



USDA Employee Emergency Response Guide

**USDA Headquarters
Washington, D.C.**

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Foreword

The purpose of the Employee Emergency Response Guide is to provide an understandable and accessible reference for use in emergency situations in order to promote the safety of USDA Headquarters employees. This guide addresses some of the most common emergencies that employees in the Headquarters Complex may face on any given day. The guide relies on employees to use their better judgment to help identify emergency situations in and around the office. It is recommended that employees review the guide and become familiar with the layout in order to ensure faster, more reliable access to this emergency reference.

This guide will be updated periodically as a result of lessons learned during drills or the receipt of new information. Please check back frequently. Lastly, this guide was prepared specifically for the USDA employees in the National Capital Region. However, its contents may be applied anywhere.

There are personnel who are familiar with the Incident Management Handbook and the Occupant Emergency Plan and have a more in-depth knowledge of the material outlined in this guide. Please address your questions, recommendations, and concerns to their supervisors or by e-mail to: preparedness@usda.gov.



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Emergency Contact Numbers

Any Location

	Location	Number
Fire	Any location	9-911
Medical Emergency	Any location	9-911
Federal Protective Service	Any location	202-708-1111 TTY (301) 763-0126
Employee Information Line	Any location	800-932-1902 (recording) or 202-690-3636 (recording) Call 711 to access voice relay (TTY) services. 877-677-2369 (Operations Center)

USDA

	Location	Number
Security	HQ Complex 6am - 6pm	202-720-6270 202-720-8479 (TTY)
	HQ Complex 24 hour guard	202-690-0869 202-720-8476 (TTY)
	GW Carver Center	301-504-2366 301-504-2370
Health Unit	HQ Complex	202-720-9522 202-720-8480 (TTY)
	GW Carver Center	301-504-2398
	Riverdale	301-734-8660
Facilities	Headquarters Complex	202-720-6859 202-260-0386 (TTY)
	George Washington Carver Center	301-504-2411 301-504-2409 (TTY)

Personnel and visitors using TTY should call 711 to access voice relay (TTY) services and provide the operator with the number you wish to contact.

Employee Information Center: <http://www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared>



First Responders to Emergencies

Headquarters Complex and George Washington Carver Center

At these government-owned buildings, the Office of Operations is the first responder to an emergency. Situations are handled from an Emergency Command Center (ECC) located in the subbasement of Wing 3. The structure for handling an emergency is based on the Incident Command System developed by the Forest Service. The chart for the different positions assumed during an emergency is on the following page.

It is through this structure that Public Address (PA) System, Computer Emergency Notification System (CENS), ROAM Secure Alert, Channel 6, radio, and VoiceReach messages will be sent. The Office of Operations relies on both government employees (through the Occupancy Emergency Plan (OEP) structure) and contract employees to support the handling of the emergency. Contract employees (other than Security Officers) will wear red armband identifiers to assure employees that they are authorized OEP officials during a crisis.

