

Annex D: Response Options

Organizational Response Options

There are only four potential response options to any emergency incident. They are:

1. **Shelter-in-Place.** Sheltering-in-place means staying inside whatever building you happen to be in at the time of an emergency or, if you are outside, going into an undamaged building nearby and staying there for a period that may last hours to several days.

In-place sheltering is the preferred protective action when a threat is immediate and there is no time to evacuate, or when competing emergencies occur (e.g. Hazmat event occurs during a major snowstorm) when it would be more dangerous to put people on icy streets than it would be to shelter them inside their homes and businesses.

If in-place sheltering is ordered, then people affected by the order should be made aware of how to properly shelter. In-place sheltering involves closing all doors and windows, and shutting off all outside ventilation systems (e.g. air conditioners or outdoor heating systems) that could draw contaminants into the dwelling. Wet towels can also be placed under doors to block any infiltration between the door and the floor.

People may be directed to go to a lower room in their house if appropriate. People may also be advised to breathe through a handkerchief or a wet towel if necessary.

2. **Evacuation.** Evacuation is the urgent immediate egress or escape of people away from an area that contains an imminent threat, an ongoing threat to lives or property.

Evacuation is the preferred method of protecting the general public from a known or suspected hazard, such as a flood, hurricane, or a HAZMAT event. Some information is needed by decision makers prior to ordering evacuation. This information includes:

- Type of hazard;
- Time of expected event (hurricane is 24 hours away, Hazmat event happened 10 minutes ago);
- Evaluation of the hazards involved with the event the danger involved (short term and long term);
- Wind speed and wind direction in the area of the release;
- Time available to evacuate versus the time the hazard may spread

NOTE: If sufficient time exists, then evacuation is the preferred method of providing protection. In the event of an instantaneous release of a radiological, chemical or biological substance, it may be more prudent to have people in the immediate area shelter-in-place inside their homes until the plume passes, and then evacuate when it is safe to do so.

EOC staff and/or Field Incident Command staff, if established, must quickly obtain as much of the above information as possible and evaluate who may be affected by a release of the substance in question. The ultimate decision is made by the Emergency Management Director, or, if it's a field based event, by the Incident Commander, with the advice and consent of the Emergency Management Director .

Evacuation should occur in a keyhole fashion (e.g. one-mile circle around the event, and then some distance, perhaps 2-3 miles directly downwind of the event).

Evacuees should be directed to go to a Red Cross Shelter and register at the center. Evacuees should also be advised to bring all medications with them to the shelter, and bring personal items and a change of clothes to last 2-3 days.

3. **Relocation (Continuity of Operations).** The transfer of operations from its primary location to another predetermined location. Relocation utilizes the day-to-day staff, just working from a different location.
4. **Devolution.** The transfer of operations from a primary location to another predetermined location. Devolution utilizes the completely separate staff from day-to-day personnel, which often means there is a degradation in performance.

For more information regarding how these options would be implemented, please refer to the organization-specific plans.

For County resources such as the IMAT, CCART, MRC, and shelter trailer, a resource request form ICS 213RR will be submitted to Cumberland County EMA. For State assets, the same process will be followed.