



Chemical incidents

A chemical leak from an industrial site, transport accident or deliberate release may mean sealing yourself indoors or leaving the area fast. This page helps your family prepare a safe room, follow official instructions and clean off any chemical safely.

CHECKLIST

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| ☐ Duct tape and scissors | ☐ Medicines for you and your pets |
| ☐ Pre-cut plastic sheeting labelled for each window | ☐ Phone and charging cables |
| ☐ Towels for blocking gaps | ☐ Radio for emergency broadcasts |
| ☐ Large and small rubbish bags | ☐ Mild soap and moist wipes |
| ☐ Disposable gloves | ☐ Clean change of clothes |

BEFORE

- Choose a large safe room, ideally upstairs with a water source, that you can seal.
- Make a sealing kit: duct tape, scissors, towels and plastic sheets cut to fit windows.
- Practise sealing air conditioner units, exhaust fans and vents.
- Pack go kits for home and car, with rubbish bags and disposable gloves.
- Agree how family members will contact each other if separated.
- Never mix household chemicals such as bleach and ammonia.

DURING

- Follow official instructions on whether to shelter in place or evacuate.
- If told to shelter, go in with pets, close windows and doors, and switch off fans and AC.
- Take medicines, phone and charger to your safe room and tape plastic over windows, vents and door gaps.
- Use towels or clothing to block gaps if you have no plastic sheeting.
- If exposed outdoors, move away from the area and upwind if you can.
- Do not rely on a car for protection, as vehicles are not airtight.
- If evacuating, take your kit and use the route officials give, with no shortcuts.
- Do not smoke, eat or drink if you may be contaminated.

AFTER

- If exposed, remove clothing as soon as you can, cutting off anything that goes over your head.
- Seal used clothing in a bag inside a second bag and keep it out of normal rubbish.
- Wash skin and hair with lukewarm water and mild soap without scrubbing.
- Flush eyes with water for 10 to 15 minutes if they burn or vision blurs.

IN THE UAE

In the UAE, follow National Early Warning System phone alerts and call Civil Defence on 997 or an ambulance on 998.

MY NOTES

Sources: CDC, What to Do to Shelter in Place for a Chemical Emergency (<https://www.cdc.gov/chemical-emergencies/response/shelter-in-place.html>); American Red Cross, Chemical Emergency Preparedness (<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/chemical-emergency.html>); CDC, What to Do in a Chemical Emergency (<https://www.cdc.gov/chemical-emergencies/response/index.html>); UK Government (Prepare), Hazardous substance and radiation exposure (<https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/be-informed-about-hazards/hazardous-materials-incident/>); CDC, About Getting Clean (<https://www.cdc.gov/chemical-emergencies/response/get-clean.html>); UAE Government Portal (u.ae), Handling emergencies (<https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/justice-safety-and-the-law/handling-emergencies>)
General guidance in our own words. Always follow your local authorities.