

(From the Sacramento State Multi-Hazard Emergency Plan)

III. SHELTER PROGRAM

1. Concepts of Shelter in Place or Evacuation:

1.1. Purpose:

To establish information/direction for “sheltering in place” versus evacuation.

1.2. There are only two emergency actions that can be taken with regard to a hazardous materials or release of a bacterial agent:

1.2.1. Move rapidly out of the potential danger zone or:

1.2.2. Shelter in place until the hazard has dissipated or advised by emergency personnel.

1.3. With a campus the size of Sacramento State University, there is a real problem in ordering the emergency evacuation of the campus because of a hazardous materials spill or release of a bacterial agent. Most people will attempt to get into their cars, and because this is primarily a commuter university the number of vehicles has the potential of being quite large. As all of these emotional people attempt to get out of the small entrances, to the parking facilities, the potential for automobile accidents are going to occur and people will begin to panic, adding confusion to the situation.

1.3.1 For the most part, putting a large group of people in to an area where there is toxic cloud will cause more problems than it will solve. Sheltering in place is a sound and viable tactic to utilize in this kind of critical incident.

1.4. The average hazardous material spill within the United States lasts approximately 45 minutes. The reason for this is twofold:

1.4.1. Either the chemical is a gas under pressure and has dissipated into the air becoming diluted to a point where it is no longer a threat or:

1.4.2. The fire department has responded and managed to shut off the problem. The fire department hazardous materials units have practiced all of the many variations to shutting down leaking facilities.

1.5. It is actually safer sheltering inside of a building and allowing the cloud of dangerous material to pass over the university and the buildings. This concept is more viable than actually going outside in a potential, lethal hazmat area with a panicked and emotional crowd.

1.5.1. If the decision is made to shelter in place, the Emergency Building Coordinator will notify Facilities Services or in extreme cases assign personnel to do the following:

- * Advise building emergency personnel as part of the Building Plan to shut off heating ventilation and air conditioning-HVAC for the building so that the chemical is not drawn inside.

- * Individual departments and offices will be advised to block areas where air flow can enter their areas, i.e. door jambs, window jambs, and air ducts. If available, office personnel should place wet towels, plastic, newspaper, or other material over the above listed areas. Closing and locking all windows and doors to provide a tighter seal should be accomplished before doing the above procedure. Building elevators that could spread vapors should also be shut down/disabled.

- * After being advised that the danger has subsided or passed, office personnel should be advised to exit the building as soon as possible.

- * During the clearing of the building, personnel should be assigned (as part of the building plan) to open windows and doors so that the building will be vented properly to rid the building of any lingering vapors.

- * Building staff should meet at their designated rally points to discuss the next plan of action based on information received from emergency response personnel.