

Appendix L.

What to Do in a Chemical Emergency

LEPCs and TEPCs may use suggestions provided below as part of outreach to their community on what to do if a chemical emergency happens.

Additional details, phone numbers and contact information should be added to provide the appropriate information.

What are the actions you might need to take?

In case of a hazardous chemical emergency, you might be asked to take one of three actions:

- Evacuate.
- Shelter in place.
- Protect your respiratory system.

These are described below. Be sure to be clear about them. If you have neighbors who have disabilities (e.g., vision or hearing impaired), please help them. Be sure they know what they are supposed to do in an emergency.

If you are told to evacuate:

You should move to the place designated by local or tribal officials. Follow these steps to get ready for the trip.

- Stay as calm as you can. If you already know where to go and what to take, that will help.
- Gather what you and your family will need. Pack only what you will need most.

Take these things along if you can:

- This information sheet.
- Extra clothing.
- Eyeglasses, dentures, prescription drugs, other medicines, and first aid kit.
- Baby supplies.
- Portable radio and flashlight (if you have them).
- Checkbook and credit cards.
- Driver's license or identification.

Remember as you leave to do the following:

- Turn off lights, your household appliances, and heating, cooling or other ventilation systems.

- Leave your refrigerator/freezer on.
- Lock your house.

Do not use your phones unless you or someone you know is injured or too sick to do what is needed. If you must use the phone, keep your call very short.

This information sheet and your radio and TV will tell you what actions you need to take. Read it through and be sure you understand it. Clear up all questions you have, not later.

Turn on your radio or TV for up-to-date information during the emergency.

- Use only one car (or other vehicle) for your family. If you have room, please check to see if any neighbors need a ride.
- Keep your car windows and air vents closed. Listen to your radio for reports about your route and other information.
- Drive safely, traffic will be heavy. Law officers along your route will help with the traffic.
- If you need a ride, go with a neighbor, friend or relative.

If you are told to shelter in place:

You should protect yourself inside your house or other building. This is a good action to take if there is a short release or small amount of hazardous material in the air. Take these steps to protect yourself.

- Go inside if you are outside. When inside, stay inside until your radio or TV says you can leave safely. This is most likely to be no more than a few hours, rather than a day or more.
- Close all doors and windows.
- Turn off heating, cooling or ventilation systems.
- Do not use fireplaces. Put out the fire. Close the dampers.
- Listen to your local radio or TV for further instructions.

If you are told to protect your respiratory system:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a damp handkerchief or other cloth to protect your breathing. Fold the cloth over several times.
- Close the windows and doors if you are in a building or a car.
- Turn off heating, cooling or ventilation systems.

What should you do if you know there is a release of hazardous chemicals and it's coming toward you?

- Be prepared to get yourself and your family out of the area if directed to do so by the local authorities.

- Be prepared to protect yourself wherever you are if evacuation isn't possible or necessary.
- Studies have shown that even poorly sealed buildings give some protection from a serious amount of gas entering the building. Those results would indicate that if you are outside, you should go into your house or nearby public building or get in your automobile.
- Once inside, close off all outside ventilation, such as the air conditioner or windows.
- Stay inside and wait for the cloud to pass. If you feel the gas entering the building and you are in danger, a wet cloth or towel over your nose and mouth will act as a filter and offer some protection. In any event, staying inside is safer than trying to outrun a release.
- If you are outside and can't possibly get in, move crosswind (in a direction so the wind is blowing from your left to right or vice versa, but not into your face or from behind). This offers the best advantage for getting out of the path of the release. In either case, remain calm and wait until you receive further instruction before taking any further action.

If you think you have been exposed:

- **Eyes:** Gently hold your eyes open, or have someone assist you, and flush with saline or lukewarm water for 15 minutes. Encourage blinking while rinsing. If wearing contacts, remove the lenses after first flushing the eyes for five minutes.
- **Skin:** Remove contaminated clothing and flood skin with water for 15 minutes. Then wash gently with soap and water and rinse. It is important to cut off clothing rather than pulling off to avoid exposing other areas of the body.
- **Inhaled:** Immediately get the person to fresh air. Avoid breathing fumes. If victim is not breathing, call for help and start assisted (mouth-to-mouth) breathing.