		
1290 KUMA	103.5 KWHT		
1090 KLWJ			

- Stay in your shelter room until you are told to leave.
- When given the "all clear" or "ventilate", open doors and windows to air out your house.
- Stay off the phone. It should be used for emergency calls only.
- Be prepared to evacuate if ordered to do so. Evacuation instructions will be announced over the Emergency Alert System and your Tone Alert Radio.
- Parents: Schools near the Umatilla Chemical Chemical Depot are prepared to do their part in protecting your kids. [To learn more about plans that schools have to keep kids safe, click here.](#)

After the emergency

When you hear the "all clear" or "ventilate" announcement, you should:

- Open doors and windows to air out your house.
- Turn on your heating / cooling system to ventilate the house immediately.
- Go outside.