About HSEMA

The mission of the DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency is to support and coordinate homeland security and emergency management efforts, ensuring that emergency operations in the District of Columbia are prepared to protect against, plan for, respond to, and recover from natural and man-made hazards. This is accomplished by:

- Providing 24-hour emergency operations center capabilities;
- Serving as the central communications point during regional emergencies;
- Developing plans and procedures to ensure emergency response and recovery capabilities for all emergencies and disasters;
- Conducting assessments of resources and capabilities for emergencies;
- Coordinating emergency resources for emergencies and disaster incidents;
- Providing training and conduct exercises for all emergency first responders, city employees, and the public;
- Coordinating all major special events and street closings;
- Providing public awareness and outreach programs.

To find out more about what you can do to prepare yourself, your family, your business, or your community, please contact us.

District of Columbia
Homeland Security and
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Shelter-In-Place

When?

Where?

Why?

Basic guidelines on how to prepare and react should a disaster impact you and your community.

When Should I Shelter?

There may be times when you and your family may need to "shelter-in-place" meaning you stay put wherever you are (home, school, work, or car) until hazardous weather passes or the area is safe. This is a precaution aimed to keep you protected while remaining indoors.

Chemical, biological, or radiological contaminants may be released accidentally or intentionally into the environment. Should this occur, information will be provided by local authorities on television and radio stations on how to protect you and your family.

For example, during a tornado warning you should seek shelter in a basement or an inside room away from windows. However, during a hazardous spill or chemical attack you should take shelter in a room above ground and possibly seal off the room to keep gas or fumes from coming in.

What Do I Do???

Prepare a Disaster Supply Kit

- First aid kit
- 3-day supply of non-perishable food
- Food and supplies for infant (if necessary)
- One gallon of water per person per day
- Flashlight & extra batteries
- Battery-powered or crank radio
- Supply of prescription medications
- Emergency contact phone numbers
- Landline phone hardwired to the outlet (not cordless house phone)
- Charged cell phone (for 911 calls)
- Items for entertainment (books, games, etc.)

Be sure to consider seniors, children, and pets when preparing your Disaster Supply Kit.

Be Aware

Whether you're near home, work, or school the procedures you follow are similar:

- Go inside the nearest structure and turn on radio or television for emergency information
- Close all windows and doors
- Turn off all ventilation systems
- Go into an interior room and seal cracks around doors and any vents that lead into the room
- Continue monitoring radio or television for notice that the community is safe

What If I'm –

At Home:

- Close & lock all windows and exterior doors
- Turn off all fans and HVAC systems
- Close the fireplace damper
- Get your Disaster Supply Kit and turn on the radio
- Use duct tape and plastic sheeting to seal all cracks leading into the room you're in
- Have your hard-wired phone with you in the room and call your emergency contact to check in

In My Vehicle:

- If you are close to home, office, or public building, go there immediately
- Otherwise, pull to the side of the road in the safest place possible. If it is sunny, under a bridge or shady spot would be preferable
- Turn off the engine and close the windows and vents
- Listen to the radio
- Stay where you are until you are told it is safe to return to the road