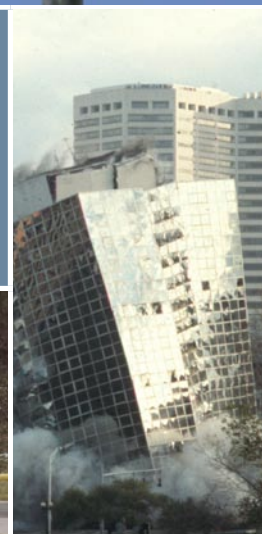
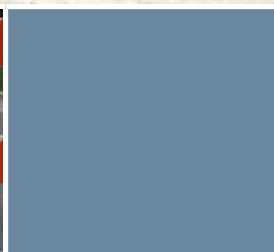


Preparing To Shelter In Place Issues For Governments To Consider



PREPARING TO SHELTER IN PLACE

ISSUES FOR GOVERNMENTS TO CONSIDER

Sheltering in place means staying inside whatever building you happen to be in at the time of an emergency or, if you are outside, going into an undamaged building nearby and staying there for a period that may last hours to several days. Officials are likely to instruct people to shelter in place if an explosion or chemical spill releases toxic dust, fumes, radiation, or chemicals outside. Community residents may want to protect themselves this way if an emergency like an electrical blackout or snowstorm makes it very difficult or unsafe for them to go anywhere else. Depending on when the emergency occurs, some people are likely to be in a place other than their home – for example, at work, school, or shopping – apart from other household members.

When almost 2,000 diverse community residents in the *Redefining Readiness* demonstration sites considered what they would face in a shelter-in-place emergency, they identified many issues that are critical to their protection. While most of the issues relate to individuals and private-sector organizations in communities, policy makers and government agencies also have important roles to play. The questions below are designed to stimulate thinking about ways that local, state, and federal governments can support the efforts of community residents and nongovernmental organizations to prepare effectively for shelter-in-place emergencies. There are many right answers, but don't expect to have answers right away. Instead, as you consider the questions with other policy makers or with the other people in your agency, decide which questions are relevant to your particular arm of government and how you can best address them.

If you also want your government-run work place or school to be prepared, take a look at *Issues for Work Places to Consider* and *Issues for Schools and Early Childhood/Youth Programs to Consider* too.

For more information about the problems people face trying to shelter in place, examples of specific actions that can be taken to resolve those problems, and an inclusive process for using this issue set, please visit www.redefiningreadiness.net.

I. DECLARATION OF A SHELTER-IN-PLACE EMERGENCY

(I) Under what circumstances will government officials instruct residents to protect themselves by sheltering in place?

- What are the specific emergency situations that will trigger this kind of instruction?
- Will instructions vary for people in different locations in the community? If so, on what basis and how?

II. RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOVERNMENT WORKERS AND PEOPLE IN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

(1) Have government workers and other people who use government buildings been involved in preparing to keep people safe in those places in a shelter-in-place emergency?

- Have *Issues for Work Places to Consider* and *Issues for Schools and Early Childhood/Youth Programs to Consider* been discussed and addressed in government-run work places and schools?

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

(1) How will the public be informed about a shelter-in-place emergency?

- Do current methods communicate effectively with all of the places where people will be?
- Do current methods communicate effectively with people who don't speak English and people who are hearing impaired, in places without radio or TV, outside, on the road, or in isolated areas?
- Do current methods clearly distinguish the need to shelter in place from the need to evacuate?
- Are effective back-ups available if some forms of communication are not operational during the emergency?

(2) How will community residents find out how their loved ones are and where they are during a shelter-in-place emergency?

- What is the role of government in assuring telephone and e-mail communication for the general public during a large-scale emergency?

- Is there current capacity in the community for a telephone/Internet hot-line that work sites, shops, schools, and other places could contact to report the condition of their building and the people inside during the emergency and that community members could contact to get information about their loved ones in languages they understand?
- If that capacity does not exist, does the government need to support such an effort?

IV. PUBLIC INCENTIVES, SUPPORTS, AND PROTECTIONS

(1) What is the role of government in assuring that work places, schools, businesses, and other places have prepared to shelter the people inside during this kind of emergency?

- What kinds of incentives and supports do different kinds of places need to prepare for sheltering in place?
- What kinds of incentives and supports will promote an inclusive preparedness process (in other words, a process that involves – and addresses the issues of – the people who work at the place, who go there on a regular basis, and whose dependents go there on a regular basis)?
- What can be done to make community residents aware of how public places will respond to a shelter-in-place emergency?

(2) What is the role of government in providing shelter for people who are outside in a dangerous area in this kind of emergency?

- Do public shelters need to be prepared where people outside can go?
- Do emergency workers need to be prepared to rescue people outside and take them to shelter?

(3) What is the role of government in assuring the safety of buildings where people would be sheltering in this kind of emergency?

- To minimize the seepage of toxic substances into buildings, should the windows, doors, walls, and ceilings of buildings be inspected to see if they are air-tight?
- Should the government develop standards for external seepage and include these standards in building codes?
- Should the government publicize criteria for determining if a building is in danger of collapsing as a result of an emergency?

- (4) What is the role of government in organizing a system of medical consultation and support for people sheltering in buildings?**
- Will medical professionals (including mental health professionals) be available by telephone, Internet, or CB radio to help sheltering people deal with medical emergencies?
 - How will critically needed medications and supplies be delivered safely to people sheltering in buildings, and how will critically ill people be evacuated safely from buildings?
- (5) What preparations have been made to patrol the streets in uncontaminated areas to prevent break-ins during this kind of emergency?**
- What can be done to make people in all neighborhoods aware of these preparations?
- (6) What is the role of government in partnering with community organizations and groups to respond to a shelter-in-place emergency?**
- Which organizations and groups is the government partnering with now?
 - How can the government determine if other organizations and groups in the community are interested in being involved and what they might contribute?
 - What is the role of government in protecting organizations and groups from liability when they provide emergency assistance to community residents?
- (7) What is the role of government in assuring adequate compensation for losses incurred during this kind of emergency?**

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