



Acute Exposure Guideline Levels

Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and scientists from the chemical industry, academia and government are developing new guidelines for protecting the public from hundreds of hazardous materials that are around us every day. The chemical warfare agents stored at the nearby Army post are included in the guidelines, called Acute Exposure Guideline Levels (AEGLs).

These new guidelines provide a common standard for organizations responding to chemical accidents. The AEGL provide information on health effects for the general population, including infants, children, the elderly and others who may be more sensitive to hazardous chemical exposure than the healthy adult male on which current chemical warfare agent exposure standards are based. In addition, they consider medical evidence that our bodies can withstand some nerve agent exposure.

The AEGL also consider the amount of time over which an exposure would occur. They provide guidance on how much chemical agent an unprotected individual may be exposed to over specific amounts of time, from 10 minutes up to eight hours. They detail three levels of anticipated health effects. With this more-accurate exposure information, Army and local officials will be better able to determine the best actions to protect people who may be at risk if a chemical warfare agent accident occurs.

In the event of an accident at your local chemical stockpile site, your community's emergency officials will use these AEGLs along with information from the accident site, sophisticated computer systems and weather information to determine whether chemical agent could reach your community from an accident on the Army post. They determine where the agent would go and how fast it would travel. The AEGL will give them additional information to determine who should evacuate, who should take shelter temporarily, and when temporary sheltering should end.

Your officials are continuously evaluating your local emergency preparedness plans in light of new and improved information such as AEGLs to determine whether any planning changes are needed. However – your basic initial response to an emergency is the same: **Specifically - if you are advised that an accident has occurred, follow your community officials' recommendations immediately. Then, listen to Emergency Alert System (EAS) TV and radio stations that broadcast emergency messages for additional instructions and information.**

If you don't already know which stations are your local EAS stations, find out now. Get your Evacuation Kit and Shelter-in-Place Kit ready now. Talk with your family and co-workers about emergency plans and procedures. Practice sheltering-in-place and evacuating at home and at your work place. Plan with your family how each of you will carry out evacuation and shelter-in-place instructions if an emergency occurs when you are at places other than home, work or school; when you are not together; when you don't have transportation to evacuate; when older children are not with an adult; etc. Find out more about your county's emergency plans by contacting your local emergency management agency for other fact sheets and materials.

Be *Ready* and *Set to Act* immediately if instructed to evacuate, temporarily shelter-in-place or end temporary sheltering in the event of a chemical accident at the nearby Army post and for other emergencies in your community.