



Chemical Release Instructional Guide

Porter County Emergency Management Agency



How To Protect Yourself: Chemical Emergencies

If a large chemical release occurs in your area, what do you do? Protect yourself by means of evacuation or shelter-in-place.

If a person becomes exposed to hazardous chemicals, contact local authorities and dial 911.

Hazard Identification

If a chemical escapes its container and presents itself in the environment in a manner for which it was unintended, a potential hazard exists. It is important to know how to protect yourself and others in the event of a chemical emergency. Large scale airborne chemical events produce the most potential for exposure to the general population.

Notification

When a chemical emergency arises, you will be notified by either a door to door contact, instructions given over a loudspeaker, or mass notification systems, such as Smart 911 or RAVE Alert. Radio station 105.5 FM WLJE may also be used to provide current emergency instructions and updates.

Evacuation

Evacuation instructions are given for emergencies that require the movement of people from an area due to potential endangerment of health or life as during intense fires, release of high concentrations of airborne chemicals, or a long duration period of airborne chemicals. When asked to evacuate, gather essential supplies and follow the instructions provided. The Porter County Emergency Management Agency has developed an Evacuation Supply Checklist, which can be used as a guide to prepare you. The checklist can be downloaded from our website.

Prepare Your House for Evacuation

Prepare your house for evacuation by:

- ✓ Turning off lights, electrical appliances (leave refrigerator and freezer on), and ventilation systems.
- ✓ Using the telephone minimally. Lines should be open to receive important incoming calls.
- ✓ Checking on neighbors and friends, assisting as needed.
- ✓ Trying to carpool with neighbors to use the least number of vehicles as possible.
- ✓ Informing key loved ones where you are going.
- ✓ Making arrangements for pets or animals; they should be sheltered in a house or barn if you cannot take them with you.
(Pets may not be allowed at shelters; make arrangements with friends or veterinarians as alternatives.)
- ✓ Listen to 105.5 FM radio for current information which may include shelters and traffic routes.
- ✓ Not eating or drink food or water that may have been exposed to contaminants.



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Post Evacuation

- ✓ Do not return home until instructed by authorities.
- ✓ Upon returning home, open your house for ventilation.

Important Safety Tips

Remember:

- ✓ Do not attempt to pick up children from school or child care facilities. They will be evacuated or sheltered-in-place at the school or child care facility.
- ✓ Stay calm and level-headed in emergency situations. Panic will only increase the risk of accidents which could result in injury, property damage, or fatality.
- ✓ A large chemical release to the environment creates potential hazards and harmful effects to those exposed. Accidental chemical releases to the air are a primary concern to the immediate public. Releases to the air allow for rapid chemical movement and extensive coverage.
- ✓ Airborne chemicals can exist in at least three forms: gas, liquid and solid. The gaseous chemicals travel the quickest because of their low density and higher energy state. The liquids and solids have higher densities and in small droplets and particles can easily be moved through the air.
- ✓ The two most common routes of chemical entry into the body are inhalation and skin absorption. Released chemicals can be inhaled into the lungs and depending on the chemical properties can burn, asphyxiate, absorb into the blood stream or cause other damage to recipient. Skin absorption can allow entrance of chemical into the bloodstream and or damage the skin.

Temporary Breathing Protection Outside of Shelters

Once you have been notified of a chemical emergency, you may need to temporarily move around outside.

- ✓ Protect yourself by covering your nose and mouth with a damp handkerchief that has been folded over upon itself several times.
- ✓ Full body coverage clothing can provide an extra layer of skin protection.
- ✓ If you cannot find shelter: walk, drive, or move yourself crosswind. Crosswind means the wind will be blowing from one of your sides, left or right, but not from your front or back.
- ✓ When driving, close windows, and shut off the ventilation system exchanging air from the outside.

Role of Chemicals

Chemicals play an essential part in our lives:

- ✓ They protect us against diseases as with the use of bleach, cleaners, and medicines.
- ✓ They provide fuel and materials for our vehicles for transportation purposes.
- ✓ Our fabrics, carpets, and furniture are made or coated with chemicals to make us comfortable in our homes and workplaces.