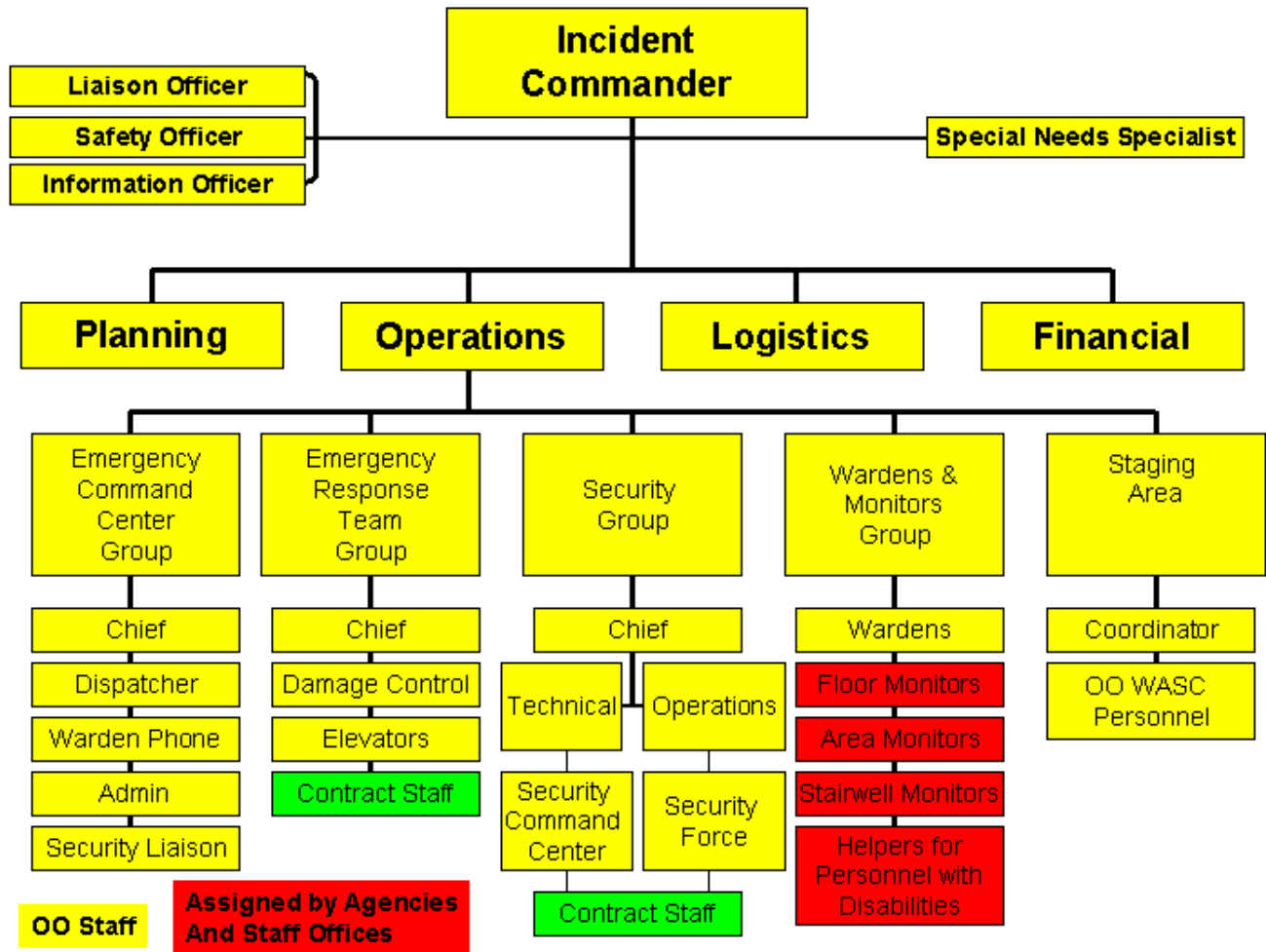
Leased Buildings

Each building that houses government employees is required to have an OEP. These plans are available through your local facilities contact and are on the Employee Information web site. These buildings are leased through the General Services Administration (GSA) from private building owners. Discussions on emergency plans should be held regularly with the USDA tenants, the building management, and GSA.

Should there be an emergency at a leased location, your facilities contact should *notify the USDA Operations Center at 202-720-5711.*



Incident Command Team





Communications Tools

What communications tools are in place to provide me with updated information?

The Office of Operations and the USDA Operations Center will be monitoring TV, radio, and other communications to keep on top of the emergency situation.

Office of Operations personnel will provide regular updates on conditions and what additional actions you should take, such as continuing to shelter-in-place in the initial work areas, moving the shelter-in-place locations, or initiating an evacuation of the building, and giving the “All Clear” signal. Information will be communicated by a combination of the following:

- Public Address (PA) system
- Computer Emergency Notification System (CENS)
- USDA Channel 6 television
- Wardens
- Voice Reach/Message Reach
- ROAM Secure Alert
- USDA Employee Information Line
- Website

<http://www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared>

Office of Operations personnel will communicate with each other to coordinate actions via two-way radios and will keep the Deputy Administrators for Management informed.

The USDA Operations Center coordinates external communications with emergency responders via the Regional Information Communications and Coordination System (RICCS) and the Washington Warning System (WAWAS).

Leased buildings have varying internal communications. Check with your supervisor to see what capabilities are in your building.



Evacuating the Building

What do I do if we are told to evacuate the building?

- If an alarm sounds in your building, remain calm. There are a variety of communication tools that can be used to keep employees informed (PA systems, CENS, two-way radios, megaphones). However, if an alarm sounds, you must *evacuate immediately*.
- Follow all instructions given by first responders, supervisors, emergency wardens and other emergency personnel.
- Be aware of people with disabilities in your area who may require your assistance. Be prepared to help them.
- In the Complex buildings, there are red warden phones located by stairwells. These phones are for wardens and persons with disabilities only. Using this phone will give a direct call to the ECC, and you will be given further information specific to your location.
- DO NOT use elevators unless instructed to do so by emergency personnel.
- If the alarm sounds or if you are instructed to evacuate by other communications means, **BEGIN TO EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY**. If you are on a lower floor, it is critical that you evacuate immediately so that those on the upper floors are not caught in a backup in the stairwells as they descend to the lower floors. **DO NOT ATTEMPT** to go back up the stairs.
- Turn off your lights but leave your door unlocked. This will facilitate easy entry for sweeps by wardens and monitors and quick access for first responders if needed.
- *Secure all classified material* in an appropriate manner before leaving your work area.
- If it will not delay your exiting, take your coat if the weather is inclement. If you are at your work area, take your wallet/purse, and identification but leave briefcases, suitcases, etc. behind. If you are on a lower floor than your work area when the alarm to evacuate is given, do NOT go back up to get your personal things.
- Walk *quickly and calmly* to the nearest marked exit. Follow the instructions of the ERT monitors and wardens regarding alternate exit routes, should your normal pathway be blocked
- Exit the building and move directly to your organization's assembly point. Your specific assembly point will be determined by your organization and the type of incident.
- Do not attempt to re-enter the building until told by the authorities that it is safe to do so.



Headquarters Shelter-in-Place Guide

What is shelter-in-place?

Shelter-in-Place is a protective action taken inside the building to protect you from external hazards, minimize your chance of injury, and/or provide the time to allow preparations for a safe evacuation. We will shelter-in-place when the Incident Commander deems that it is in your best interest to remain in a sheltered environment. We may also shelter-in-place when there is no immediate danger outside, but we are requested by other government entities to participate in a controlled dismissal to allow for an orderly movement out of the District of Columbia.

Options

- Stay in your offices
- Move to an interior space - an office or corridor that is not part of the outside perimeter of the building
- Relocate to another part of the building - either horizontally or vertically

Why do we shelter in place?

1. Most likely scenarios

- Severe weather (tornado, hail, etc.)
- Civil unrest
- Accidental chemical release due to industrial/vehicle accident

- Controlled release of personnel for an orderly evacuation from the District of Columbia
- Upon request from other government agencies to allow for the movement of personnel from other parts of the city who are in danger even though the Headquarters Complex is not affected.

2. Least likely scenario: Biological, chemical, or radiological attack

Duration



Shelter-in-Place at USDA

Headquarters is anticipated to last only a few hours – 3 to 4.

However, while the danger may pass in a few hours, the effect on

the transportation system may prevent you from leaving the immediate area for several hours. Be patient.

While we believe that most situations will be of SHORT DURATION, we also consider it prudent to plan for a longer period of time, and we recommend that you stock your Grab and Go Kit in preparation for the possibility of a stay of up to 12 hours. Planning for a longer duration will provide you with options if you are released from USDA but are not able to get home and have to stay with friends or at a motel.

Actions to take

What action will I be told to take if I am inside the building?

The specific action will be determined by the event. Follow the instructions that will be provided by the PA System, CENS, USDA Channel 6 TV, the wardens, your monitors, and



your supervisory chain. General guidance follows:

For flooding, severe congestion on the streets or Metro, or upon receipt of a request by authorities for USDA to shelter-in-place:

Remain in your offices.

