

# **Be Ready**

## **Homeland Security**

### **Overview**

#### **INTRODUCTION - What is Ready.gov all about?**

Terrorists are working to obtain biological, chemical, nuclear and radiological weapons and the threat of an attack is very real. Here at the Department of Homeland Security, throughout the federal government, and at organizations across America we are working hard to strengthen our Nation's security. Whenever possible, we want to stop terrorist attacks before they happen. All Americans should begin a process of learning about potential threats so we are better prepared to react during an attack. While there is no way to predict what will happen, or what your personal circumstances will be, there are simple things you can do now to prepare yourself and your loved ones. Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as assembling a supply kit and developing a family communications plan, are the same for both a natural or man-made emergency. However, as you will see throughout the pages of **Ready.gov**, there are important differences among potential terrorist threats that will impact the decisions you make and the actions you take. With a little planning and common sense, you can be better prepared for the unexpected.

#### **STEP 1 - Make a Kit of Emergency Supplies**

Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to make it on your own for *at least* three days, maybe longer. While there are many things that might make you more comfortable, think first about fresh water, food and clean air. Consider putting together two kits. In one, put everything needed to stay where you are and make it on your own. The other should be a lightweight, smaller version you can take with you if you have to get away. You'll need a gallon of water per person per day. Include in the kits canned and dried foods that are easy to store and prepare. If you live in a cold weather climate, include warm clothes and a sleeping bag for each member of the family. Start now by gathering basic emergency supplies: a flashlight, a battery-powered radio, extra batteries, a first aid kit, toilet articles, prescription medicines and other special things your family may need. Many potential terrorist attacks could send tiny microscopic "junk" into the air. Many of these materials can only hurt you if they get into your body, so think about creating a barrier between yourself and any contamination. It's smart to have something for each member of the family that covers their mouth and nose. Plan to use two to three layers of a cotton t-shirt, handkerchief or towel. Or, consider filter masks, readily available in hardware stores, which are rated based on how small a particle they filter. It is very important that the mask or other material fit your face snugly so that most of the air you breathe comes through the mask, not around it. Do whatever you can to make the best fit possible for children. Also, include duct tape and heavyweight garbage bags or plastic sheeting that can be used to seal windows and doors if you need to create a barrier between yourself and any potential contamination outside.

#### **STEP 2 - Make a Plan for What You Will Do in an Emergency**

Be prepared to assess the situation, use common sense and whatever you have on hand to take care of yourself and your loved ones. Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the attack, the first important decision is deciding whether to stay or go. You should understand and plan for both possibilities. Develop a Family Communications Plan: Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another and review what you will do in different situations. Consider a plan where each family member calls, or

e-mails, the same friend or relative in the event of an emergency. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-state contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members. You may have trouble getting through, or the phone system may be down altogether, but be patient. **Staying Put:** There are circumstances when staying put and creating a barrier between yourself and potentially contaminated air outside, a process known as "shelter-in-place," can be a matter of survival. Choose an interior room or one with as few windows and doors as possible. Consider precutting plastic sheeting to seal windows, doors and air vents. Each piece should be several inches larger than the space you want to cover so that you can duct tape it flat against the wall. Label each piece with the location of where it fits. If you see large amounts of debris in the air, or if local authorities say the air is badly contaminated, you may want to "shelter-in-place." Quickly bring your family and pets inside, lock doors, and close windows, air vents and fireplace dampers. Immediately turn off air conditioning, forced air heating systems, exhaust fans and clothes dryers. Take your emergency supplies and go into the room you have designated. Seal all windows, doors and vents. Watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet for instructions. **Getting Away:** Plan in advance how you will assemble your family and anticipate where you will go. Choose several destinations in different directions so you have options in an emergency. If you have a car, keep at least a half tank of gas in it at all times. Become familiar with alternate routes as well as other means of transportation out of your area. If you do not have a car, plan how you will leave if you have to. Take your emergency supply kit and lock the door behind you. If you believe the air may be contaminated, drive with your windows and vents closed and keep the air conditioning and heater turned off. Listen to the radio for instructions. **At Work and School:** Think about the places where your family spends time: school, work and other places you frequent. Talk to your children's schools and your employer about emergency plans. Find out how they will communicate with families during an emergency. If you are an employer, be sure you have an emergency preparedness plan. Review and practice it with your employees. A community working together during an emergency also makes sense. Talk to your neighbors about how you can work together.

