

## What is Shelter in Place?

Shelter in place is a short-term safety procedure that will help protect staff and students by taking shelter inside the school if hazardous materials are released into the atmosphere. Hazardous materials are all around us at home and school. When properly handled, they do not pose a health threat; however, when they are accidentally or intentionally released, there is a potential for danger. Preparedness is the key to surviving any emergency, especially a hazardous materials accident. Toxic releases can come without a warning and allow only minutes to respond.

## Why Would You Shelter in Place?

Shelter in place would be necessary if chemical, radiological or biological contaminants are accidentally or intentionally released into the environment. During a release of hazardous materials, the air quality may be threatened and an evacuation may take you through a plume of toxic materials that could lead to serious health problems. Information on the hazard would be provided to the school by local health or emergency authorities. Please note that sheltering in place is usually a few hours in duration, not days or weeks.

### Prepare Before a Disaster Strikes

- Choose a room(s) to be used. The ideal room is an interior room above the ground floor that has access to water and restroom facilities.
- Pre-cut plastic sheeting so it can be quickly applied to windows and vents.
- Assemble shelter in place supplies and store in the chosen shelter room(s).
- Your to-go bag (evacuation bag) may contain important information on your emergency plan and student accountability. You may want to revise this emergency resource to provide needed information during a shelter in place event as well as an evacuation.
- Educate parents on the importance of complying with a school's shelter in place procedure to protect their health as well as the health of their child.

### Shelter in Place Supplies

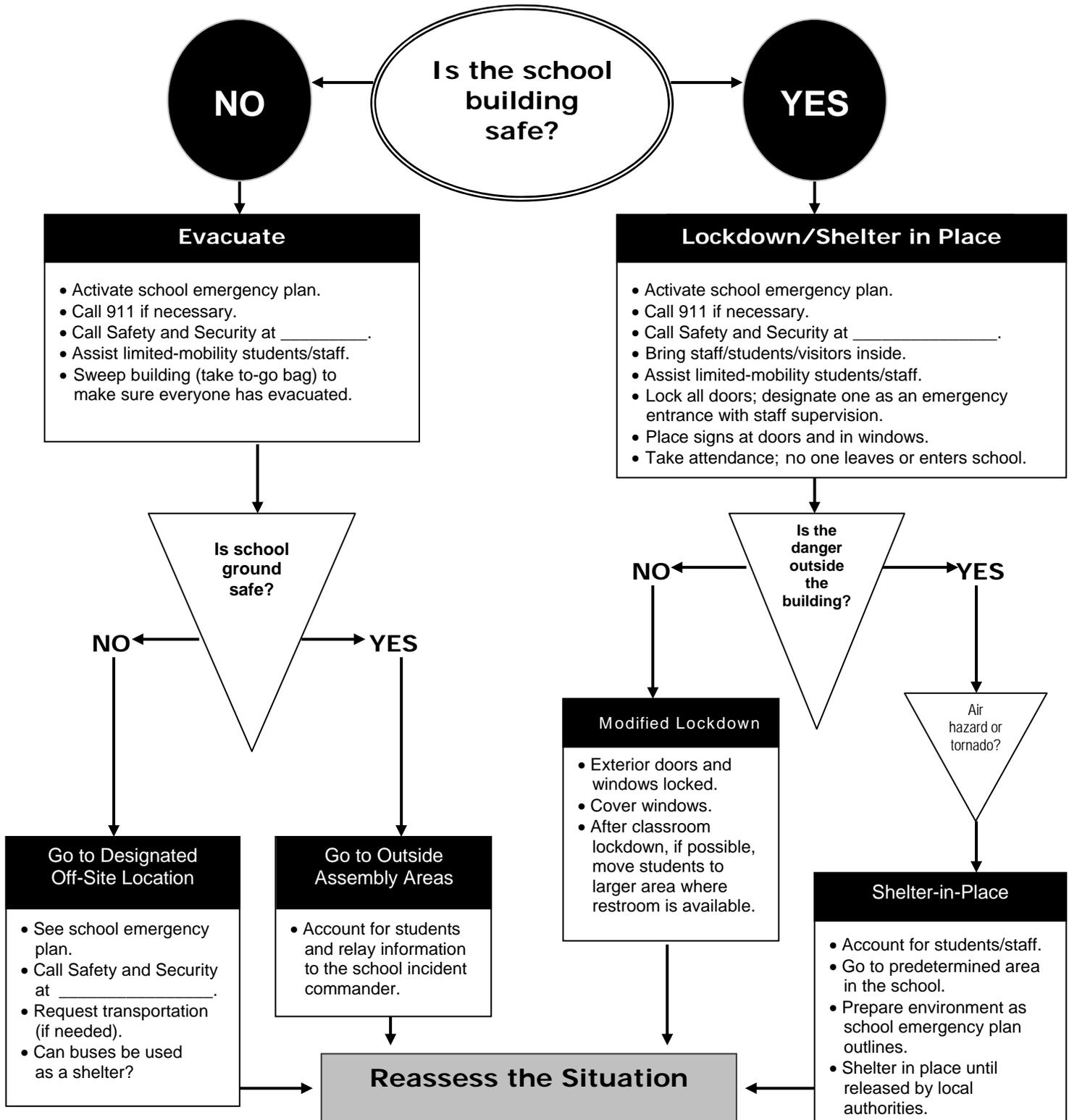
- Pre-cut plastic sheeting and duct tape to cover windows, doors, air vents or other openings. Wet cloth towels can also be used if plastic is not available.
- Battery-powered radio.
- Flashlight (with extra batteries).
- Telephone or communication device.
- Hygiene items if restroom facilities are not available (e.g., plastic bucket with a tight lid, garbage bags).
- First aid kit.
- Water and snacks.
- Games and books.
- Any specialized student health care items including medications and equipment.

