Shelter in Place Procedure

PURPOSE

The Shelter in Place procedure is used during an emergency when Officials deem that it’s safer for individuals to remain indoors than exit into a potentially harmful environment. A hazardous chemical release or potential act of violence are examples of emergencies that may necessitate a Shelter In Place alert.

To help you remember what to do, the 4 S Procedure has been developed. The 4 S’s are:

SEEK Shelter, SECURE your environment, SILENCE any sounds that may make your location known to an intruder, STAY where you are until you have been advised it’s safe to leave.

SEEK & SHARE SHELTER

- Assess your environment. Certain situations may require immediate shelter but where possible:
  - Seek rooms that can be locked from the inside
  - Avoid large open areas, windows or areas that can’t be secured
  - Look for alternative space outside of the lab. A lab is not an ideal place for sheltering.
- If you are outside and alerted to seek shelter indoors, enter the closest possible building.
- If it is safe to do so, share the building with those campus members seeking shelter. Look for Caltech ID’s and/or uniforms but always use your judgment.
- Consider sheltering with others but avoid sheltering in large groups. Companionship can be helpful when dealing with the crisis.

SECURE

- Lock the building’s exterior doors (manually or via Card Access)
- Secure the space that you are in. If there are no locks, consider barricading the door
- Close and lock any windows
- Pull blinds
- In some cases the ventilation system may be shut off
- Increase distance from the hazard. If the release is outside, move into the building’s interior. Always move away from the highest area of concentration.

SILENCE

- Minimize noise
- Keep cell phones turned on but put them on vibrate
- Turn down ringers on desk phones
- Unplug speakers on computers or audio equipment
  - Example: Radios, MP3 players, fans, clock alarms
- Be aware of your surroundings and use your senses; listening for unusual sounds, look for hazards or smells
- Reduce or turn off lights to make yourself less visible in the building. Keep flashlights on hand

STAY

- Remain in a secure location and wait for instructions from emergency personnel or an official source such as the Caltech Emergency Notification system before exiting the building.

COMMUNICATIONS DURING A SHELTER IN PLACE EVENT

- Notification to shelter in place can come from various sources however the Caltech Emergency Notification system will be used as a primary communication tool.
- Always alert or share necessary safety information with other people in your building or location
- If you have pertinent information about the emergency or need assistance call ext 5000 or send an email or text message to 5000@caltech.edu. Please consider that by making a phone call you may be audible to a perpetrator.

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