



- Cover nose and mouth with a wet cloth.
- When approaching a closed door, use the palm of your hand and forearm to feel the low middle and upper parts of the door. If it is not hot, brace yourself against the door and open slowly. If it is hot to the touch, do not open the door--seek an alternate escape route.
- Heavy smoke and poisonous gases collect first along the ceiling. Stay below the smoke times.

## **AFTER**

If you are trapped in debris.

- Use a flashlight.
- Stay in your area so that you don't kick up dust. Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so that rescuers can hear where you are. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort--shouting can cause a person to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

Assisting Victims

- Untrained persons should not attempt to rescue people who are inside a collapsed building. Wait for emergency personnel to arrive.

## **Chemical Agents**

Chemical agents are poisonous gases, liquids or solids that have toxic effects on people, animals and plants. Most chemical agents cause serious injuries or death.

Severity of injuries depends on the type and amount of the chemical agent used, and the duration of exposure.

If a chemical agent attack were to occur, authorities would instruct citizens to either seek shelter where they are and seal the premises or evacuate immediately. Exposure to chemical agents can be fatal. Leaving the shelter to rescue or assist victims can be a deadly decision. There is no assistance that the untrained can offer that would likely be of any value to the victims of chemical agents.

## **Biological Agents**

Biological agents are organisms or toxins that have illness-producing effects on people, livestock and crops.

Because biological agents cannot necessarily be detected and may take time to grow and cause disease, it is almost impossible to know that a biological attack has occurred. If government officials become aware of a biological attack through an informant or warning by terrorists, they would most likely instruct citizens to either seek shelter where they are and seal the premises or evacuate immediately.

A person affected by a biological agent requires the immediate attention of professional medical personnel. Some agents are contagious, and victims may need to be quarantined. Also, some medical facilities may not receive victims for fear of contaminating the hospital population.

More information on Bioterrorism preparedness and response is available online from the [Department of Health and Human Services Center for Disease Control](#).

[Background](#)

[Preparing For A Disaster](#)

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