



# RESPONSE (DURING)

Response is the actions taken to save lives and protect property from damage during an emergency – it is putting preparedness plans into action.

When a disaster strikes you may need to take specific actions to remain safe. These include sheltering-in-place, implementing a lockdown, evacuating, or relocating to an emergency shelter. These terms and some basic “how-to” procedures are outlined below.

## SHELTER-IN-PLACE

In many emergencies, it is safer to stay indoors. This practice is referred to as shelter-in-place. Select a small, interior room, with no or few windows, and take refuge there. If you are not in immediate danger, stay where you are until you can get more information from Fairfax Alerts, Fairfax County’s website, or the local media.



### How-to

- ▶ Follow instructions from authorities if available to decide whether you should shelter-in-place or evacuate.
- ▶ Call 911 and report the emergency, if appropriate.
- ▶ Follow your emergency plan.
- ▶ In case of an environmental release or threat:
  - Tape around doors, windows, and vents, and place wet towels at bottom of doors, in order to seal out fumes and gases.
  - Turn off air-exchange heating systems, air conditioners, and exhaust fans.
  - Leave the electricity on.
  - Use Fairfax Alerts and other sources to get information during the event.

### WHY YOU MIGHT NEED TO SHELTER-IN-PLACE

- ▶ Acts of Violence/Terrorism events
- ▶ Civil Disturbance
- ▶ Chemical, biological, or radiological contaminants released accidentally or intentionally into the environment
- ▶ Various types of severe weather

## WHY YOU MIGHT NEED TO LOCKDOWN

- ▶ Acts of Violence/Terrorism events
- ▶ Civil Disturbance

For more information and guidance on **responding to active shooters**, see the Acts of Violence/Terrorism hazard annex on **p. 48**, including links to the DHS run/hide/fight and ALICE websites.

## WHY YOU MIGHT NEED TO EVACUATE FROM A BUILDING

- ▶ An internal chemical spill or gas leak
- ▶ Visible smoke, vapor cloud, or fire (inside the building)
- ▶ Bomb threat
- ▶ Suspicious mail
- ▶ Localized flooding

## LOCKDOWN

Lockdown refers to securing or protecting individuals from an immediate threat of violence – like an active shooter or other assailant. There are procedures for exterior lockdown, which are intended to keep a threat of violence from entering the building, and interior lockdown, which are implemented when the threat of violence is inside the building. A lockdown is anticipated to last only a few hours.

### How-to

- ▶ Do not panic — remain calm.
- ▶ Lock all doors and windows immediately. If a door can't be locked, quickly block the door with heavy items.
- ▶ Never open doors or windows unless ordered to do so by a verified public safety official. Always ask for documentation to confirm identity.
- ▶ Turn off all lights, and close blinds or curtains.
- ▶ Instruct everyone in the room with you to stay low and away from the windows and doors.
- ▶ Silence televisions, cell phones, and other electronics.
- ▶ Clear hallways, bathrooms, and any area or room that cannot be thoroughly secured.
- ▶ Assist those with access and functional needs if safe to do so.
- ▶ Remain indoors and under lockdown until you receive an “all clear” from authorized personnel.
- ▶ Follow all instructions from law enforcement personnel.

## EVACUATION

A wide variety of emergencies may require evacuation, whether from a building or an area. In some instances, you may need time to prepare, while other situations might call for an immediate action. Planning ahead helps evacuations go quickly and safely, no matter the circumstances.

### How-to: Building Evacuation

- ▶ Do not panic — remain calm.
- ▶ Do not run.
- ▶ In the event of a fire, do not open hot doors. Before opening any door, touch it near the top to see if it is hot.
- ▶ Do not use elevators.
- ▶ Do not break windows in a fire — oxygen feeds fires.
- ▶ Do not assist first responders unless you are asked to do so.
- ▶ Do not be a rubber-necker — move away from the problem area, to your safe area. Remain there until you are instructed to return or relocate.

## How-to: Area Evacuation

- ▶ Decide whether you should shelter-in-place or evacuate; defer to instructions from authorities.
- ▶ Follow your emergency plan.
- ▶ Grab your go bag and any additional food, cash, and supplies you might need.
- ▶ Don't forget your keys and your pets.

- ▶ Shut off your gas service. Learn where your utilities are and how to shut them off.
- ▶ Identify a destination, and advise your out-of-state contact (and others) to let them know where you are headed.
- ▶ Research your route, as some roads may be closed based on the event – check Fairfax County information resources and Internet resources.
- ▶ Fuel up. Sometimes evacuations cause localized gas shortages.

### WHY YOU MIGHT NEED TO EVACUATE FROM AN AREA

- ▶ Widespread flooding (or forecast)
- ▶ Forecast of severe weather to which your home is vulnerable
- ▶ Hazardous materials release
- ▶ Other voluntary or mandatory evacuation orders from the county

## PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY SHELTER

There are instances during which Fairfax County will open emergency shelters. The following are a few considerations if you have to relocate to a shelter:

- ▶ Bring your emergency go bag, including a three-day supply of any specialized supplies, such as:
  - Special food to accommodate any restrictions or allergies.
  - Prescription pharmaceuticals, supplies, and devices necessary for health maintenance.
- ▶ If you have a pet(s):
  - Verify that shelters are open to pets.
  - Bring your pet(s) with you!
  - Bring pet supplies.

## HELPING YOUR COMMUNITY

Emergency preparedness is a shared responsibility that requires whole-community involvement. During or after a disaster, if you know someone on your block or in your building that has health concerns, is elderly or has small children, or otherwise may need assistance, check in on them, or invite them to ride out the event with your family. Your kindness could save a life.

Get to know the people on your block or in your building in advance. It is the neighborly thing to do – plus, past disasters show that prepared neighborhoods have less loss of life, reduced severity of injury and trauma, and less property damage. We are all in this together.