For severe weather and civil unrest that pose a physical threat:

Stay inside and, if directed, move away from windows to the inner corridors. Be sure to close all doors connecting exterior offices to the corridor. For extreme weather, such as a tornado, you may be advised to move to lower levels in the building. Take your Grab and Go Kit.

For an external chemical, biological, or radiological incident:

Stay inside and if next to a window, move to an inner corridor or office. Close your windows and turn off air conditioners and fans, including above door transom fans. Be sure to close all doors connecting exterior offices to the corridor, to reduce the transfer of contaminated air from the outside to the inside.

Move to interior spaces, generally on a floor that is on the second floor or above. Why? Because most chemical agents, particularly those which may be used by terrorists, are heavier than air and tend to hug the ground. We suggest that all occupants explore their intended sheltering area and learn the quickest way up if you are using the stairwells.

Elevator use will be restricted to persons with disabilities and/or health issues. These personnel should move to the second or third floor. We want to restrict the movement of elevators to

any higher level, as they drag air up the shaft whenever they move. Elevators will normally be shut down to prevent any further movement 15 minutes into the event.

You should also be aware that conditions are likely to get uncomfortable, as the maintenance staff will immediately shut down the ventilation system to reduce the chance of contamination entering the building. The close quarters, heat, and stuffiness will add to your discomfort. Please remain calm, and assist those around you in coping with the situation.

For an internal chemical, biological, or radiological incident:

Depending on the location and or severity of the event, you will most likely be told to immediately relocate to another safer portion of the building. Specific instructions on where to go and what areas to avoid will be provided via the communication methods outlined in previous sections. Do not automatically evacuate as you may be placing yourself in the path of the hazard. The developing situation will dictate further actions.

Notifications

How will I be informed that I need to shelter-in-place?

You will be notified immediately through both the Headquarters-wide PA system and CENS with specific instructions on the type of event and where employees should move. We will keep you updated throughout the situation as often as possible.

We will also provide emergency information through USDA Channel 6 TV, the wardens, and security forces. Some persons with disabilities



may also receive information through their Wyndtell pagers.

A word of caution: Some news media serve as excellent sources of information on developing situations but some do not always have accurate data and jump to conclusions. What is being reported as factual for some part of town (a reporter at the Capitol may say the plume of toxic material has cleared and it is safe - it is for him) may not have the data on what is happening at the Headquarters Complex. Likewise, media may report on actions that other agencies are taking that may not be the best action for us, in our location. Acting on external news media may put you at risk - wait for word from USDA officials.

The USDA Incident Commander operates from the USDA Operations Center with its contiguous Operations Watch Area, Security Control Center and ECC. These centers provide real-time, accurate data for decision-making and are linked to the Washington Alert System, the network of Federal Command Centers, and the Metropolitan Council of Government.

Leased Locations

The general guidance provided for the Headquarters Complex applies as well to USDA personnel in leased facilities. When informed of an event, move to those locations that offer a higher degree of safety within your facility. Coordinate with the other tenants.

Currently, our primary system to keep you apprised of any threat will be CENS. If you are having difficulties with CENS at your location please check with your IT system administrator. We are also currently working on a number of initiatives, which will shortly be in place, to provide your facility with redundant notification of any emergency. These initiatives include

extending the USDA Channel 6 TV to your common areas and providing key staff within your facility with a direct radio link to the Incident Command structure. We also have notification lists of key personnel in each facility that we can contact directly by phone in the event of an emergency.

What Else?

What action will I be told to take if I am outside the building?

Immediately upon notification to shelter in place, Security will direct personnel outside the building to come inside. You will not be denied entry. Once all personnel in the immediate area are inside the building, security may post signs in the doors to direct late arrivals to another building or specific entrance where personnel may be sequestered to enable responders to attend to any signs of possible contamination.

Where will visitors go?

Upon notification to shelter-in-place, all employees should assess their immediate area, identify any visitors, and provide them assistance. Visitors include anyone not regularly assigned to USDA Headquarters including: other agency employees, dependents, contractors, and other visitors, etc. Once identified you need to direct the visitor(s) to the appropriate Shelter-in-Place location- take them with you. If the visitor(s) insist on leaving the building, escort them to the nearest Security Officer and allow Security to help them.

What about the Child Development Center?

The children in the Child Development Center (CDC) in the Yates building will be relocated to the second floor conference room. Please allow the system to work in caring for the children.



Parents are advised to not go to the CDC and pick up their children, since it will slow the relocation process. Further, moving through a potentially hazardous area may result in your picking up contamination and placing your child and others at risk.

If I am told to Shelter-in-Place, do I have to stay?

No. Shelter-in-place is a voluntary action, unless mandated by law enforcement or public health officials. Personnel who ask to leave the building before it has been determined safe to do so will be directed to the Security Office where they will be informed of any civil restrictions. If no restrictions are in place, personnel asking to leave will be escorted by Security to the authorized exit point. Remember that leaving may be put you at risk. The anticipated traffic jams and Metro congestion may prevent you from exiting the area expeditiously and could place you in a contaminated zone.

Could legal authorities exercise a mandate to Shelter-in-Place?

Yes. Federal Protective Service and law enforcement agencies can "detain" occupants within a police perimeter, and local health departments can quarantine and isolate occupants.

If we have to Shelter-in-Place what will USDA Headquarters provide?

USDA Headquarters will provide for your immediate shelter and security in a Shelter-in-Place event, but will not provide emergency food and water for all employees. The Office of Operations has a limited supply of life-support consumables to provide for visitors, persons in medical distress, occupants trapped in elevators,

and personnel who cannot return to their offices if an emergency is declared. The prime responsibility for providing for your personal needs rests with you.

You will be responsible for providing your own "Grab and Go Kit " with food, water, and prescription medications should you be directed to Shelter-in-Place. For more information on the Grab and Go Kit, please visit:

<http://www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared/Grabandgo kit.htm>

What can I do to ensure that I am prepared?

