

A chemical emergency is the accidental release of dangerous chemicals into the air. For example, chemical emergencies sometimes happen when freight trains derail, or when tanker trucks have accidents. Luckily, the odds of a chemical emergency in our community are very slim. Still, it's important to know what to do just in case one occurs.

To learn more...

Write or call:

The Kent County
Local Emergency Planning Committee
Kent County Sheriff Dept.
Office of Emergency
Management
701 Ball Ave. NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
(616) 336-3019



**How to
stay safe
in a
chemical
emergency.**

How to know there's an emergency.

Several methods may be used to notify you of a chemical emergency:

- Local public warning sirens may sound.
- Police or fire personnel may go door to door notifying residents.
- NOAA weather radios may sound an alert.

Stay calm. Turn on the TV.

Local public warning sirens mean you should **immediately turn on the TV or radio**. In a real emergency, TV or radio stations will air information. (If you have cable TV, be sure that you're tuned to a local station.)

Don't call 911 to ask questions.

Unless you need police or paramedics, do not tie up emergency phone lines. It will be easier and faster to get information from your local TV or radio station.

Also, 911 lines should remain clear for people who really need the police or medical help fast. (Of course, if that includes you or someone near you, then you should call.)

If you're told to leave home...

Do so immediately. A delay could be deadly.

Don't stop to pack. Take only things you really need (medicine, for example). Toothbrushes and toiletries, if necessary, will be provided at the shelter.



If there's a chemical spill or other emergency, Public Warning Sirens may sound.



Unless there's an immediate threat to your life or property, do not call 911.

Lock your doors and windows.

Head to the nearest shelter. The TV or radio will tell you where to go.

If you're told to stay inside...

Close all doors and windows.

If you're driving, stay in your car. Turn off the heater and air conditioner, and/or close the vents.

At home, turn off all pilot lights, heaters and air conditioners. Put out fireplace fires, and close the damper.

Keep the TV or radio on to listen for further instructions.

If you're exposed to fumes...

If you think dangerous fumes may have entered your building, place a wet cloth or towel over your mouth or nose.

Schools, childcare centers and nursing homes...

Schools, childcare centers and health care facilities should have clear plans for chemical emergencies. If there is an emergency, don't call these facilities to check on your loved ones and don't go there. Traffic and telephone tie-ups may interrupt their emergency plan.

If you have a child in school, it's a good idea to request a copy of the school's emergency plan and go over it with your child to be sure you both understand it.

How to know when it's safe.

Either the police or TV and radio announcers will announce the "all clear".



If told to stay indoors, close windows, doors and outside vents. Turn off air conditioners and extinguish all pilot lights.



If there is an emergency don't call these facilities to check on your loved ones.

Don't abandon these emergency procedures until told to do so by the authorities.

When authorities say the emergency is past, you can return home if you left. If you stayed home, the official all clear means it's safe to open windows and doors and turn on air conditioners, heaters, and pilot lights again.

If you need special help...

If you or someone you know is disabled or otherwise unable to take the steps described in this booklet, now is the time to develop an action plan.

Talk to a neighbor or family member who lives close by to find out if they can help in a chemical emergency.

Above all, keep your cool.

Remember:

- TV or radio is the best source of information.
- Follow the TV/radio announcer's instructions, or those of the police.
- Close all windows and doors.
- If told to leave home, do so immediately.
- Do not go to or call schools, childcare centers or nursing homes.

Emergencies don't have to end in tragedy. If you and the people with you know what to do, and do it calmly, everyone's probably going to be just fine.



If told to leave your home, don't delay. Take only the things you really need, like prescription medicine.



Tune in right away to a local station on your radio or TV.