### **STEP 3 - Be Informed about what might happen**

Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as assembling a supply kit and developing a family communications plan, are the same for both a natural or man-made emergency. However there are important differences among potential terrorist threats that will impact the decisions you make and the actions you take.

**Specific Terrorist Threats** A biological attack is the deliberate release of germs or other substances that can make you sick. Many agents must be inhaled, enter through a cut in the skin or eaten to make you sick. A chemical attack is the deliberate release of a toxic gas, liquid or solid that can poison people and the environment. A nuclear blast is an explosion with intense light and heat, a damaging pressure wave and widespread radioactive material that can contaminate the air, water and ground surfaces for miles around. A radiation threat or "Dirty Bomb" is the use of common explosives to spread radioactive materials over a targeted area. Be prepared to adapt this information to your personal circumstances and make every effort to follow instructions received from authorities on the scene. Above all, stay calm, be patient and think before you act. With these simple preparations, you can be ready for the unexpected.

## **MAKING A KIT**

### **Water**

- One gallon of water per person per day, for drinking and sanitation.
- Children, nursing mothers, and sick people may need more water.

- If you live in a warm weather climate more water may be necessary.
- Store water tightly in clean plastic containers such as soft drink bottles.
- Keep *at least* a three-day supply of water per person.

## **Food**

- Store *at least* a three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water.
- Pack a manual can opener and eating utensils.
- Choose foods your family will eat.
  - Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
  - Protein or fruit bars
  - Dry cereal or granola
  - Peanut butter
  - Dried fruit
  - Nuts
  - Crackers
  - Canned juices
  - Non-perishable pasteurized milk
  - High energy foods
  - Vitamins
  - Food for infants
  - Comfort/stress foods

## **CLEAN AIR**

Many potential terrorist attacks could send tiny microscopic "junk" into the air. For example, an explosion may release very fine debris that can cause lung damage. A biological attack may release germs that can make you sick if inhaled or absorbed through open cuts. Many of these agents can only hurt you if they get into your body, so think about **creating a barrier** between yourself and any contamination.

### **Nose and Mouth Protection**

Face masks or dense-weave cotton material, that **snugly covers your nose and mouth** and is specifically fit for each member of the family. Do whatever you can to make the best fit possible for children. Be prepared to improvise with what you have on hand to protect your nose, mouth, eyes and cuts in your skin. Anything that fits snugly over your nose and mouth, including any dense-weave cotton material, can help filter contaminants

in an emergency. It is very important that most of the air you breathe comes through the mask or cloth, not around it. Do whatever you can to make the best fit possible for children. There are also a variety of face masks readily available in hardware stores that are rated based on how small a particle they can filter in an industrial setting. Given the different types of attacks that could occur, there is not one solution for masking. For instance, simple cloth face masks can filter some of the airborne "junk" or germs you might breathe into your body, but will probably not protect you from chemical gases. **Still, something over your nose and mouth in an emergency is better than nothing.** Limiting how much "junk" gets into your body may impact whether or not you get sick or develop disease.

### **Other Barriers**

- **Heavyweight plastic garbage bags or plastic sheeting**
- **Duct tape**
- **Scissors**

There are circumstances when staying put and creating a barrier between yourself and potentially contaminated air outside, a process known as "**shelter-in-place**," is a matter of survival. You can use these things to tape up windows, doors and air vents if you need to seal off a room from outside contamination. Consider precutting and labeling these materials. Anything you can do in advance will save time when it counts. Use available information to **assess the situation**. If you see large amounts of debris in the air, or if local authorities say the air is badly contaminated, you can use these things to tape up windows, doors and air vents if you need to seal off a room.

