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## Nov. 7 declared Shelter-in-Place Education Day

By Vera Kochan

Health officials and emergency response agencies such as fire and police agree that shelter-in-place is the best measure to take in the event of a chemical release emergency. Moraga Mayor Dave Trotter proclaimed Nov. 7 to be "Shelter-in-Place Education Day" and in the interest of public safety, urges "all residents to take part in this program."

The Contra Costa Community Awareness Emergency Response Group is sponsoring the 17th annual drill by assisting schools and childcare centers with preparedness for this type of emergency.

In the event of a chemical release, safety sirens will sound initially for about three minutes. These safety sirens are located in the county's industrial corridor from Oakley to Richmond. The sirens are tested on the first Wednesday of each month at 11 a.m. for only about one minute. Additional community warning system tools are used to alert residents in case of emergencies in other areas.

Sirens will re-sound periodically if the event continues, and it is at this point that the public is recommended to shelter, shut and listen.

Steps to shelter in place include:

- 1) Advise everyone to stay inside, since leaving the building could result in exposure to toxic chemical vapors;
- 2) Close all doors and windows and make sure to utilize the locks for a tighter seal;
- 3) Turn off all air conditioning and heating systems. Ceiling fans or portable fans can be used inside to keep cool;
- 4) Turn on your AM radio to KCBS 740 to get official updated information; and
- 5) Stay off the telephone. Contra Costa County has a telephone ring-down system that will begin calling numbers in the impacted area. Do not call 911 to get more information. Only call 911 in a life-threatening emergency. Overloaded phone circuits can prevent actual emergency calls from getting through. County officials will announce the All Clear via the news media, so residents are advised to monitor radio stations, such as KCBS 740. Since the sirens were not designed to be heard indoors, there is no separate safety siren signal for All Clear. The county will reactivate its telephone ring-down and call impacted areas with the All Clear message.

After the All Clear is announced the health department recommends opening doors and windows to air out your building.

For safety alerts in Moraga sign up at [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com). For more information about Shelter-in-Place, visit [www.cococaer.org](http://www.cococaer.org).

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