While we cannot foresee every possible emergency, you can be prepared to meet most. We recommend that you and your family develop an emergency plan so you can be confident they are safe in the event of an emergency. If your family is safe, then you will feel more comfortable while sheltering-in-place and during your return home. For specific information on how to develop a family emergency plan and what emergency action plans your local authorities have in place, refer to our website:

<http://www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared>

Shelter-in-Place Locker Locations in HQ Complex

The lockers are located at:

South Building

- Sub-basement -- 2 lockers. One in the hallway by S228 and one in the 3rd Wing stairwell Tail-House
- 2nd Floor - 4 lockers. One each at elevator lobby's in the 3rd and 6th Wing Tail-House, and 3rd and 5th Wing Head-House.
- 5th Floor-- 4 lockers. One each at elevator



Lobby's in the 3rd and 5th Wing Tail-House and 3rd and 5th Wing Head-House.

Yates Building

- Basement - 1 locker
- 3rd Floor - 1 locker
- 5th Floor-- 1 locker

Whitten Building

- Basement-3 lockers. One each in A Section and W and E Wings
- 2 floor - 1 locker in A Section
- 3 floor-2 lockers. One each near the archways in E and W Wings

Cotton Annex

- Basement-1 locker

- 3rd floor-1 locker
- 5th floor-1 locker

Each locker contains:

- 1 Medical kit--assembled by our USDA medical staff
- 8 Battery powered combination flashlight/radio with hand cranked generator
- 10 Cases bottled water
- 20 cases energy bars
- 10 Folding floor mats
- 20 Fleece blankets
- 20 packets anti-bacterial moist wipes.



Grab and Go Kit Recommendations

Recommended personal emergency kit

- Small tote bag, fanny pack, backpack, soft-sided briefcase or whatever holds the contents of your kit. It is recommended that you not use plastic bags or cardboard boxes to hold your emergency supplies since these can break open if dropped.
- Water – Prepackaged emergency water with 5-year shelf life or bottled water. One to two quarts should be sufficient since the anticipated event duration will be hours, not days. However, since you have no idea how long your return trip home could be, this amount may not be enough during the summer months. Another thing to remember is not to throw away your empties on the way home. You may need to refill them. If you are considering prepackaged water in pouches or boxes be sure to protect them. These packages can leak if not stored properly.
- Non-perishable foil wrapped food such as snack or high protein bars that are light and easy to carry. You can also buy prepackaged bars with a 5-year shelf life. These bars are high calorie and do not promote thirst. Regardless of what you choose, keeping them in plastic bags or containers helps to reduce the risk of rodent and insect intrusion.
- Three day supply of medicines - While everything else on this list is based on the short term, we recommend a 3-day supply of medications, just in case you cannot make it home and end up staying at a friend's house or hotel. Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications. Be sure they are stored to meet instructions on the label and be mindful of expiration dates. It would also be a good idea to have the pharmaceutical name written down inside your kit just in case you cannot remember the exact name or you need medical care.
- Small battery operated or solar radio - You may need to walk and not have any way of getting up-to-date information.
- Small flashlight.
- Extra batteries for your radio and flashlight. If possible buy a radio and flashlight that use the same size batteries so you only have to buy one size and can interchange if you have to.
- Light/glow stick (2) to pin to your clothes or carry in case you have to walk in the dark.
- Small knife or multi-tool - While you may not know how to use all the tools, it is a good bet someone else will.
- Personal toiletries, including toothbrush, non-water hand cleaner, eye drops, etc. –
- Comfortable clothes, sturdy shoes, socks, and hat for the season in case you have to walk. These items don't need to be in your kit.
- N95 paper mask (2) – These masks are small, light weight and inexpensive. They provide added protection from particulate matter (dust) that may be



generated in an explosion.

- A pen and small note/phone book with the phone numbers and e-mail addresses of your family, friends and neighbors. While many people carry cell phones and electronic note pads, a hard copy back up never hurts and can take a lot of abuse.
- Rain poncho
- Blanket
- Small first aid kit
- Area map
- Cash, \$50, in small denominations to buy food and gas in case you are unable to use your credit or debit cards. **Keep this on your person not in your kit.**

Remember, an emergency kit is only intended to meet basic needs, and you are the best judge of what your needs are.



Fire Emergency Situations

Fire prevention:

- Know the location of fire exits and exit stairwells. Fire extinguishers are to be used only by persons properly trained in their use.
- Do not prop open fire doors or stairwell doors. Report fire and stairwell doors that do not close properly to your facilities staff. Report any exposed electrical wiring.

What do I do if I notice a fire?

IF YOU NOTICE A FIRE OR SITUATION THAT REQUIRES EVACUATION OF THE BUILDING:

1. Pull one of the manual fire alarms located strategically throughout every building. These manual stations automatically summon the fire department. In government-owned buildings, the GSA Mega center (708-1111) also gets notified.
2. Dial 9-911. Give the following information to the 911 operator.

Street address: _____

Nearest cross street: _____

Name of the building: _____

Location of fire in the building: _____

Description of the situation: _____

3. Report any fire to the Security Control Center: 202-690-0869.
4. Notify others in your area.

5. Assist anyone who needs help evacuating.
6. Proceed to your agency's designated assembly areas.
7. Proceed to the zone where personnel from your Division or Branch will congregate within the designated assembly areas.

If you become trapped in a building during a fire:

- If you are on the ground floor and a window that opens is available, carefully climb out if you can do so safely.
- If there is no window, stay near the floor where the air will have less smoke. Shout at regular intervals to alert emergency crews of your location.
- If you are in a room with the door closed, feel the door. If the door is warm, do not open it. If smoke is entering the room through cracks around the door, stuff something in the cracks to slow the flow.
- If you are on an upper floor and cannot reach one of the stairwells, go to an office with a window, close the office door, go to the window and wave with something so emergency crews can see you.



Explosions

If an explosion occurs in your office:

- Take shelter under your desk or a sturdy table to protect yourself from projectiles, the force of the blast, and falling debris.
- As soon as possible check for fires and other hazards then quickly and appropriately exit the building.
- DO NOT use the elevators.

