

How to Shelter in Place

Emergency personnel may tell you to shelter in place during certain kinds of disasters, like chemical spills. “Shelter in place” essentially means to take immediate shelter wherever you are at. You will need to pay attention to authorities to find out whether you need to simply take refuge where you are or take additional measures to seal the room to prevent outside air from coming in.

The items in your Home Emergency Kit should help you shelter in place for up to seven days. Here are some additional tips to help you prepare to take shelter immediately:

- Check your emergency kits on a regular basis.
- Register for the “reverse 911” system at www.elpasoteller911.org/ to get notifications sent to your cell phone.
- Evacuate only when instructed to do so by emergency personnel.
- Choose a room in advance for you to shelter in. This room should be in the innermost portion of your home, with limited/no windows.
- Contact your workplace, children’s schools, or anyplace you have family to find out what their shelter in place plans are.
- At work, help make sure that emergency plans involve all employees. The safety planning team should have prescribed duties, and alternates should be assigned for each duty just in case someone is out for the day.
- Contact your Personal Support Network to let them know that you are safe.
- Bring service animals, pets, and children indoors immediately when a shelter in place order is issued.
 - If children are at school, they may be sheltered there.
 - Set up a place for your animals to relieve themselves indoors.
- Close and lock all doors and windows, and close shades, curtains, and blinds. Turn off your heating or air conditioning system, along with all fans. Close your fireplace or woodstove flues.
- If you are instructed to seal the room, use duct tape and plastic sheeting to seal all cracks around doors and windows. Tape over vents and electrical outlets, too.
- Turn off any air-intake, such as heating and cooling systems, air filtration systems, etc. If instructed, consider turning off water intake as well.