### **HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air Filtration) Filter Fans**

Once you have sealed a room with plastic sheeting and duct tape you may have created a better barrier between you and any contaminants that may be outside. However, no seal is perfect and some leakage is likely. In addition to which, you may find yourself in a space that is already contaminated to some degree. Consider a **portable air purifier**, with a **HEPA filter**, to help remove contaminants from the room where you are sheltering. These highly efficient filters have small sieves that can capture very tiny particles, including some biological agents. Once trapped within a HEPA filter contaminants cannot get into your body and make you sick. While these filters are excellent at filtering dander, dust, molds, smoke, biological agents and other contaminants, they will not stop chemical gases. Some people, particularly those with severe allergies and asthma, use HEPA filters in masks, portable air purifiers as well as in larger home or industrial models to continuously filter the air.

### **First Aid Kit**

In any emergency a family member or you yourself may be cut, burned or suffer other injuries. If you have these basic supplies you are better prepared to help your loved ones when they are hurt. Remember, many injuries are not life threatening and do not require immediate medical attention. Knowing how to treat minor injuries can make a difference in an emergency. Consider taking a first aid class, but simply having the following things can help you stop bleeding, prevent infection and assist in decontamination.

Things you should have:

- Two pairs of Latex, or other **sterile gloves** (if you are allergic to Latex).
- **Sterile dressings** to stop bleeding.
- **Cleansing agent/soap** and antibiotic towelettes to disinfect.

- **Antibiotic ointment** to prevent infection.
- **Burn ointment** to prevent infection.
- **Adhesive bandages** in a variety of sizes.
- **Eye wash solution** to flush the eyes or as general decontaminant.
- **Thermometer**
- **Prescription medications** you take every day such as insulin, heart medicine and asthma inhalers. You should periodically rotate medicines to account for expiration dates.
- **Prescribed medical supplies** such as glucose and blood pressure monitoring equipment and supplies.

Things it may be good to have:

- Cell phone
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant

Non-prescription drugs:

- Potassium Iodide
- Aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid (for upset stomach)
- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Laxative
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

## SUPPLY CHECKLISTS

### Emergency Supplies

The basics of survival: **water**, **food** and **clean air** are essential, but some of the following items may make a time of crisis more comfortable.

### Basic Supplies

- **Flashlight** and extra **batteries**
- Battery powered **radio** and extra batteries
- Plastic **garbage bags**, ties and toilet paper for personal sanitation
- **First aid kit**

- **Map** of the area for evacuation or for locating shelters
- A **whistle** to signal for help
- **Moist towelettes**

### **Clothing and Bedding**

If you live in a cold weather climate, you must think about warmth. It is possible that the power will be out and you will not have heat. Rethink your clothing and bedding supplies once a year to account for growing children and other changes.

- Have at least **one complete change of warm clothing** and shoes per person including:
  - A jacket or coat
  - Long pants
  - A long sleeve shirt
  - Sturdy shoes
  - A hat and gloves
  - A **sleeping bag** or warm blanket for each person.

### **Tools**

The basics of survival: water, food, and clean air are essential, but some of the following items may make a time of crisis more comfortable:

- Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or a print out of this information
- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Cash or traveler's checks, change
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife
- Paper towels
- Fire extinguisher: small canister, ABC type
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Medicine dropper

- Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water

### **Sanitation**

- Toilet paper, towelettes
- Feminine supplies
- Personal hygiene items
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Household chlorine bleach You can use bleach as a disinfectant (diluted 9 parts water to one part bleach), or in an emergency you can also use it to purify water. Use 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.

### **Important Family Documents**

- Keep copies of important family records such as insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS ITEMS**

Remember the special needs of your family members. **Infants**, the **elderly** and **persons with disabilities** need the same planning as everyone else, and sometimes a little more, to be prepared for a terrorist attack.