If you are trapped in debris:

- If possible, use a flashlight to signal your location to rescuers
- Avoid unnecessary movement so that you do not kick up dust.
- Use anything you have to cover your mouth. Dense weave cotton material is the best for creating a filter through which to breathe.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so that rescuers can hear where you are.
- Use a whistle if one is available to signal rescuers.
- Shout only as a last resort as it can cause a person to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.



Medical Emergency Situations

What do I do if a co-worker becomes seriously ill?

In a serious Medical Emergency:

1. Administer appropriate First Aid. In the case of serious injury, keep the victim warm and comfortable to prevent shock. Remember ABC: Airway, Bleeding, Circulation, when administering First Aid
2. The Medical Staff is trained and equipped to handle most workplace health or accident emergencies and can be reached at the Health Unit: 720-9522

3. Have someone dial 9-911 immediately. Give the following information to the 911 Operator.

Street: _____

Address: _____

Nearest cross street: _____

Name of building: _____

Floor: _____

Room: _____

4. Have a co-worker call Security at 690-0869. Give the floor, room number, and any special directions to the location so Security can direct the emergency response personnel to the person.



Influenza

How to recognize influenza

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent this illness is by getting a flu **vaccination** each fall. Symptoms include:

- fever (usually high)
- headache
- extreme tiredness
- dry cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle aches
- gastric problems (nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea; less likely to occur in adults than children)

Preventing the Flu

- ***Stay home when you are sick.***
If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- ***Avoid close contact.***
If you must go out avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- ***Cover your mouth and nose.***
Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- ***Clean your hands.***
Wash your hands often. This will help protect you from germs.

- ***Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.***

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

Treating the Flu

- If you get the flu, get plenty of rest, drink a lot of liquids, and avoid using alcohol and tobacco. Hot liquids may relieve the feeling of congestion. Also, you can take medications such as acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol®) to relieve the fever and muscle aches associated with the flu. "Over the Counter" therapies, which do not require a prescription, may temporarily relieve flu symptoms, however, such therapies do not treat the virus that causes the flu.
- Because the flu is a viral infection, it cannot be treated with antibiotics. Antibiotics are medicines that kill bacteria and are, therefore, only useful for treating bacterial infections or complications from the flu such as pneumonia.



Other Potential Forms of Influenza

Avian Influenza

Avian influenza is an infection caused by avian (bird) influenza (flu) viruses. These flu viruses occur naturally among birds. Wild birds worldwide carry the viruses in their intestines, but usually do not get sick from them. However, avian influenza is very contagious among birds and can make some domesticated birds, including chickens, ducks, and turkeys, very sick and kill them.

Influenza A (H5N1) virus – also called “H5N1 virus” – is an influenza A virus subtype that occurs mainly in birds, is highly contagious among birds, and can be deadly to them. H5N1 virus does not usually infect people, but infections with these viruses have occurred in humans. Most of these cases have resulted from people having direct or close contact with H5N1-infected poultry or H5N1-contaminated surfaces. There have been cases in which Avian influenza has been passed from birds to humans but the disease has not yet been transmitted from human to human.

Pandemic Influenza

An influenza pandemic is a global outbreak of disease that occurs when a new influenza A virus appears or “emerges” in the human population, causes serious illness, and then spreads easily from person to person worldwide. Pandemics are different from seasonal outbreaks or “epidemics” of influenza. Seasonal outbreaks are caused by subtypes of influenza viruses that already circulate among people, whereas pandemic outbreaks are caused by new subtypes, by subtypes that have never circulated among people, or by subtypes that have not

circulated among people for a long time. Past influenza pandemics have led to high levels of illness, death, social disruption, and economic loss.

Influenza pandemics are different from many of the threats for which public health and health-care systems are currently planning:

- A pandemic will last much longer than most public health emergencies and may include “waves” of influenza activity separated by months of inactivity (in 20th century pandemics, a second wave of influenza activity occurred 3-to-12 months after the first wave).
- The numbers of health-care workers and first responders available to work can be expected to be reduced. They will be at high risk of illness through exposure in the community and in health-care settings, and some may have to miss work to care for ill family members.
- Resources in many locations could be limited, depending on the severity and spread of an influenza pandemic.

Communicating Information to USDA Employees Regarding a Pandemic Influenza Outbreak

Information will be communicated to employees via:

- Channel 6 – Slides and Informational Public Announcements
- Websites
- Posters
- Table Tents
- CENS



- All-Employee E-Mails
- Handouts – distributed at building entrances
- AGLEARN
- USDA News
- LED Message Boards

* Information on this page and the preceding one has been taken from the CDC Website.



Biological Hazard Situations

What do I do if I suspect a biological agent has been released?

What do I do if I open a letter and find it contains a powdery or other “suspicious” substance, or has a written statement that the item contains a harmful substance?

- Stop immediately.
- Do not shake, bump or empty the package.
- Put it down, and do not touch it.
- Gently cover it with any material that is handy. For example: paper towel, file folder, etc.
- Do not smell it, taste it, or try to analyze it.
- Isolate the immediate area where the item is located, and make sure that no one disturbs the item. First responders will handle any evacuations.
- Turn off air conditioners, heaters, and fans to prevent any potentially harmful substance from circulating. Close doors and windows in the room where the letter or package is located.
- Wash your hands with soap and cool water for 30-60 seconds, and then wash your face. Ensure that other persons who may have touched the letter or package do the same.
- Notify security.

- Do NOT allow anyone to leave who might have touched the item. If possible, make a list of persons who have touched it.
- Do NOT re-enter the area where the suspicious letter, envelope, or package is located. It is a potential crime scene, and it is critical that you do not disturb any evidence. Above all, remain calm, and wait for the arrival of emergency personnel.
- Give Security the list of persons who may have touched the item so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow-up.

What do I do if I receive an envelope with powder, and powder spills on me or onto my work area?

