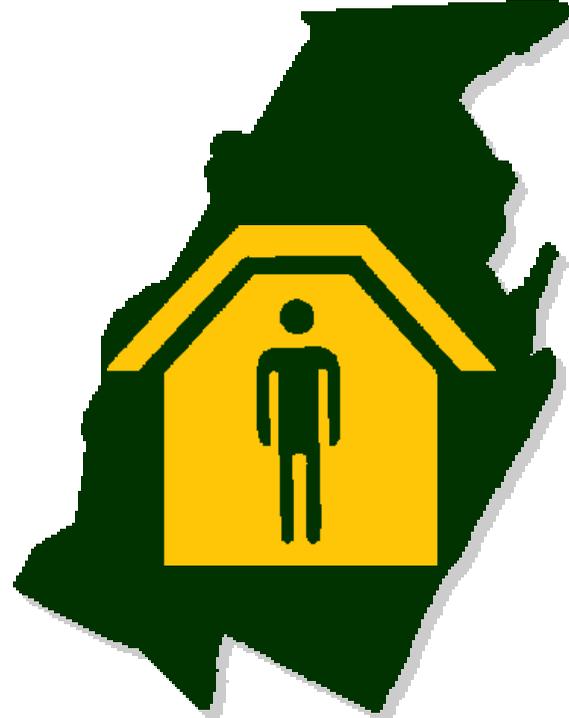


## How to Shelter In Place During a Local Emergency



**Learn how you can  
protect yourself and your  
family if there is ever a  
need to “Shelter In  
Place” in Blair County.**

Blair County Local Emergency Planning Committee  
615 Fourth Street  
Altoona, PA 16601

Phone: 814-940-5900  
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<http://www.blaircounty911.com>

## Sheltering In Place

If you are told to “shelter in place”, take your children and pets indoors **IMMEDIATELY!**

Sheltering in place is one of the basic instructions you may receive from Blair County emergency officials during a local emergency. Sheltering in place offers you and your family immediate protection for a short time in your home especially for emergencies involving the release of hazardous materials.

Sheltering in place is a public protection tool used by communities in the United States and around the world. It is the quickest way to provide short-term protection for yourself and your family during an emergency. Your shelter room and its indoor air can temporarily separate you from potentially dangerous chemicals in the outside air. In many areas, people have successfully sheltered in place to protect themselves from harmful chemicals during emergencies.

Sheltering in place at school or work is basically the same process as sheltering in place at home. The main difference is that sheltering at school or work requires cooperation among the administrators, staff and employees. Good planning, common agreement on actions in an emergency, regular training, and practice are essential.

A shelter in place emergency may occur anywhere hazardous materials are manufactured, stored or transported. Chemical plants are obvious sources of potential accidents. Less obvious are the highways and railways throughout the county. Many shipments of hazardous materials travel through the county each day. Fortunately, these shipments typi-

cally pass through the county with little, if any, notice. Additionally, schools and universities use chemicals and other hazardous materials as part of their teaching curriculum. Chemical storage containers at places such as swimming pools, water filtration plants, and waste water treatment facilities are also common around the area.

Blair County emergency officials would advise sheltering in place in any one of these conditions:

-  A chemical leak has occurred and is expected to last for a short time,
-  The chemical has a low health hazard and its release does not warrant an evacuation,
-  Chemical fumes could quickly overtake you if you are outside.

Although the information in this brochure is about shelter in place emergencies, the same steps may be used to plan for survival during natural emergencies, such as floods and winter storms. In either case, it pays to develop an emergency plan for your family.

This brochure provides general information on how you should act before, during and after a shelter in place emergency. The Blair County Local Emergency Planning Committee, Blair County Department of Emergency Services, and the Southern Alleghenies Chapter of the American Red Cross can provide you with additional details. Even more information about emergency preparedness can be found at

<http://www.dhs.gov/> ; and,  
<http://www.redcross.org/> .

## Before a “Shelter in Place” Emergency

Learn about how warnings would be issued for facilities where you live, work or go to school.

The Blair County Local Emergency Planning Committee, Department of Emergency Services, and the Southern Alleghenies Chapter of the American Red Cross can give you information about how alerts would be issued through the Emergency Alert System (EAS), on local television stations, radio stations, cable television systems, and through the NOAA Weather Radio “All-Hazard” radio network. They can also explain how these alerting systems are tested on a weekly basis.

### **EAS** (Emergency Alert System)

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) was established by the FCC in 1994. EAS is a tool that federal, state and local officials may use to warn the public, through local broadcast AM, FM and television stations, and local cable television systems, about emergency situations.

### **NWR** (NOAA Weather Radio)

The NOAA Weather Radio system is an all-hazards radio network. It provides the most comprehensive local

weather from the National Weather Service, and emergency information available to the public. NWR provides this service 24 hours a day. “All Hazards” messages include those dealing with severe weather, technological emergencies such as hazardous materials (HAZMAT) releases, AMBER Alerts, and terrorist attacks.

When comparing NOAA Weather Radio receivers, make sure to get one that has the SAME decoding feature, and battery back-up. This allows you to program the receiver to respond only to those all-hazard messages that concern you here in Blair County and will continue to operate should the power fail.

Here is a list of some other things that one should do to prepare for any situation that would require “sheltering in place.”

-  Study your surroundings for potential sources of hazardous materials.
-  Prepare a shelter-in-place kit appropriate for the type(s) of emergencies that could occur near you. Keep this kit in an easily accessible place. The kit should, at least, contain:

- Battery-operated AM/FM radio with fresh batteries;
- Flashlight with fresh batteries;
- Bottled water;
- Energy bars or food;
- Towels and wet wipes;
- Toys for young children;
- First-aid kit; medicine; and,
- Other items essential for your family's survival.

-  Check the kit every six months to make sure all the supplies are still there and that they are fresh.

-  The room chosen for sheltering should have a wired telephone (don't depend on a cell phone), although you should use it only for emergency calls. If you use it otherwise, you may be taking up a line needed by emergency response officials.
-  Find out which local radio station, television station and cable systems in your area broadcast emergency information.
-  Purchase and program a NOAA Weather Radio for Blair County.
-  Learn CPR and first-aid.
-  Select a room in your house that has few or no windows.
-  Make sure all family members know what to do in a chemical emergency, whether they are at home, school, work or outdoors.
-  Review your plan periodically and conduct drills.

## During a “Shelter in Place” Emergency

**H**ere in Blair County, you are most likely to hear about a Shelter in place emergency through an EAS message on local radio and television stations, highway message signs or NOAA Weather Radio. If you are instructed to “shelter-in-place:”

-  **Immediately** take your family and pets to the room you've chosen as a shelter.

If your children are at school, do not leave your house to go get them. Going outside

could increase your exposure to hazardous chemicals. Schools have emergency plans of their own to keep your children safe during a “shelter in place” emergency.

-  Turn off heating, cooling and fans that draw in air from the outside.
-  If you have a fireplace, close the damper.
-  Shut and lock doors and windows. Locking makes a better seal.
-  Turn on a radio or television to a local station that broadcasts emergency information. Stay tuned until the “all clear” message is broadcast.
-  Stay off the phone. It should be used for emergency calls only.
-  Be prepared to evacuate if ordered to do so by public safety officials. Evacuation instructions will be announced over the EAS and/or NWR.

## After a “Shelter in Place” Emergency

**W**hen you hear the “all clear” message over the emergency broadcast system, you should:

-  Open doors and windows.
-  Turn on your heating/cooling system to ventilate the house.
-  Go outside