

Stay Put – Learn How to Shelter in Place

Sometimes the best way to stay safe in an emergency is to get inside and stay put inside a building or vehicle. Where you should stay can be different for different types of emergencies.

Be informed about the different kinds of emergencies that could affect your area and ways officials share emergency information. Ask your local emergency management agency about the best places to take shelter during different types of emergencies.

Get Inside, Stay Inside

If local officials tell you to “stay put,” act quickly. Listen carefully to local radio or television stations for instructions, because the exact directions will depend on the emergency situation. In general you should:

- Get inside. Bring your loved ones, your emergency supplies, and when possible, your pets,
- Find a safe spot in this location. The exact spot will depend on the type of emergency,
- Stay put in this location until officials say that it is safe to leave.

Stay in Touch

Once you and your family are in place, let your emergency contact know what’s happening, and listen carefully for new information.

- Call or text your emergency contact. Let them know where you are, if any family members are missing, and how you are doing.
- Use your phone only as necessary. Keep the phone handy in case you need to report a life threatening emergency. Otherwise, do not use the phone, so that the lines will be available for emergency responders.
- Keep listening to your radio, television, or phone for updates. Do not leave your shelter unless authorities tell you it is safe to do so. If they tell you to evacuate the area, follow their instructions.

Sheltering with pets

- Prepare a spot for your pets to poop and pee while inside the shelter. You will need plenty of plastic bags, newspapers, containers, and cleaning supplies to deal with the pet waste.
- **Do not allow pets to go outside the shelter until the danger has passed.**

Sealing a Room

In some types of emergencies, you will need to stop outside air from coming in. If officials tell you to “seal the room,” you need to:

- Turn off things that move air, like fans and air conditioners,
- Get yourself and your loved ones inside the room,
- Bring your emergency supplies if they are clean and easy to get to
- Block air from entering the room, and
- Listen to officials for further instructions.

Once officials say the emergency is over, turn on fans and other things that circulate air. Everyone should go outside until the building’s air has been exchanged with the now clean outdoor air. For more details, read FEMA’s Guidelines for Staying Put

Staying Put in Your Vehicle

In some emergencies it is safer to pull over and stay in your car than to keep driving. If you are very close to home, your workplace, or a public building, go there immediately and go inside. Follow the “shelter-in-place” recommendations for that location. If you can’t get indoors quickly and safely:

- Pull over to the side of the road.
 - Stop your vehicle in the safest place possible and turn off the engine.
 - If it is warm outside, it is better to stop under a bridge or in a shady spot so you don’t get overheated.
- Stay where you are until officials say it is safe to get back on the road.
- Listen to the radio for updates and additional instructions.
 - Modern car radios do not use much battery power, so listening to the radio for an hour or two should not cause your car battery to die.
 - Even after it is safe to get back on the road, keep listening to the radio and follow directions of law enforcement officials.