

Sheltering in place in your workplace is similar to sheltering in place at home, but there are some significant differences.

The basic steps remain the same:

1. Shut and lock all windows and doors.
2. Turn off all air handling equipment (heating, ventilation, and/or air conditioning).
3. Go to a pre-determined sheltering room (or rooms).
4. Seal any windows and/or vents with sheets of plastic and duct tape.
5. Seal the door(s) with duct tape around the top and sides; place a wet towel at the bottom of the door.
6. Turn on a TV or radio and listen for further instructions.
7. When the “all clear” is announced, open windows and doors, turn on ventilation systems and go outside until the building’s air has been exchanged with the now clean outdoor air.

Additional steps that offices need to consider:

1. Employees cannot be forced to shelter in place. Therefore, it is important to develop your shelter in place plan with employees to maximize the cooperation of employees with the shelter plan. Determine if all employees will shelter or if some will leave the building before shelter procedures are put in place.
2. Develop an accountability system. You should know who is in your building and where they are if an emergency develops. Visitors should be made aware of your office's decision to shelter in place if advised by emergency management officials.
3. Duties should be assigned to specific employees. Those employees should have backups.
4. Drills should be planned and executed on a regular basis. Afterwards, the drill should be critiqued by employees and/or drill monitors from the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). Lessons learned should be incorporated into your Shelter in Place plan.

GETTING BACK TO NORMAL IN YOUR WORKPLACE

Getting back to normal is an important step in coping with the after math of disaster. The problems in returning to daily life or the business world holds similar challenges that need to be recognized by people who were not immediately affected by loss of loved ones, jobs or income. There are warnings with regard to business as well as family life. • Do not push yourself to get "back to business as usual" too soon. Respect your feelings that "nothing seems important right now." Make arrangements with managers and co-workers to collaborate and offer mutual support for those who are having a hard time doing required tasks. Work together in teams; mutual support is just as important in the office as at home in personal relationships.

- Expect that daily tasks and business lose their importance in contrast to the tragedy and therefore do not be surprised if you cannot concentrate, or feel that what you are doing is not significant.
- Do not feel guilty about not being able to be as proficient as you normally are. For example, one worker reports, "I make a nightly list of at least 30 things to do in the office the next day, but when I get there, I just push papers from the left side of my desk to the right side. Nothing on the papers seems to matter." Give yourself time to retrieve your commitment to work. To help overcome disinterest and trouble concentrating, get started on small tasks that can be accomplished easily and with much stress.
- Respect your feelings, even if you have not suffered as severe losses as others. So many say, "I shouldn't complain about how I can't get back to work because other people's sons or wives have died. My problems can't compare to theirs." This is an aspect of "survivor guilt", where people minimize their own upset in contrast to others, yet, she advises, everyone should honor their own feelings. Each person's reaction matters for their own life and deserves empathy and support.
- Allow yourself to have your feelings, but then begin to do what is necessary. Once you start a task, you can get swept up in the activity of it. If you become distracted, take a break, call a friend for support, and begin again.
- To feel "normal" and to overcome trouble concentrating, perform a mundane task that does not require challenging thought, but that you can do very deliberately. At home, clean out your medicine cabinet, or fold laundry.
- Be consciously aware of simple things that you do in everyday life that take care of yourself. Brush teeth or shave while thinking, "I am taking care of myself". Prepare children for school while consciously thinking, "I am taking care of my children."

Troubled feelings can go on for an extended time. Be patient with yourself and realize symptoms will come and go related to news events.

Shelter In Place At Your Office

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