

BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL THREATS

San Diegans are protected by our local law, fire, public health and emergency medical personnel. However, it is best for each of us to be sure our families and homes are also prepared for disasters.

Biological and chemical weapons pose a different problem for our community and health care providers because it may take hours or days to determine an attack has occurred.

When the first sign of attack is the occurrence of human illness or injury, it is the public health disease detectives, physicians, microbiologists, and paramedics who are the first line of defense.

It is important for you to know that San Diego's public health services, health care and emergency medical systems have years of experience and a collaborative relationship, which ensures the highest level of services in the event of a medical threat. Should additional resources be necessary, we know that we can call upon our military partners and other federal resources. For example, if needed, large federal supplies of vaccines and antibiotics can be made available to our community.

In the event of an attack, government officials will instruct residents on what actions they are taking and what actions the public should take. It is important that you remain calm and cooperate fully with local officials.

Right now, many people in our community feel a sense of anxiety about personal preparedness. We support the federal government advice against hoarding antibiotics, purchasing gas masks, or any other such extraordinary measures.

In the event of a chemical or biological attack, instructions will be provided by local public health and safety officials on personal protection, decontamination and health warnings via the Emergency Alert System (EAS) broadcast over radio and television as well as print media.

BEFORE AN ATTACK

The public also has a role in reducing the impact of terrorism on their lives.

Learn about the nature of terrorism

- Terrorists look for visible targets where they can avoid detection before or after an attack, such as international airports, large cities, major international events, resorts and high-profile landmarks.
- Report any suspicious activities to the San Diego FBI office at (858) 565-1255.

Adapt, as appropriate, the same techniques used to prepare for earthquakes, fires and other emergencies.

- Be prepared and observe your environment. Terrorists most often strike with little or no warning.
- Use caution when you travel. Observe and report unusual activity. Keep your packages with you at all times. Do not accept packages from strangers.
- Locate stairways and emergency exits and develop plans for evacuating buildings and crowded public areas.

If you live or work in multi-level buildings:

- Identify the location of fire exits and review emergency evacuation procedures.
- Locate and maintain fire extinguishers in working order and learn how to use them.
- Obtain training in first aid and CPR.

Assemble and maintain an emergency supply kit that includes those items listed in this brochure. Also compile essential emergency preparedness items in back packs to keep in your home and car.

DURING AN ATTACK

If there's an explosion:

- Remain calm. Take cover under a desk or sturdy table if ceiling tiles, bookshelves, their contents, etc. begin to fall.
- Exit the building as quickly as possible.

If there's a fire:

- Stay low to the floor at all times and exit the building as quickly as possible. Heavy smoke and poisonous gases collect near the ceiling first.
- Use a wet cloth to cover your nose and mouth.
- Use the back of your hand to feel closed doors. If the door is not hot, brace yourself against the door and open it slowly. Do not open the door if it is hot. Seek another escape route.
- Use appropriate fire exits, not elevators.

AFTER AN ATTACK

If you are trapped in debris:

- If possible, use a flashlight or whistle to signal rescuers regarding your location.
- Stay in your area so that you don't kick up dust. Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so that rescuers can hear where you are.
- Shout only as a last resort—shouting can cause a person to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

PROTECTIVE ACTIONS

Protective actions are actions we take to safeguard our family members and ourselves from harm. The most common emergency protective actions are evacuation and shelter-in-place.

- Evacuation means to leave the area of actual or potential hazard.
- Shelter-in-place means to stay indoors. This includes additional precautions such as turning off air-conditioning, ventilation systems and closing all windows and doors.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- Remain calm.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Have a family preparedness plan.
- Stay informed.
- If an evacuation is ordered, follow the instructions of local officials regarding evacuation routes and the location of shelters.
- If shelter-in-place is recommended, local officials will provide instructions on necessary actions.
- Do not leave your sheltered location or return to the evacuated area until it is deemed safe to do so by local officials.

EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT

Maintaining an emergency supply kit is a good idea for any emergency. Individuals and organizations should be prepared to be without assistance for a minimum of 72 hours.

- Battery-powered radio, flashlights, batteries
- Whistle
- First aid kit and manual
- Hard hats
- Duct tape
- Fluorescent tape to rope off dangerous areas
- Water
- Food (canned, no-cook, packaged snacks)
- Manual can opener
- Cash and credit cards
- Change of clothing, rain gear, and sturdy shoes
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Fire extinguisher (A-B-C) type
- Infant and feminine hygiene supplies
- Essential medicines and eyeglasses
- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of doctors and pharmacist
- Food and water for pets
- Large plastic bags for trash, waste, water protection
- Toilet paper and paper towels
- Charcoal grill or camp stove for outdoor cooking

Don't forget that the front of the White Pages of your Pacific Bell telephone directory contains a handy First Aid and Survival Guide (Section B).

WEBSITES

Listed below are a few websites that provide additional information.

<http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/>

(County of San Diego)

<http://www.fema.gov/>

(Federal Emergency Management Agency)

<http://www.oes.ca.gov/>

(California Office of Emergency Services)

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/>

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Preparing for Emergencies:

County of San Diego

Office of Disaster Preparedness

(858) 565-3490

Health Related Questions:

County of San Diego

Division of Community Epidemiology

(619) 515-6620

Vaccine Information Hotline:

(800) 600-9594

Board of Supervisors

Greg Cox, District 1

Dianne Jacob, District 2

Pam Slater, District 3

Ron Roberts, District 4

Bill Horn, District 5

Chief Administrative Officer

Walter F. Ekard

Health and Human Services Agency Director

Rodger G. Lum, Ph.D.

Public Health Officer

George R. Flores, M.D., MPH

Terrorism: A Guide to Domestic Preparedness



Prepared by:
*the Unified San Diego County
Emergency Services Organization
in cooperation with
the County of San Diego
Health and Human Services Agency &
Office of Disaster Preparedness*