

# Fact Sheet

## Feuille de renseignements



Ministry of Community Safety  
and Correctional Services

Ministère de la Sécurité communautaire  
et des Services correctionnels

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### Shelter-in-Place

In the event of an emergency, such as the accidental or intentional release of dangerous goods into the atmosphere (e.g., chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear contaminants), persons in the threatened area may be instructed to shelter-in-place.

#### What is Shelter-in-Place?

- Unlike seeking refuge at a shelter outside of your home or place of work, as might occur during an evacuation, shelter-in-place is a precaution to help keep you safe by remaining indoors.

#### How will I be notified?

- Typically by the media.
- Alternately, emergency services might drive through your neighbourhood and provide instructions over a loud speaker or by going door-to-door.
- Some municipalities have installed public alerting systems, such as sirens, tone-alert radios, and automated phone calling. Please contact your local emergency management coordinator for information on any such systems in your community.

#### What should I do if at home?

- If instructed by local officials to shelter-in-place, close and lock all windows and exterior doors. If there is danger of an explosion, close all window coverings (e.g., shades, blinds, curtains). Also turn off all fans, vents, and heating and air conditioning systems and close any fireplace dampers.

- If possible, take refuge in a small, interior room, with no or few windows. In case of a chemical threat, an above ground location is preferable, as chemicals heavier than air may seep into the basement even with the windows closed.
- Although most shelter-in-place orders usually last only a few hours, take your family emergency survival kit into the room with you so you and your family and pets have a supply of food, bottled water, first aid supplies and medications on hand.
- Have a working radio available so you can listen to the media to know when it's safe to come out or if you will need to evacuate the area.
- Try to have a hard-wired telephone inside the room in which you are seeking shelter. This will provide a backup to any cellular equipment you may have.
- Avoid using the telephone unless you are reporting an emergency or it is absolutely necessary. Emergency responders and those who need immediate emergency assistance will need all available lines.

### **What should I do if advised to shelter while at work?**

- Close the business and ask all staff, customers or visitors to stay inside the building.
- Close and lock all doors, windows and any other openings to the outside.
- Turn off, seal or disable all building mechanical systems such as fans, heating and air-conditioning systems, and systems that automatically supply fresh air.
- In cases of a chemical threat try to seek shelter in above ground rooms (e.g., conference rooms, large storage closets, copy or pantry rooms) that will prevent overcrowding and will have access to a hard-wired telephone.
- Avoid rooms with large windows or mechanical equipment like ventilation blowers or pipes, as it might not be possible to seal off this equipment from the outdoors.
- Write down the names of everyone in the room, and call your business's designated emergency contact person to report who is in the room and their affiliation with the business.
- Listen to the media for further instructions from local authorities.

## What should I do if driving?

- Follow the directions issued by local authorities. If you are unable to get inside a building or easily leave the affected area, it may be best to pull your car over to the side of the road, turn off the engine and stay inside your vehicle unless there is a tornado or hurricane approaching (for information on severe weather safety visit: [www.ontario.ca/emo](http://www.ontario.ca/emo)).
- In hot weather, try to stop under a bridge or in a shady spot to avoid becoming overheated.
- In the event of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) incident close all car windows and vents and seal the heating/air-conditioning vents with duct tape or any other suitable material.
- Listen to the radio regularly for updated advice and instructions.
- For more information on preparing your family's Emergency Survival Kit visit [www.ontario.ca/emo](http://www.ontario.ca/emo).

Contact:

Emergency Management Ontario

Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional  
Services

(416) 314-3723

*Disponible en français à [www.ontario.ca/gdu](http://www.ontario.ca/gdu).*