**Special Consideration:** Do not forget to plan for students and staff with special health needs to make sure the necessary medicines, supplies and equipment are available in the rooms designated to shelter in place.

## Shelter in Place Procedures for Schools

1. Activate the school emergency plan including the parent communication/notification procedure.
2. Close the building; if needed, follow reverse evacuation procedures to bring students, staff and visitors into the building.
3. Go to pre-designated shelter in place rooms. Place signs on doors explaining that the school is sheltering in place.
4. Provide for telephone inquiries from concerned parents by having a telephone available in the room selected to provide shelter. There should be a way to communicate with all the rooms where individuals are sheltering.
5. Close and lock all windows and doors to the outside.
6. Turn off heating/air conditions systems and fans (any system that draws air from outside); close all vents.
7. Seal doors, windows, heating vents or any opening that could let air in with plastic and tape or wet towels. Once sealed, stay away from windows.
8. Do not go outside. Listen to your radio/television until local authorities advise you that the emergency is over. You will be informed on how to ventilate your building to remove any residual hazardous fumes by local authorities.
9. Follow your school emergency plan to account for students.

# Decision to EVACUATE or LOCKDOWN/SHELTER IN PLACE



Adapted from Ohio Resource Network for Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities

<http://www.ebasedprevention.org>

## Shelter in Place Drill Checklist

Shelter in Place Tasks	Objective Completed	Objective Requires Improvement (note changes needed)
1. Parents were informed about drill.	_____	_____
2. Staff trained on building shelter in place procedure prior to event.	_____	_____
3. Students/staff promptly reported to assigned room(s).	_____	_____
4. "Shelter in place" signs placed on doors of appropriate rooms.	_____	_____
5. Room(s) secured as outlined in emergency plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Windows and exterior doors closed and locked.*</li> <li>• Air conditioners, fans and heating systems that draw in air turned off.*</li> <li>• Duct tape and plastic sheets used to seal windows, doors, vents and outlets. Wet cloth towels can be used in place of plastic and tape.*</li> <li>• Pilot lights turned off but electricity should remain on.*</li> </ul>	_____	_____
6. Drapes and curtains closed.	_____	_____
7. Attendance/student accountability completed.	_____	_____
8. Sign posted indicating room designated for people who arrived from outside the school during the drill.	_____	_____
9. Alternate restroom facilities available in each room.	_____	_____
10. Alternate source of water for rooms without sinks.	_____	_____
11. Provisions identified for students needing emergency medication or health supplies during shelter in place.	_____	_____
12. Staff/students/visitors stayed in designated area during drill.	_____	_____
13. Rooms had method to communicate with office during the drill.	_____	_____

\* These steps could be simulated during a drill.

Dear Parents,

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of your school here) \_\_\_\_\_ school has emergency plans and procedures to protect our students and staff during emergencies. Our ***shelter in place*** plan includes provisions to protect staff and students if a dangerous chemical or biological agent was released in the community and posed a threat during the school day. If this type of event occurred, we would take direction from the local public health and safety officials to protect our students and staff. It is important for you to understand that our building would be secured, with no one being allowed to enter or leave the building, until local officials have given us clearance.

The goal of ***shelter in place*** is to provide a barrier (the school building) between the students and the hazard in the environment. While we protect our students in the school building, we recognize that our parents may be sheltered in their own homes or places of work. The school will make every effort to communicate the status of our students to you; however, it is extremely important that you do not attempt to come to the school to remove your student. The ***shelter in place*** approach has proven to be much safer than evacuating students into potentially contaminated outdoor environments. Our plans are developed with our local law enforcement, emergency management and public health officials.

In the near future, we will be performing a ***shelter in place*** drill to practice our school emergency plan. We will encourage our students to discuss this drill with you. We also encourage you to prepare your home for an emergency event such as ***shelter in place***.

Our school continues to take proactive measures to protect the safety of all our students and staff members. We thank you for understanding your role in our emergency procedures. Please contact the school if you would like further information about our emergency procedures.

Sincerely,