### **For Baby:**

- Formula
- Diapers
- Bottles
- Powdered milk
- Medications
- Moist Towelettes
- Diaper rash ointment

### **For Adults:**

- Ask your doctor about storing prescription medications such as heart and high blood pressure medication, insulin and other prescription drugs.
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eye glasses

For more information on supplies, see "Your Family Disaster Supply Kit" from American Red Cross and Federal Emergency Management Agency

### **For Seniors:**

- Plan how you will evacuate or signal for help.
- Plan emergency procedures with home health care agencies or workers.
- Tell others where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Teach others how to operate necessary equipment.
- Label equipment like wheelchairs, canes or walkers.
- **Additional supplies for Seniors:**
  - **Extra eyeglasses and hearing-aid batteries.**
  - **Extra wheelchair batteries or other special equipment in your supply kit.**
  - **A list of the style and serial numbers of medical devices such as pacemakers in your emergency supply kits.**
  - **Copies of medical insurance and medicare cards.**
  - **List of doctors and emergency contacts.**

### **For People with Disabilities:**

- Create a support network to help in an emergency.
- Tell these people where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Give one member of your support network a key to your house or apartment.
- Contact your city or county government's emergency information management office. Many local offices keep lists of people with disabilities so they can be located quickly in a sudden emergency.
- Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to help identify your disability.
- If you are dependent on dialysis or other life sustaining treatment, know the location and availability of more than one facility.
- Show others how to operate your wheelchair.
- Know the size and weight of your wheelchair, in addition to whether or not it is collapsible, in case it has to be transported.
- **Additional Supplies for People with Disabilities:**
  - **Extra eyeglasses and hearing-aid batteries.**
  - **Extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen.**
  - **Keep a list of the style and serial number of medical devices.**
  - **Medical insurance and Medicare cards.**
  - **List of doctors, relatives or friends who should be notified if you are hurt.**

For more information on supplies, see "Your Family Disaster Supply Kit" from American Red Cross and Federal Emergency Management Agency. For more information on special needs, see Disaster Preparedness For People With Disabilities from FEMA, and Disaster Preparedness for Seniors by Seniors from the Red Cross.

## Make a Plan

You should **plan in advance** what you will do in an emergency. Be prepared to **assess the situation, use common sense** and whatever you have on hand to take care of yourself and your loved ones. Think about the places where your family spends time: school, work and other places you frequent. Ask about their emergency plans. Find out how they will communicate with families during an emergency. If they do not have an emergency plan, consider helping develop one.

## CREATING A FAMILY PLAN

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another and review what you will do in different situations.

- It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an **out-of-state contact** may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.
- Be sure every member of your family **knows the phone number** and has **coins** or a **prepaid phone card** to call the emergency contact.
- **You may have trouble getting through**, or the telephone system maybe down altogether, **but be patient**.

**Emergency Information** Find out what kinds of disasters, both natural and man-made, are most likely to occur in your area and how you will be notified. Methods of getting your attention vary from community to community. One common method is to broadcast via **emergency radio** and **TV broadcasts**. You might hear a special siren, or get a telephone call, or emergency workers may go door-to-door. Call the closest chapter of the American Red Cross for emergency information that applies to your community. **Emergency Plans** You may also want to **inquire about emergency plans** at places where your family spends time: **work, daycare and school**. If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create one. Talk to your neighbors about how you can work together in the event of an emergency. You will be better prepared to safely reunite your family and loved ones during an emergency if you think ahead and communicate with others in advance.

## DECIDING TO STAY OR GO

Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the attack, the first important decision is whether you stay put or get away. You should understand and plan for both possibilities. Use common sense and available information, including what you are learning here, to determine if there is immediate danger. In any emergency, local authorities may or may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should monitor TV or radio news reports for information or official instructions as it becomes available. If you're specifically told to evacuate or seek medical treatment, do so immediately. **Staying Put** Whether you are at home, work or elsewhere, there may be situations when it's simply best to stay where you are and avoid any uncertainty outside. There are other circumstances when staying put and creating a barrier

between yourself and potentially contaminated air outside, a process known as "shelter-in-place," is a matter of survival. Use available information to assess the situation. If you see large amounts of debris in the air, or if local authorities say the air is badly contaminated, you may want to take this kind of action.

