



“Your Guide to Home Chemical Safety & Emergency Procedures”





Chemicals are an important part of life

They are a natural and important part of our environment. Even though we often don't think about it, we use chemicals every day. Chemicals help keep our food fresh and our bodies clean. They help our plants grow and fuel our cars. And chemicals make it possible for us to live longer, healthier lives.

Under certain conditions, chemicals can be poisonous or have a harmful effect on your health. Some chemicals which are safe, and even helpful in small amounts, can be harmful in larger quantities or under certain conditions.

Chemical accidents do happen at home and in the community,.....

- and the American Red Cross, Emergency Management, and the Local Emergency Planning Committee wants you to be prepared.

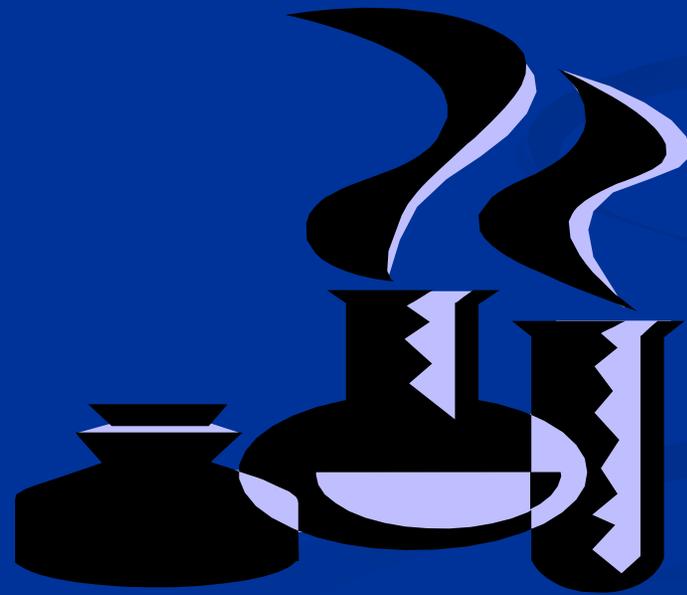


How you may be exposed to a chemical.....

- You may be exposed to a chemical in three ways:
- Breathing the chemical
- Swallowing contaminated food, water, or medication
- Touching the chemical, or coming into contact with clothing or things that have touched the chemical.

Remember....

You may be exposed to chemicals even though you may not be able to see or smell anything unusual.



Chemical Accidents can be prevented!!!

Many people think of chemicals as only those substances used in manufacturing processes.

But chemicals are found everywhere – in our kitchens, medicine cabinets, basements, and garages.

In fact, most chemical accidents occur in our own homes. And they can be prevented!

How you may be notified of a major chemical emergency -

In the event of a major chemical emergency, you will be notified by the authorities. To get your attention, you may be called by telephone, receive information via local radio stations, or emergency personnel may drive by and give instructions over a loud speaker.



Officials could even come to your door!

Listen carefully to radio or television emergency alert stations (EAS), and strictly follow instructions. Your life could depend on it.



You will be told:

- The type of health hazard;
- The area affected;
- How to protect yourself;
- Evacuation routes (if necessary);
- Shelter locations;
- Type and location of medical facilities; and
- The phone numbers to call if you need help.

Do not call the telephone company, 9-1-1, or the operator for information unless instructed to do so.

Dial these numbers only for a possible life-threatening emergency.



Shelter in Place

One of the basic instructions you may be given in a chemical emergency is to “shelter in place”.

While gathering your family, you can provide a minimal amount of protection to your breathing by covering your mouth and nose with a damp cloth.

Then,

Instructions to follow for Shelter in Place

- Close all windows in your home.
- Turn off all fans, heating and A/C systems.
- Close the fireplace damper (if you have one).
- Go to an above-ground room (not a basement) with the fewest windows and doors.
- Take your Family Disasters Supplies Kit with you.
- Wet some towels and jam them in the crack under the doors.

- Tape around the doors, windows, exhaust fans or vents. Use the plastic garbage bags to cover windows, outlets, and heat registers.
- If you are told there is danger of explosion, close the window shades, blinds, or curtains. To avoid injury, stay away from the windows.
- Stay in the room and listen to your radio until you are told “all is safe” or you are told “to evacuate”.



Evacuation

- Authorities may decide to evacuate an area for your protection. Again, it is important to stay calm, listen carefully and follow all instructions.
- If you are told to evacuate, listen to your radio to make sure the evacuation order applies to you and to understand if you are to evacuate immediately or if you have time to pack some essentials.
- Do not use your telephone.



If you are told to evacuate immediately:

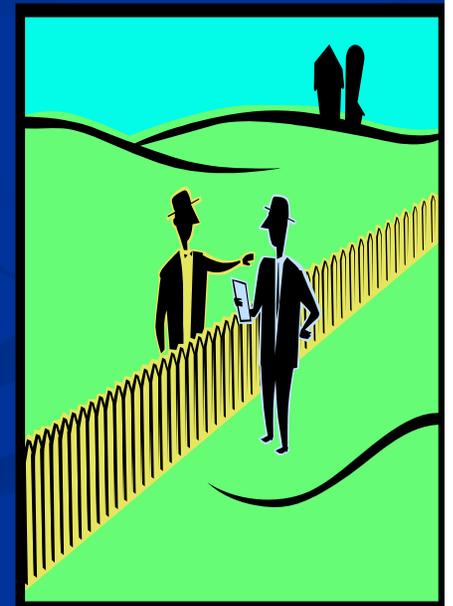
- Take your Family Disaster Supplies Kit and medications
- Close and lock your windows
- Shut off all vents
- Lock the door
- Move quickly and calmly
- Take your pets with you, if time permits.



If the authorities tell you to evacuate because of a possible chemical,

- Take your Family Disasters Supplies Kit, to include:
- A change of clothing for each family member
- Medication, eyeglasses, hearing aids or dentures, or things like canes and walkers
- Personal items such as toothbrushes, deodorant, etc.
- Items for your baby such as diapers, formula, or baby food
- Books, puzzles or cards and games for entertainment.

- Do not assume that a shelter will have everything you need. In most cases, the shelters will provide only emergency items such as meals, cots, and blankets.
- You don't need to turn off your refrigerator or freezer, but you should turn off all other appliances and lights before locking your home as you leave.
- Check on neighbors to make sure they have been notified, and offer help to those with disabilities or other special needs.



- If you need a ride, ask a neighbor. If no neighbor is available to help you, listen to the emergency broadcast station for further instructions.
- Take only one car to the evacuation site.
- Close your car windows and air vents and turn off the heater or A/C.
- Don't take shortcuts because a shortcut may put you in the path of danger. For your safety, follow the exact route you are told to take.



Remember....

The best way to protect yourself and your family is to be prepared and the time to do it, is now!!



LEPC would like to thank its contributors

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