

## Improvised shelter – where and how to hide in case of danger?

If you hear the warning signal of “General warning”, you need to hide immediately from the danger. The Fire Rescue Service of the South Moravian Region in partnership with the Police of the Czech Republic – the city police headquarters of Brno and Diocesan Charity of Brno offers you some basic information about what a safe shelter should look like and what to do to increase resistance of the shelter.

### Where should you hide?

If you hear the warning signal of “General warning”, hide immediately in the nearest shelter. You will find the sound of that and other warning signals existing in the CR on the website at the bottom.

#### Case 1 – AIR

##### E.g. leakage of dangerous chemicals, a natural disaster (except for Case 2)

The only suitable shelter, which can protect you against most of possible dangers coming through the air, is a solid (walled, panelled) building with lockable doors and windows. A car or any other vehicle cannot be used as a proper shelter. However, you can use it for fast transport to a shelter. Choose preferably at least two-floored building with more than one room. It is important to hide on a higher floor especially in case of dangerous chemicals' leakage because some of chemicals are heavier than the air. If it is clear, from which direction the wind is blowing, hide in the leeward side of the room, where the windows are not displayed to the air circulation carrying a dangerous chemical.

Some climatic factors may also become dangerous – e.g. lightning, sudden storm rainfall, hails, tornado, etc. In such cases hiding in a building right under the roof may be dangerous (especially in rooms with skylights). Hide on lower floors of the building and keep rather longer distance from the windows.

#### Case 2 – WATER

##### E.g. floods, landslip, cavern

If the danger is brought by **WATER**, you need to find a completely different type of shelter. The most common danger in our country is floods. In such case you need to hide at a higher place in your surrounding (especially in case of storm-sewage outside the building!).

Natural floods may not be dangerous for massive and good quality buildings. However, we recommend you to find a shelter at a place which

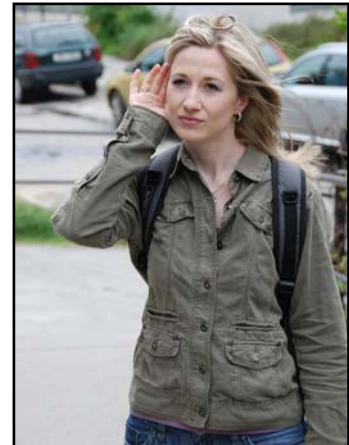


Fig.: listening to the siren

you have checked before and are sure about that it cannot be reached by water. Beware of secluded humps on flatland – you may get cut off and trapped by water.

Mind that if the floods are followed by long lasting rain, the unstable slopes may slip down. Therefore, avoid hiding under steep hills, even if they are out of flooded area.

In case of a special flood (storm-sewage as a result of a broken dam) it is necessary to find the highest point in the terrain and get there as quickly as possible. In this case your life is highly endangered and you need to act as fast as possible. A storm-sewage damages everything like tsunami on the shore.

### **Case 3 – FIRE**

#### **E.g. fire in a building or in the forest**

In case of danger of **FIRE** it is important to move away to any place where you are out of the heat of the fire as well as from the product of combustion.



Fig.: stopping up the door from smoke

If you are in a building, try to get out through the rooms, which have not been affected by the fire. If your way out has been cut off, stay in a safe room and do not let any air get in touch with the fire, possibly move to higher floors or to the roof. You could also try to get out of the house through the window. However, it is not recommended to do unless you are directly in peril of your life by the fire on a lower floor. Before you

jump out of the window, consider your abilities and make sure that the terrain underneath is safe enough. When you get outside, recede immediately to a safe distance. The burning building or its parts may slip or fall down.

If you are endangered by fire in the terrain, you should always try to escape in the direction which is perpendicular to the direction of blowing wind, so that you would not get endangered by products of combustion. If you are far from a residential area, hide by the nearest watercourse or at least in the open terrain, where you can watch the spreading fire.

### **How to hide**

A resistant shelter is important especially in Case 1, which will be dealt with in detail onward. If there is a danger of leakage of dangerous chemicals, it is especially important to arrange the shelter to prevent it from penetration of the dangerous chemical inside. It is necessary to close the door and windows, turn off the fan, and stuff up all holes and gaps, especially the outlet of the ventilating system and air conditioning, as well as seal the door and window frames in the room where you are hiding.

However, before that (if you have enough time) check if all the other windows and doors in the building have been shut. Otherwise air draught and chimney effect may spread dangerous chemicals in the building. Do not forget to block the keyhole and especially the gap under the door of the room. Use an adhesive tape, wet cloths (blankets or sheets), and your own clothes if necessary.

A special case makes leakage of radioactive chemicals. There you need to find a room, preferably in the basement, without windows with walls as thick as possible. To prevent penetration of radiation, beside the sealing and stuffing mentioned above, you should cover all the doors and windows with piled-up bricks, sand bags, boards, sheet metal, or other impenetrable materials. However, you must be able to get safely out of the shelter.



Fig.: blocking a keyhole

**Would you like to learn more about how to act correctly in emergency? Within the project of "Vaše cesty k bezpečí" (Your ways to safety) The Fire Rescue Service of the South Moravian Region in partnership with the Police of the Czech Republic – the city police headquarters of Brno and Diocesan Charity of Brno offers you more advices more our smart blondes, who will give you instructions at our web pages [www.firebrno.cz/EN](http://www.firebrno.cz/EN) how to solve other situations endangering your safety, health, life and possessions.**