### To "Shelter-in-Place:"

- Bring your family and pets **inside**.
- **Lock** doors, **close** windows, air vents and fireplace dampers.
- **Turn off** fans, air conditioning and forced air heating systems.
- **Take your emergency supply kit** unless you have reason to believe it has been contaminated.
- **Go into an interior room** with few windows, if possible.
- **Seal** all windows, doors and air vents with plastic sheeting and duct tape. Consider measuring and cutting the sheeting in advance to save time.
- Be prepared to **improvise** and use what you have on hand to **seal gaps** so that you create a barrier between yourself and any contamination.
- Local authorities may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should **watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet often for official news** and instructions as it becomes available.

**Getting Away** There may be conditions under which you will decide to get away, or there may be situations when you are ordered to leave. Plan how you will assemble your family and anticipate where you will go. Choose several destinations in different directions so you have options in an emergency.

### Create an evacuation plan:

- **Plan places** where your family will meet, both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood.
- If you have a car, keep at least a **half tank of gas** in it at all times in case you need to evacuate.
- Become familiar with **alternate routes** and other means of transportation out of your area.
- If you **do not have a car**, plan how you will leave if you have to.
- **Take your emergency supply kit** unless you have reason to believe it has been contaminated.
- **Lock** the door behind you.
- Take your **pets** with you, but understand that only service animals may be permitted in public shelters. Plan how you will care for your pets in an emergency. **If time allows:**
  - Call or email the "out-of-state" contact in your family communications plan.
  - Tell them where you are going.
  - If there is damage to your home and you are instructed to do so, shut off water, gas and electricity before leaving.
  - Leave a note telling others when you left and where you are going.
  - Check with neighbors who may need a ride.

**Learn how and when to turn off utilities:** If there is damage to your home or you are instructed to turn off your

utilities:

- Locate the electric, gas and water shut-off valves.
- Keep necessary tools near gas and water shut-off valves.
- Teach family members how to turn off utilities.
- **If you turn the gas off, a professional must turn it back on. Do not attempt to do this yourself.**

### **Plan for your pets:**

- **Pets should not be left behind**, but understand that only service animals may be permitted in public shelters. Plan how you will care for your pets in an emergency.
- **Store** extra food, water and supplies for your pet.

## **AT WORK AND SCHOOL**

Like individuals and families, schools, daycare providers, workplaces, neighborhoods and apartment buildings should all have site-specific emergency plans. Ask about plans at the places where your family spends the most time: work, school and other places you frequent. If none exist, consider volunteering to help develop one. You will be better prepared to safely reunite your family and loved ones during an emergency if you think ahead, and communicate with others in advance.

### **Neighborhoods and Apartment Buildings**

A community working together during an emergency makes sense.

- **Talk to your neighbors** about how you can **work together** during an emergency.
- **Find out if anyone has specialized equipment** like a power generator, or expertise such as medical knowledge, that might help in a crisis.
- Decide who will **check on elderly or disabled neighbors**.
- **Make back-up plans** for children in case you can't get home in an emergency.
- Sharing plans and **communicating in advance** is a good strategy.

### **Schools and Daycare**

If you are a parent, or guardian of an elderly or disabled adult, make sure schools and daycare providers have emergency response plans.

- Ask how they will **communicate** with families during a crisis.
- Ask if they **store** adequate food, water and other basic supplies.
- Find out if they are **prepared** to "shelter-in-place" if need be, and where they plan to go if they must get away.

### **Employers**

If you are an employer, make sure your workplace has a building evacuation plan that is regularly practiced.

- Take a critical look at your **heating, ventilation and air conditioning system** to determine if it is secure or if it could feasibly be upgraded to better filter potential contaminants, and be sure you know how to turn it off if you need to.

- Think about what to do if your employees **can't go home**.
- Make sure you have appropriate **supplies** on hand.
- Read more at Make a Kit and Staying Put.

