

Emergency Management – Sheltering

Sheltering is often the most critical element in protecting you and your family in times of disaster. There are two basic forms of sheltering, emergency (mass care) and in-place sheltering.

In-place Sheltering

A protective action issued by emergency officials alerting residents that conditions outside preclude immediate evacuations and sheltering should take place within the home. Download the American Red Cross Fact Sheet on in place sheltering instructions.

Emergency Mass Care Sheltering

If a flood, fire, hazardous materials spill or another emergency poses a threat or potential threat to your safety, authorities may advise you to evacuate to a designated sheltering facility.

Emergency shelters are set up in locations such as schools, churches, and community centers. The City of Portage works in cooperation with the American Red Cross of Southwest Michigan to provide mass care sheltering within the city.

The Red Cross has agreements to provide sheltering capabilities at numerous locations in the City of Portage. Additional shelters are available within a few minutes of the city in neighboring communities.

An evacuation order may come with little warning, so it is important to include plans for evacuation as part of family, business, and neighborhood preparedness plans.

Should an evacuation be necessary, local officials will notify you directly through the local media. When an evacuation order is issued, listen to your television or radio to make sure the evacuation order applies to you, and to understand if you are to evacuate immediately or if you have time to pack some essentials. Stay tuned to a radio or television for information on evacuation routes, temporary shelters, and procedures.

At the time you are advised to evacuate, you will also be advised of the location of the nearest emergency shelter determined by the type of emergency that has taken place. Emergency shelters are designed to provide a place to stay – along with sleeping quarters, food, water and shower facilities.

In some instances, sheltering may be required for extended periods of time due to major storms or utility disruptions. Alternatives to the mass care shelters would be to try to seek shelter with friends or relatives living outside of the affected area.

Stay alert to the local media for emergency alerts and updates on what protective actions to take. Make sure you have access to a battery-operated radio or corded phone to keep updated to emergency instructions.

If ordered to seek shelter, do so immediately. If evacuating to an emergency shelter bring your disaster supplies kit with you. Follow the route authorities recommend. Don't take shortcuts on the way to the shelter, they may be blocked or expose you to dangerous hazards.