

# HAZMAT Incidents And You

Chemicals are found everywhere. They purify drinking water, increase crop production, and simplify household chores. But chemicals also can be hazardous to humans or the environment if used or released improperly. Hazards can occur during production, storage, transportation, use or disposal.

Whether it be an accidental chemical release or an intentional attack, be prepared by knowing what to do before, during and after a chemical/hazardous materials incident that affects your area. Your local emergency management office is equipped with an automated phone system that will be used to notify you and provide instructions for these types of incidents. If you witness a chemical/hazardous incident, call 9-1-1 as soon as possible.

## What to do before chemical disasters:

- Know what your threats are in the community.
  - ✓ Contact your Local Emergency Planning Council.
  - ✓ Contact your local Emergency Management Office.
  - ✓ Check with your local Chamber of Commerce.
- Add these items to your "All-Hazards Disaster Kit"
  - ✓ Plastic Sheetting (you can precut these to fit the safe room of your home)
  - ✓ Duct tape
  - ✓ Scissors

## What to do during chemical disasters:

- Know your evacuation routes and evacuate if told to do so.
- Shelter in place if told to do so (see page 42 for directions).
- Keep your disaster kit with you in your safe room.
- Listen to local radio or television stations for detailed information and instructions.
- Remember that some toxic chemicals are odorless.

## What to do after chemical disasters:

- Return home or go outside only when told it is safe to do so by local authorities.
- Open windows and vents and turn on fans to provide ventilation.
- Follow decontamination instructions from local authorities.
- Seek medical treatment for symptoms related to hazardous materials.

- If medical assistance is not immediately available and you are contaminated, remove your clothes and place in plastic bag or sealed container and dispose of as told to by local authorities, take a shower and put on clean clothes.
- Remember that eyeglasses, contacts and hearing aides may be contaminated and must be cleaned properly or disposed of.
- Seek information from local authorities on how to clean your property.
- Continue to monitor your television and radio for current information.

*Are you ready?*