For more information on specific building threats, see "Protecting Building Environments from Airborne Chemical, Biological, or Radiological Attacks" from National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

## IN A MOVING VEHICLE

- If there is an **explosion** or other factor that makes it difficult to control the vehicle, **pull over, stop the car and set the parking break**.
- If the emergency could impact the physical stability of the roadway, **avoid overpasses, bridges, power lines, signs** and other hazards.
- If a power line falls on your car you are at risk of **electrical shock**, stay inside until a trained person removes the wire.
- **Listen** to the radio **for information and instructions as it becomes available**.

## IN A HIGH-RISE BUILDING

- Note where the closest **emergency exit** is.
- Be sure you know **another way out** in case your first choice is blocked.
- **Take cover** against a desk or table if things are falling.
- **Move away** from file cabinets, bookshelves or other things that might fall.
- **Face away** from windows and glass.
- **Move away** from exterior walls.
- Determine if you should stay put, "**shelter-in-place**" or get away.
- **Listen** for and follow **instructions**.
- Take your **emergency supply kit**, unless there is reason to believe it has been contaminated.
- **Do not use elevators**.
- Stay to the right **while going down stairwells to allow emergency workers to come up**.

## Be Informed

Disaster preparedness is no longer the sole concern of earthquake prone Californians and those who live in the part of the country known as "Tornado Alley." For Americans, preparedness must now account for man-made disasters as well as natural ones. Knowing what to do during an emergency is an important part of being

prepared and may make all the difference when seconds count.

## **Biological Threat**

A biological attack is the deliberate release of germs or other biological substances that can make you sick. Many agents must be inhaled, enter through a cut in the skin or be eaten to make you sick. Some biological agents, such as anthrax, do not cause contagious diseases. Others, like the smallpox virus, can result in diseases you can catch from other people. **If there is a Biological Threat** Unlike an explosion, a biological attack may or may not be immediately obvious. While it is possible that you will see signs of a biological attack, as was sometimes the case with the anthrax mailings, it is perhaps more likely that local health care workers will report a pattern of unusual illness or there will be a wave of sick people seeking emergency medical attention. You will probably learn of the danger through an emergency radio or TV broadcast, or some other signal used in your community. You might get a telephone call or emergency response workers may come to your door. In the event of a biological attack, public health officials may not immediately be able to provide information on what you should do. It will take time to determine exactly what the illness is, how it should be treated, and who is in danger. However, you should watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet for official news including the following:

- Are you in the group or area authorities consider in danger?
- What are the signs and symptoms of the disease?
- Are medications or vaccines being distributed?
- Where?
- Who should get them?
- Where should you seek emergency medical care if you become sick?

**Protect Yourself** If you become aware of an unusual and suspicious release of an unknown substance nearby, it doesn't hurt to protect yourself. Quickly get away. Cover your mouth and nose with layers of fabric that can filter the air but still allow breathing. Examples include two to three layers of cotton such as a t-shirt, handkerchief or towel. Otherwise, several layers of tissue or paper towels may help. Wash with soap and water and contact authorities. **Symptoms and Hygiene** At the time of a declared biological emergency, if a family member becomes sick, it is important to be suspicious. Do not automatically assume, however, that you should go to a hospital emergency room or that any illness is the result of the biological attack. Symptoms of many common illnesses may overlap. Use common sense, practice good hygiene and cleanliness to avoid spreading germs, and seek medical advice.

## **Chemical Threat**

A chemical attack is the deliberate release of a toxic gas, liquid or solid that can poison people and the environment. **Possible Signs of Chemical Threat**

- Many people suffering from watery eyes, twitching, choking, having trouble breathing or losing coordination.
- Many sick or dead birds, fish or small animals are also cause for suspicion.

### **If You See Signs of Chemical Attack**

- Quickly try to **define the impacted area** or where the chemical is coming from, if possible.

- Take immediate action to **get away**.
- If the chemical is inside a building where you are, get out of the building without passing through the contaminated area, if possible.
- Otherwise, it may be better to move as far away from where you suspect the chemical release is and "shelter-in-place." Read more at Staying Put
- If you are outside, quickly decide what is the **fastest escape** from the chemical threat. Consider if you can get out of the area, or if you should follow plans to "shelter-in-place."

