



# Shelter-in-Place

**Chemical agents are poisonous gases, liquids, or solids that have toxic effects on people, animals and plants. Most chemical agents cause serious injuries or death. Severity of injury depends on the type and amount of the chemical agent used, and the duration of exposure.**

Were a chemical agent attack to occur, authorities would instruct people to either seek shelter where they are and seal the premises (shelter-in-place), or evacuate immediately. If the order is to remain in your home, office or school, you will need to follow these directions for “shelter-in-place.”



■ **Move or stay inside.**



■ **Close all windows and doors.**



■ **Turn off ventilation systems (heating and air-conditioning, fireplace dampers, etc.).**



■ **Go into a room with the fewest doors and windows and seal the room.**



■ **Stay in the room until told by the authorities that it is safe to come out.**

## How to shelter-in-place

- Dampen towels and place over the crack under the door.
- Cut plastic sheeting to fit over the windows and vents. Secure the plastic in place with duct tape.
- Tape around the door.
- Turn on the radio.
- Don't ventilate (air out) or leave your sealed shelter until you are told to do so.

## Remember

- If the order is evacuation, do so immediately, carefully following directions. Do not wander about, know where you are going, and how to get there.
- Avoiding chemical exposure should be your primary goal. Leaving your sheltered area to rescue or assist victims can be a deadly decision.

- There is no assistance that the untrained can offer victims that would likely be of any value during a chemical attack.
- If you were outside before taking shelter and think you may have been exposed to a chemical agent, there are several things you can do. If you are in a sealed shelter, take off at least your outer clothes, put them in a plastic bag and seal the bag. If water is available, wash or take a cool to warm (not hot) shower, using lots of soap and water. Do not put the soap in your eyes, just lots of water. If you leave the area, tell emergency responders or medical staff at your destination you may have been exposed. Tell the emergency responders about the sealed bag so that they can arrange for its safe removal after the emergency.
- If you have symptoms of exposure, call 9-1-1 immediately and follow their instructions.

**WASHINGTON  
MILITARY  
DEPARTMENT**



**Emergency  
Management  
Division**

www.emd.wa.gov  
1-800-562-6108

Building 20, MS: TA-20  
Camp Murray, WA  
98430-5122

*Illustrations courtesy of ExxonMobil*