Shelter-in-Place Procedures - What It Means to “Shelter-in-Place”

If an incident occurs and the building or areas around you become unstable, or if the air outdoors becomes dangerous due to toxic or irritating substances, it is usually safer to stay indoors because leaving the area may expose you to that danger. Thus, to “shelter-in-place” means to make a shelter of the building that you are in. With a few adjustments, this location can be made even safer and more comfortable until it is safe to go outside.

Basic “Shelter-in-Place” Guidance

If an incident occurs and the building you are in is not damaged, stay inside—seeking an interior room—until you are told it is safe to come out. If your building is damaged, take your personal belongings (purse, wallet, etc.) and follow the evacuation procedures for your building (close your door, proceed to the nearest exit, and use the stairs instead of the elevators). Once you have evacuated, quickly seek shelter at the nearest University building. If police or fire department personnel are on the scene, follow their directions.

How You Will Know to “Shelter-in-Place”

A shelter-in-place notification may come from several sources, including the University Police, Residence Life staff members, other University employees, or other state or local authorities utilizing the University’s emergency communication tools.

How to “Shelter-in-Place”

No matter where you are, the basic steps of shelter-in-place will generally remain the same. Should the need ever arise, follow these steps, unless instructed otherwise by local emergency personnel:

1. If you are inside, stay where you are. Collect any emergency shelter-in-place supplies and telephone to be used in case of emergency. If you are outdoors, proceed into the closest building quickly or follow instructions from emergency personnel on the scene.

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2. Locate a room to shelter inside. It should be
   ⇒ An interior room;
   ⇒ Above ground level; and
   ⇒ Without windows or with the least number of
     windows. If there is a large group of people
     inside a particular building, several rooms may
     be necessary.
3. Shut and lock all windows (tighter seal) and close
   exterior doors.
4. Turn off air conditioners, heaters and fans.
5. Close vents to ventilation systems as you are able.
   (University staff will turn off ventilation as quickly
   as possible.)
6. Make a list of people with you and ask someone
   (Residence Life staff, faculty or other staff) to call
   the list in to University Police so they know where
   you are sheltering. If only students are present,
   one of the students should call in the list.
7. Turn on a radio or TV and listen for further
   instructions.
8. Make yourself comfortable.