

# SHELTERING vs. EVACUATION

*Disasters happen anytime and anywhere.*

*When disaster strikes, it is easier to cope when you are prepared. Get Ready! Saginaw County recommends that you have a plan for both sheltering and evacuating and that you take the advice of emergency response personnel.*

## SHELTER IN PLACE

- Close all doors to the outside and close and lock all windows.
- Turn off all air conditioners and all heating systems and switch inlets to the "closed" position. Seal any gaps around window air conditioners with tape and plastic sheeting, wax paper or aluminum wrap.
- Turn off all exhaust fans in kitchen, bathrooms and other spaces.
- Close all fireplace dampers.
- Go to an above ground room (*not the basement*) with the fewest windows and doors. This is usually a bathroom.
- Use tape and plastic food wrapping, wax paper or aluminum wrap to cover and seal bathroom exhaust fan grilles, range vents, dryer vents and other openings to the outside to the extent possible (*including any obvious gaps around external windows and doors*).
- Tune into the Emergency Broadcast System on your radio or television for further information and guidance.

## EVACUATION

If public officials order you to evacuate, take that order seriously and act IMMEDIATELY.

- Bring your Emergency Kit and be sure to include:
  - Prescription medication
  - Disaster supplies (*See November's Fact Sheet for kit information*)
  - Clothing and bedding (*one change of clothes and bed roll for each person*)
  - Car keys and the keys of the place you may be going (*relative's or friend's house*)
- Lock your home.
- Use travel routes specified by local authorities. Do not use shortcuts because some areas may be impassable or dangerous.
- If flooding is a danger avoid flooded roads and washed-out bridges.
- Stay away from downed power lines.
- Listen to local authorities. They will provide the most accurate information and will communicate the location of shelters.

## What is the difference between Shelter-In-Place and Evacuation?

**Shelter-In-Place** generally means that you stay where you are – indoors - and do not go outside until the all-clear is announced by local authorities. The cause for this order may be a hazardous substance that was accidentally released into the air in your community. When the all clear is announced open all the windows in your home to allow the clean air to remove any residual airborne substances in your home. Generally, Shelter-In-Place situations only last for a few hours.

**Evacuation** means that you must leave your home and go to a safer place away from the danger area. This is usually the result of a larger scale and widespread disaster. Devastating severe weather that causes power outages, downed trees, destruction of homes, and unsafe drinking water is an example of the need to evacuate as directed by local authorities. Evacuation may last for several days to several weeks.

