

# HAZMAT Information

## Hazardous Materials Incidents



Hazardous materials are substances, which, because of their chemical, physical or biological nature, pose a potential risk to life, health or property if they are released. Hazards can exist during production, storage, transportation, use or disposal.

### What To Do In A Hazardous Materials Incident

1. If you witness a hazardous materials incident, call 911.
2. Stay away from the incident site to minimize the risk of contamination.
3. If you are caught outside during an incident, try to stay upstream, uphill and upwind as hazardous materials can quickly be transported by water and wind. In general, try to go at least one-half mile (10 city blocks) from the danger area; for many incidents you will need to go much further.
4. If you are in a car, close windows and shut off ventilation.
5. **If You Are Told To Shelter In Place:**
  - Strictly follow all instructions given by emergency authorities.
  - To reduce the possibility of toxic vapors entering your home, seal all entry routes as efficiently as possible. Close and lock the windows and doors. Seal gaps under doorways and windows with wet towels and duct tape or similar thick tape.
  - Turn off all ventilation systems, including furnaces, air conditioners, vents and fans.
  - Building superintendents should set all ventilation systems to 100 percent recirculation so that no outside air is drawn into the building. If this is not possible, ventilation systems should be turned off. Secure elevator operations to minimize air movement throughout the building.
  - Close all fireplace dampers.
  - Seal any gaps around window air conditioning units, bathroom and kitchen exhaust fan grilles and stove and dryer vents with tape and plastic sheeting or garbage bags, wax paper or aluminum wrap.
  - Close as many internal doors as possible.
  - If emergency officials warn of an outdoor explosion, close all drapes, curtains and shades. Stay away from windows to prevent injury from breaking glass or flying debris.
  - If you suspect that gas or vapors have entered the building, take shallow breaths through a cloth or towel.
  - Stay in protected, interior areas of the building where toxic vapors are reduced, and listen to the news media until you are told by emergency officials that all is safe, or you are told to evacuate.

6. **If you are told to evacuate, do so immediately.**

- Listen to your battery-powered radio and follow the instructions of local emergency officials.
  - If emergency officials say there is time, close all windows, shut vents and turn off attic fans to minimize contamination.
  - Use travel routes specified by emergency officials; do not use shortcuts because certain areas may be impassable or dangerous.
7. Avoid contact with any spilled liquid materials, airborne mist or condensed solid chemical deposit. Keep your body fully covered and wear gloves, socks and shoes, (although these measures may offer minimal protection).
8. Do not eat or drink any food or water that may have been contaminated.
9. If you need to stay indoors, fill the bathtub (sterilize it first) and large containers with water. Be prepared to turn off the main water intake valve in case authorities advise you to do so.

### **What To Do After An Incident**

1. Do not return home until local emergency officials say it is safe.
2. Upon returning home, open windows, vents and turn on fans to provide ventilation.
3. A person or item that has been exposed to a hazardous chemical may be contaminated and could contaminate other people or items. If you have come in contact with or have been exposed to hazardous chemicals, you should:
  - Follow decontamination instructions from emergency officials. (Depending on the chemical, you may be advised to take a thorough shower, or you may be advised to stay away from water and follow another procedure.)
  - Seek medical treatment for unusual symptoms that may be related to hazardous materials release.
  - If medical help is not immediately available and you think you might be contaminated, remove all of your clothing and shower thoroughly (unless emergency officials say the chemical is water reactive and advise you to do otherwise). Change into fresh, loose, warm clothing and seek medical help as soon as possible.
  - Place exposed clothing and shoes in tightly sealed containers without allowing them to contact other materials, and call local authorities to find out about proper disposal.
  - Advise everyone who comes in contact with you that you may have been exposed to a toxic substance.
4. Find out from emergency officials how to clean up you land and property.
5. Report any lingering vapors or other hazards to your local emergency services office.