

University of Maryland Libraries
Information for Dealing with Emergencies Requiring Shelter in Place
April 9, 2003

“Shelter in place” is a term to describe conditions during which it is better to stay where one is – inside a home, a place of work or other enclosed structure – or to seek shelter in the closest building. Shelter in place is pertinent at times of severe weather and also at times of threat of attack.

The University of Maryland Department of Public Safety has various “response protocols” in place, depending on the type and extent of threat. Obviously, for security reasons, campus officials and police cannot release details of their plans that would go into action in case of emergencies. However, campus citizens should be confident that we will be provided as much safety and protection as possible.

A recent article in the *Diamondback* noted that the siren system on campus is primarily to alert those who are outdoors to take shelter. It is a bonus if people inside buildings can hear the siren as well.

There is no one process or set of processes that can cover every emergency situation. However, the UM Libraries do have key people who can perform special roles in shelter-in-place emergencies, as they do in building evacuations. The first library staff member to learn of an emergency should make other staff aware and alert the floor marshals in their buildings. (Floor marshals are listed at <http://libi.lib.umd.edu/groups/safety-and-security-committee/floor-marshals>) The floor marshals can help inform staff and the public about the nature of the emergency and can help gather staff and the public. (The Safety & Security Committee will work with marshals on details of these roles.)

Individuals can take some steps to help feel prepared:

1. Read and be thoroughly familiar with the campus preparedness document: <http://www.inform.umd.edu/nowandthen/news/preparedness.html>
2. Review and follow other guides to citizen preparedness, such as *Are You Ready* from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/> or call for a paper copy at 1-800-480-2520, FEMA publication H-34.
3. Review other organizations’ guides, such as the ones from the Red Cross, at <http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/hsas.html>
4. Provide at home and work the items FEMA recommends for a disaster supply kit. (FEMA suggests a three-day supply.)
 - A supply of water (one gallon per person per day). Store water in sealed, unbreakable containers. Identify the storage date and replace every six months.

- A supply of non-perishable packaged or canned food and a non-electric can opener.
 - A change of clothing.
 - Blankets or sleeping bags.
 - A first aid kit and prescription medications.
 - An extra pair of glasses.
 - A battery-powered radio, a flashlight and plenty of extra batteries.
5. More advice is available at <http://www.fema.gov/rrr/empred.shtm>

Work groups can take steps too to anticipate the potential need for shelter in place:

1. Agree on the safest places in a building to have staff and public go in case of emergency. In cases of severe weather, a safe area is preferably a windowless room or a hallway near the center and at the lowest level of the building. Do not use elevators and stay away from windows and glass. In other emergencies, go to the highest level in an interior hallway. The highest level is recommended if there is potential danger from biological or chemical substances.
2. Be sure that flashlights and battery-operated radios are available for cases where electricity might be interrupted.
3. Stay tuned to campus sources of information and advice:
 - www.umd.edu
 - WMUC 88.1
 - 1640 AM
 - 301-405 SNOW (x57669)
 - Residential Campus Cable Channel 76
 - Academic Campus Cable Channel 40
4. Help co-workers and the public be as calm and collected as possible. Stay in a group in the safest part of the building, sitting on the floor if necessary.
5. Stay in place for the duration instructed by campus officials and police.

Again, we recognize no amount of information and preparedness can keep us safe in all circumstances. However, information and preparedness can help reduce fear and anxiety, and it is in that spirit that these suggestions are offered.

Library Executive Council
Safety and Security Committee