



## Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials are chemical substances which, if released or misused, can pose a threat to people's health or the environment. They can include explosives, flammable and combustible substances, poisons, and radioactive material.

Emergencies can occur during production, storage, transportation, use, disposal, or as part of an intentional attack.

Most hazardous material incidents are often quickly, easily, and safely contained. However, they are serious events that can impact health, buildings, and the environment.

Wisconsin Emergency Management contracts and manages 22 Regional Hazardous Materials Response Teams in the state.



ReadyWisconsin is a campaign of Wisconsin Emergency Management, a division of the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs. ReadyWisconsin seeks to educate and empower people to prepare for and respond to disasters.

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 [readywisconsin.wi.gov](https://readywisconsin.wi.gov)

# Hazardous Material Incidents





# BEFORE

- Include duct tape, scissors, and plastic sheeting in your emergency supply kit.
- Create a family communication and emergency plan.
- Know how to operate your home's ventilation system.
- Identify an above-ground shelter room with as few openings as possible.
- Contact your local emergency management office to learn which chemicals are stored in your community. Businesses that store hazardous materials are required to report the quantity and type of material.



# DURING

Listen to local radio or television news for detailed information and follow instructions carefully. Instructions may differ depending on the hazardous material and risk of exposure.

- **If told to evacuate:**
  - Leave the area immediately.
  - Close windows and lock doors. Shut all vents and shut off ventilation systems.
  - If a chemical is inside your building, get out quickly without passing through the contaminated area, if possible.
  - If you can't get out or find clean air without passing through the affected area, move as far away as possible and shelter-in-place.
- **If told to stay indoors or shelter in place:**
  - Bring pets inside.
  - Seek shelter in an internal room. Close and lock all exterior doors and windows. Close vents, fireplace dampers, and as many interior doors as possible.
  - Listen to officials for further instructions.
  - If told to seal the room, turn off things that bring in outside air, such as air conditioners and ventilation systems.
  - Seal gaps around doorways, windows, air conditioning units, and external vents or fans with wet towels, plastic sheeting, duct tape, wax paper, or aluminum foil.
- **If outside when an incident occurs**
  - Quickly decide the fastest way to find clean air. Move immediately in a direction upwind of the source.
  - If inside a vehicle, pull over and keep car windows and vents closed. Shut off the air conditioner and heater.
  - Find the closest building to shelter-in-place.

# AFTER

Do not leave the safety of a shelter to go outdoors, including to help others, until authorities say it is safe to do so. If you have evacuated, return home only when authorities say it is safe.

If you are affected by a chemical agent and medical help is not immediately available, the best action is to decontaminate yourself and help others to do so, if possible.

# HOW TO DECONTAMINATE

- Remove all clothing and other items in contact with your body.
  - Cut off clothing normally removed over the head to avoid contact with the eyes, nose, and mouth.
  - Put contaminated clothing and items into a plastic bag and seal the bag.
  - Remove eyeglasses or contact lenses. Put glasses in a pan of household bleach to decontaminate them, and then rinse and dry.
- Wash hands with soap and water and flush your eyes with water.
- Gently wash face and hair with soap and thoroughly rinse with water.
- As soon as it is safe to do so, proceed to a medical facility for screening and professional treatment.