**If You Think You Have Been Exposed to a Chemical** If your eyes are watering, your skin is stinging, and you are having trouble breathing, you may have been exposed to a chemical.

- If you think you may have been **exposed to a chemical, strip immediately and wash**.
- Look for a hose, fountain, or any source of **water**, and wash with **soap** if possible, being sure not to scrub the chemical into your skin.
- Seek emergency **medical attention**.

For more information, see "Are you Ready?" from Federal Emergency Management Agency.

## Explosions

### If There is an Explosion

- **Take shelter** against your desk or a sturdy table.
- **Exit** the building ASAP.
- **Do not** use elevators.
- **Check** for fire and other hazards.
- **Take** your emergency supply kit if time allows.

### If There is a Fire

- **Exit** the building ASAP.
- **Crawl** low if there is smoke
- Use a wet cloth, if possible, to **cover** your nose and mouth.
- Use the back of your hand to **feel** the upper, lower, and middle parts of closed doors.
- If the door **is not hot**, brace yourself against it and open slowly.
- If the door **is hot**, do not open it. Look for another way out.
- **Do not use** elevators
- If you catch fire, do not run. **Stop-drop-and-roll** to put out the fire.
- If you are at home, go to a previously designated **meeting place**.

- Account for your **family** members and carefully **supervise** small children.
- **Never** go back into a burning building.

### **If You Are Trapped in Debris**

- If possible, **use a flashlight** to signal your location to rescuers.
- **Avoid** unnecessary movement so that you don't kick up dust.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** with anything you have on hand. (Dense-weave cotton material can act as a good filter. Try to breathe through the material.)
- **Tap** on a **pipe or wall** so that rescuers can hear where you are.
- If possible, **use a whistle** to signal rescuers.
- Shout **only** as a last resort. **Shouting can cause a person to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.**

### **Nuclear Blast**

A nuclear blast is an explosion with intense light and heat, a damaging pressure wave and widespread radioactive material that can contaminate the air, water and ground surfaces for miles around. While experts may predict at this time that a nuclear attack is less likely than other types, terrorism by its nature is unpredictable. **If There is a Nuclear Blast**

- **Take cover** immediately, below ground if possible, though any shield or shelter will help protect you from the immediate effects of the blast and the pressure wave.
- Quickly **assess the situation**.
- Consider if you can get out of the area or if it would be better to go inside a building and follow your plan to "**shelter-in-place**."
- In order to **limit the amount of radiation you are exposed to**, think about shielding, distance and time.
  - **Shielding:** If you have a thick shield between yourself and the radioactive materials more of the radiation will be absorbed, and you will be exposed to less.
  - **Distance:** The farther away you are away from the blast and the fallout the lower your exposure.
  - **Time:** Minimizing time spent exposed will also reduce your risk.

Use **available information** to **assess the situation**, if there is a significant radiation threat, health care authorities may or may not advise you to take **potassium iodide**. Potassium iodide is the same stuff added to your table salt to make it iodized. It may or may not protect your thyroid gland, which is particularly vulnerable, from radioactive iodine exposure. Consider keeping potassium iodide in your emergency kit, learn what the appropriate doses are for each of your family members. Plan to **speak with your health care provider in advance** about what makes sense for your family.

### **Radiation**

A radiation threat or "**Dirty Bomb**" is the use of common explosives to spread radioactive materials over a

targeted area. It is not a nuclear blast. The force of the explosion and radioactive contamination will be more localized. While the blast will be immediately obvious, the presence of radiation will not be clearly defined until trained personnel with specialized equipment are on the scene. As with any radiation, you want to try to **limit exposure**. **If There is a Radiation Threat or "Dirty Bomb"** To limit the amount of radiation you are exposed to, think about shielding, distance and time.

- **Shielding:** If you have a thick shield between yourself and the radioactive materials more of the radiation will be absorbed, and you will be exposed to less.
- **Distance:** The farther away you are away from the blast and the fallout the lower your exposure.
- **Time:** Minimizing time spent exposed will also reduce your risk.

As with any emergency, local authorities may not be able to immediately provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet often for official news and information as it becomes available.