- Do NOT try to clean up the powder. Cover the spilled contents immediately with anything (e.g., clothing, paper, trash can, etc.), and do not remove this cover.
- Leave the room and close the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering.
- Wash your hands with soap and cool water to prevent spreading any powder to your face.
- Notify Security, and they will notify emergency personnel.
- When emergency personnel respond, they will provide guidance on decontamination. Some things that may direct you to do are:



- Remove heavily contaminated clothing as soon as possible and place in a plastic bag, or some other container that can be sealed.
- Shower with soap and cool water. Do not use bleach or other disinfectant on your skin.
- If possible, list all people who were in the room or area, especially those who had actual contact with the powder. Give this list to Security so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow-up.
- Shower with soap and cool water as soon as possible. Do not use bleach or other disinfectant on your skin.
- If possible, list all people who were in the room or area. Give this list to Security so that proper instructions can be given for medical follow-up.

What if the room is contaminated by aerosolization?

For example, a small device is activated that sprays a substance into the air; there is a warning that the air handling system is contaminated, or a warning that a biological agent was released in a public space:

- Turn off local fans or ventilation units in the area.
- Leave the immediate area and wait for assistance.
- Close the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering.
- Notify Security. They will contact emergency personnel.
- Remove heavily contaminated clothing as soon as possible and place in a plastic bag or some other container that can be sealed. This clothing bag should be given to the emergency responders for proper handling.



Chemical Hazards

How to recognize a chemical attack

A chemical attack is the deliberate release of a toxic gas, liquid or solid that can poison people and the environment. Watch for these signs:

- People with watery eyes, twitching, choking, and difficulty breathing.
- Numerous individuals experiencing unexplained water-like blisters, wheal (like bee stings), and/or rashes.
- Numerous surfaces in the area exhibit oily droplets/film or the presence of unexplained water surfaces (puddles) with oily film are present when there is no reason (rain).
- Unexplained odors in the area that resemble bitter almonds, peach kernels, or newly mown hay or green grass.
- Many sick or dead birds, insects, fish, or small animals.

Course of action

- Try to determine the source of the affected area if possible.
- Evacuate the affected area.
- If the area is inside, try to evacuate the building without passing through the contaminated area.
- If you cannot get out of the building without passing through the contaminated area, move away from the area and “shelter-in-place.”

- If you are outside when you see signs of a chemical attack, either quickly get out of the area, or determine whether it would be better to go inside and “shelter-in-place.”

Treating chemical exposure

If your eyes are watering, your skin is stinging, you have trouble breathing, or you simply think you may have been exposed to a chemical:

- Immediately strip and wash; look for a fountain, hose, or any other source of water. You can use any one of the decontamination stations (see following page).
- Use soap and water if possible, but **DO NOT SCRUB INTO YOUR SKIN.**
- Request emergency medical attention at your location. Do not go to the Health Unit



USDA HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX SHOWER FACILITIES

Whitten Building

Room 221E

Ladies Room

Room 221W

Men's Room

South Building

Room SM-12

ESRA Fitness Center Shower Facilities

Room

Hazardous waste accumulative area

Room S0556

Print Plant

Room S228

WASC Engineering Shop

Cotton Annex

Room

2nd Mezzanine Ladies' Room

Room

3rd Mezzanine Men's Room

Room

Basement Battery Room

Yates Building

Room 0-10

Men's Room-- Basement

Room 0-11

Ladies Room—Basement

Room 0-12

Chiller Room



Radiological Hazard Situation

Possible radiological threat situations:

- Dirty bomb
- Made by wrapping radioactive material around a core of ordinary high explosives and detonating it so that radioactive contamination spreads over the widest possible area.
- There are two hazards in a dirty bomb:
 - The bomb blast which presents the greatest danger
 - The radioactive particulate matter or debris that will be scattered by the bomb blast. Radioactive particulates from a dirty bomb may travel several blocks or even several miles. The extent and duration will be determined by the wind speed and direction.
- Nuclear power plant accident or release
- Release of radioactive material

What would happen if a dirty bomb were detonated near our offices?

People in the blast area would be injured by the debris and would be exposed to radiation through contact with and inhalation of the dust and debris. If the building is intact, we may have the option to shelter in place for a limited amount of time or to evacuate.

The concept of sheltering-in-place is to provide some measure of safety from the time an emergency occurs until there is sufficient reliable information about the emergency such

as: is it a bomb, dirty bomb, or etc.? Where did it occur? What is the wind direction? What type of radiological material was involved? Once sufficient information is received, a decision will be made on the actions to take. The type of emergency will determine the length of time we shelter in place.

How will I be notified of a radiological emergency?

- Notification can occur in a number of ways – PA system, CENS broadcast message, local emergency management personnel, local radio and/or television Emergency Alert System, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio, and on - the - scene police officers.
- The notification will be accompanied by instructions on what steps you should take, for example, whether to shelter in place or to evacuate.
- It is likely that there will be a period of uncertainty immediately after the event occurs. There may be a delay of several hours before officials can determine the exact nature of the emergency and whether radiological materials were involved.



Dealing With a Bomb Threat

How can I identify suspicious packages and letters?

Some characteristics of suspicious packages and letters include the following:

- Excessive postage
- Handwritten or poorly typed addresses
- Incorrect titles
- Title, but no name
- Misspellings of common words
- Oily stains, discolorations or odor
- No return address
- Excessive weight
- Lopsided or uneven envelope
- Protruding wires or aluminum foil
- Excessive security material such as masking tape, string -etc
- Visual distractions
- Ticking sound
- Marked with restrictive endorsements, such as “Personal” or “Confidential”
- Shows a city or state in the postmark that does not match the return address.

What do I do if I receive a suspicious package?

Upon seeing a suspicious package or device that resembles a bomb the individual should:

- Not open, touch, or otherwise handle the suspicious item or anything else not their own.
- Immediately warn those in close proximity and vacate the area. (Evacuate the area horizontally to move away as rapidly as possible and towards the designated safe zone.)
- Call the USDA Security Control Center via land line (do not use cell phone or radio).
- Return to your place of work once the area has been determined to be safe.

NO ONE EXCEPT TRAINED BOMB DISPOSAL PERSONNEL SHOULD ATTEMPT TO EXAMINE OR MOVE A SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE OR SUSPECTED BOMB.

What do I do if I receive a threat via telephone?

