

# What is Shelter- in- Place

“Shelter-in-Place” means to take shelter where you are, remaining inside your home, workplace or a nearby building. Some emergencies require evacuation, but often during tornados, windstorms, floods, and some chemical emergencies it is safer to stay where you are. You may need to shelter-in-place when:

- ✓ The emergency or chemical leak is of short duration
- ✓ The danger could quickly overtake you if you were outside
- ✓ There is not enough time to evacuate

## Shelter-in-Place Works

During severe weather, adequate shelter can save your life. Follow these four steps when instructed to shelter in place:

1. Move people and pets indoors immediately and go to your predesignated shelter location. Underground shelters and basements are best, but if your house or building does not have one, go to the lowest level and choose a small interior room with no windows, such as a closet or bathroom. (If you are in a mobile home, find shelter elsewhere.)
2. Crouch under a heavy piece of furniture. Cover yourself with blankets, pillows or a mattress and protect your head and neck with your arms.
3. Turn on the radio or television in order to hear any Emergency Alert System messages and wait for further instructions.
4. Stay inside until you are told that the danger has passed.

## Drug Chemical Emergencies

Chemical emergencies can occur anywhere chemicals are used, stored or transported. You can avoid danger by sheltering-in-place and following these steps:

1. Go indoors immediately. Seal the room tightly by closing and locking all windows and doors. Place a wet towel at the bottom of the door to absorb gases that might leak into the house.
2. Turn off all heating, cooling and ventilation devices including window and attic fans and anything that moves air in and out of the house. Also, close fireplace dampers.
3. Listen for instructions from emergency officials via television, radio or weather radio and do not leave until you are told it is safe to go out.
4. Stay off the telephone; do not call 911. Officials will need clear phone lines.
5. After the emergency is over, open all doors and windows and go outside until the house is well ventilated.



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# Taking Shelter

*A Preparedness  
Guide for*

**Shelter-  
in-  
Place**

and

**Saferooms**

# Shelter-in-Place

Since an emergency can happen at any time, it is important to prepare your kit in advance. Collect the following items and store them in your safest place where you plan to shelter:

- ✓ A flashlight with extra batteries
- ✓ Heavy blankets for protection from debris
- ✓ A NOAA weather radio with battery
- ✓ Bottled water
- ✓ Healthy, non-perishable food items
- ✓ A first-aid-kit



A shelter-in-place emergency will probably last only a few hours, so enough food and water for a week is not necessary. Be sure to take any necessary medicine with you to your shelter room.



## Child Safety in School

Attempting to pick up children from school during severe weather or a chemical emergency can be dangerous. You and your children could be exposed to the hazards while traveling to and from school. It is safer to leave your children at school where they will be instructed to follow the school's safety procedures until the danger has passed.

# Saferooms Save Lives

Extreme weather such as tornados and windstorms pose a serious threat to buildings and their occupants.

Tornados strong enough to damage roofs, destroy mobile homes, snap or uproot large trees and turn debris into damaging windborne missiles are common in Oklahoma.



FEMA, with help from the Wind Engineering Research Center of Texas Tech University, has developed designs for shelters called Saferooms that homeowners can build inside their houses.

The purpose of a Saferoom is to provide a space where you and your family can survive a tornado or severe windsorm with little or no injury. These shelters are designed to give protection from the forces of extreme winds as high as 250 mph, including the impact of