Any individual receiving a threat via telephone should attempt to:

- Record the call if such capability is available
- Make notes of the call using the checklist on the following page.
- At the conclusion of the call, press the switch hook (hang up) for only a few seconds, then release the switch hook



(pick up the receiver again).

- On the same line that the call came in on, perform the following:
If you have a multi-button phone, press the line button for the same line that received the threatening call.
 If your agency/location is served by a key system behind WITS2001, you must seize the same line, which received the threatening call by first pressing the RECALL button; then dialing the appropriate call trace code. **List for a dial tone.**
Dial the special Call Trace code for your telephone system (DO NOT DIAL 9 FIRST)
Touch Tone: *57 or Rotary: 1157
- Listen to the confirmation announcement, which should advise you that an automatic line trace has been activated in WITS2001 and should direct you to contact the Federal Protective Service (FPS) immediately on 202-708-1111.
DO NOT DIAL 9 FIRST
- Hang up the phone. Write down the time and date that you initiated the call trace.
- Call the USDA Security Control Center on another telephone.

What do I do if I receive a threat via mail or fax?

Any individual receiving a threat via the mail or fax should attempt to:

- Preserve the item, including any wrappings/envelopes, so they may be examined in depth by proper law enforcement entities.

- Minimize the handling of any document to reduce contamination (additional fingerprints, coffee stains, etc.).
- Call the USDA Security Control Center.

What to ask when a bomb threat is made

Get the responses to these questions recorded as accurately as possible!

When is the bomb going to explode or chemical set to release?

Where is it right now?

What does it look like?

What kind of bomb or chemical agent is it?

What will cause it to explode or release?

Did you place the bomb or chemical agent yourself?

Why?

What is your name?

What is your address?

Sex of Caller _____

Approximate Age _____

Race _____

Length of call _____

Note the Caller's voice:

- Calm
- Laughing
- Lisp
- Disguised
- Angry
- Crying
- Raspy



Accent
Excited
Normal
Deep
Slow
Distinct
Ragged
Rapid
Slurred
Familiar
Soft
Nasal
Loud
Stutter
Deep breathing
Clearing throat

Background Noise

Local
Street noises
Music
Factory
Machinery
Voices
Long distance
Motor
Office
House noises
Clear
Animal noises
Static
PA system

Threat Language

Foul
Well-spoken
Incoherent
Irrational
Taped



Civil Disturbances

Politically motivated groups may demonstrate in areas adjacent to USDA facilities and possibly attempt to illegally gain entrance to or disrupt normal operations of the facility by preventing employees from entering the building.

In General:

- Stay in your assigned area.
- Do not go to the scene of a demonstration, if avoidable.
- Whenever you observe a demonstration or civil disturbance in or around your facility, contact the USDA Security Control Center on 690-0869 or 720-8476 TDD.
- Do not confront or antagonize demonstrators.
- You will be notified if there is a need to evacuate or shelter-in-place, otherwise, stay in your area.

If you are outside:

- Seek unobstructed facility entrances, even if required to walk around to the other side of the building.
- Be prepared to present identification
- Seek a location away from the demonstration site to call your office and obtain instructions if you are unable to gain entrance into the building.

If you are inside:

- Close blinds/curtains in areas where demonstrators are visible.
- If possible, avoid areas with doors and windows leading to the exterior of the facility where demonstrators are present.



Prevention of Crime in Your Office

1. Always lock your doors when your office is unoccupied or if you are working late and are alone. Please note that during an emergency evacuation, you are requested to leave your door unlocked to allow first responders access to your area.
2. Keep purses and valuables locked up and out of sight.
3. If you remove your suit coat, always transfer your valuables to your trouser pockets.
4. Do not hang coats, hats, purses, etc., near the entrance to your office.

5. Secure all small office equipment when not in use.
6. Ask persons entering your office if you may help them. This discourages individuals who wander.
7. Watch your fellow employees' property.
8. Wear your USDA identification at all times.

If you observe someone committing a crime, DO NOT attempt to apprehend or detain the suspect. Try to memorize the physical appearance of the suspect and call the USDA Security Control Center 202-690-0869/202-720-8476.



Severe Weather Emergency Situations

When severe weather threatens your building all personnel need to:

- Remain calm.
- Close all windows.
- Close, but do not lock office doors.
- Move quickly to the lowest floor of your building possible and stay away from outside walls, windows, and large rooms such as auditoriums and theaters.
- If available, basement levels offer the best protection from the destructive winds of a major storm, tornado or hurricane.
- In case of flying debris, get under a piece of sturdy furniture such as a workbench or heavy table or desk and hold on to it. If unavailable, use arms to protect head and neck.
- No employees should leave the building during a severe weather emergency unless for dire emergency.
- Use stairways when moving to other areas. Elevators are reserved for persons with special needs.
- Follow instructions. Instructions will be provided through the CENS and PA systems, and through emergency response personnel and agencies.



Workplace Violence

What is workplace violence?

There are many forms that workplace violence can take:

- Suicide threats
- Threats to injure, or the injury of property or persons
- Fistfights
- Shootings
- Stabbings
- Sexual assaults
- Unauthorized use of deadly weapons or explosives

Whom do I contact?

The first line of action lies with the supervisors of the persons involved in the situation, but ALL acts of violence are to be reported to Security at:

- Protective Operations
(6am-6pm M-F) 202-720-6270
- TTY Line 202-720-8476
- Security Control Center
(24hrs/7 days) 202-690-0869
- General Services Administration/FPS
(24hrs/7 days) 202-708-1111

What else?

- Do not attempt to disarm any individual with a weapon.
- Assist anyone who is injured.
- Evacuate personnel away from the scene.

Allow security to contain the incident and secure the area.



Emergency Evacuation Suggestions for Individuals with Disabilities

What should I do to prepare myself for an emergency situation?

- Meet with your Agency or Branch Safety Officer to discuss specific issues related to your disability and emergency evacuation procedures. If you do not know who your Agency or Branch Safety Officer is please ask your supervisor or co-workers or contact Jerry Bowen at (202)720-0426.
- Review your building Occupant Emergency Plan (OEP) with your Safety Officer. For copies of the Washington, D.C. metro area occupant emergency plans, go to <http://www.usda.gov/oo/beprepared/OEPplans.htm>
- Know where the nearest exit, fire alarm manual station and fire extinguisher are located.
- If you have a cell phone or pager, keep it with you as often as possible.
- All employees should be encouraged to disclose any special needs that might arise in the event of an extreme emergency. Be assured that this information will be treated as confidential and shared only on a strictly "need to know" basis.

If I have a vision disability?

- Listen to directions given over the public address system.
- People who are blind or visually impaired need to know an evacuation route in time of emergency. It is good to learn at least one alternate route, just in case.
- If the "buddy" system is used, the buddy should be someone familiar with the person with a disability, specifically knowing how to provide guiding assistance and they should be familiar with the guide dog or other service animal. Additionally, back-up buddies should be recruited and trained.
- "Buddies" should go to the agreed meeting place to look for the employee with a disability. If the employee is not found, the buddy should then immediately vacate the building. If you need assistance please look for either a hall monitor, floor warden, or ask for help via the Warden Phone.
- Twice a year, it is good to practice leaving the building by at least one of the emergency evacuation routes. This improves familiarity of the evacuation procedures and routes for the employee, their service animals and the buddy(s).
- Service animals: If the alarm is sounded, employees with service animals should always leave the building - if they don't, their service animals will learn to disregard the alarms. Additionally, never let go of your service animal.



If I have a hearing disability?

- Employees who are deaf or hard of hearing have three options available: (1) have a strobe light mounted in their work area; (2) use the USDA supplied pagers (headquarters only) for early notification; or (3) develop a buddy system.
- If the employee is leaving their assigned work area for an extended time, i.e., for training or conference/meeting attendance, a temporary buddy should be established.

If I have a mobility disability?

- The Department has recently updated the Warden-Phone System within the four HQ complex buildings. On floors 2 through 6, at head house and tail house locations in each wing, there is a red telephone that is directly linked to the Emergency Command Center (ECC). Employees with mobility impairments should use these phones to contact ECC to determine if they should implement a horizontal evacuation to a designated safe area, use alternative evacuation routes, or use the Evacu-track chairs to leave the building.
- Evacu-track chairs are available, upon request from the Office of Operations Safety Officer (202-720-6808), to wheelchair users and persons with mobility impairments. If during an emergency team members cannot immediately locate the affected employee, they should evacuate the building. NOTE: Evacu-track chairs are slow and can be dangerous if used by

individuals who are not trained in their use. Training on Evacu-Track chairs should be conducted with each team member at least twice per year.

- In the event of an extreme emergency, employees using wheelchairs and scooters should consider alternative evacuations, including being picked-up and carried out of the building. When circumstances necessitate separating the user and the wheelchair, keep the period of separation to a minimum. Sufficient helpers to carry both the user and the wheelchair/scooter must be available to use this procedure. When more than one flight of stairs is traversed, helpers may need to switch positions since one person may be doing most of the lifting. Switch positions only on a level landing area. When the lifting is complete, follow the instructions of the wheelchair user and restore the manual or motorized wheelchair to full operation; then assist the user to a safe area.

If I have a mental/cognitive disability?

- Review evacuation plans with your Agency or Branch Safety Officer.
- Ask the safety monitors or members of the Emergency Team for assistance.
- Regularly review your evacuation plans with your buddy(s) and supervisor.



Contacting Facilities Personnel

How do I contact Facilities Personnel?

- USDA Headquarters Complex Facilities number: (202) 720-6858
- George Washington Carver Center Facilities Number: (301) 504-2411

What kinds of things should I report to facilities personnel?

In addition to basic housekeeping requests, report the following:

- Utility failure
- Burning smell
- Plumbing failure, flooding, water leak
- Spill of unknown material
- Please do not try to fix or clean up these things. Trained responders will address any and all of these problems.

What to Report

- Identify yourself and give the location and phone number from where you are calling.
- Identify the room/area that is involved in the emergency.
- Identify the nature of the emergency and what assistance is needed.

- Indicate if any flammable, corrosive, explosive, and/or toxic products are involved
- Identify any pertinent characteristics of equipment involved.
- Describe any actions already taken



Other Federal Agency Operations Centers

If you are in a Federal Building other than USDA please consult the list below for the telephone number of that Department's Operations Center.

AGENCY OPERATIONS CENTERS			
AGENCY	ACTIVITY	PHONE	HOURS
USDA	HQ USDA Operations Center (OC) opscenter@usda.gov	202-720-5711	24/7
CDC	Center For Disease Control & Prevention	770-488-7100	24/7
DOD	Directorate of Military Support (DOMS) Crisis Response Center Secondary Number Army Watch Office	703-695-2679 703-697-0218	24/7
DOE	Dept of Energy- Operations Center	202-586-8100	24/7
DOI	Dept of Interior - Watch Office Doi_Watch_Center@Ios.Doi.Gov	202-208-4108 877-246-1373	24/7
DOJ/FBI	Dept of Justice/ Fed Bureau of Investigation- Strategic Information Ops Center (SIOC)	202-323-3620	24/7
DOT	Dept of Transportation - 24-Hour Contact Number	202-366-1863	24/7
USCG	US Coast Guard Command Center	202-267-2100	24/7
NRC	National Response Center	800-424-8802	24/7
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency -OC Eoc.Epahq@Epa.Gov	202-564-3850	7-7/7
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency- FEMA Operations Center (FOC) Fema.Operations.Center@Fema.Gov	800-634-7084	24/7
FPS	Federal Protective Service	202-208-1111	
HHS	Dept of Health and Human Services - Information Center War Room	202-358-2413	24/7
NCS	National Communications System -Watch Office Ncs@Ncs.Gov	703-607-4950	24/7
NRC	Nuclear Regulatory Commission Ops Center	301-816-5100	24/7
USCS	US Customs Service - Situation Room	202-927-0524	24/7
USPS	US Postal Service -24-Hour Contact Number	202-268-2000	24/7
VA	Dept of Veterans Affairs -Readiness Operations Center	202-273-5510	24/7