



### **What Should The Public Do for a Suspected Biological or Chemical Poisoning?**

- ◆ Monitor the situation through local radio and television broadcasts.
- ◆ Listen for and follow instructions from public health and safety agencies.
- ◆ Call the Virginia Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 for treatment recommendations and other medical information.
- ◆ Call 9-1-1 if anyone is unconscious or not breathing.

#### **If you are Inside and event is Outside:**

- ◆ Stay inside and turn off all ventilation, close windows and doors.
- ◆ Monitor situation on emergency radio or television.

#### **If you are Inside and event is Inside:**

- ◆ Move outside safely and quickly
- ◆ Cover all exposed skin
- ◆ Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth

#### **If you are Outside and event is Outside:**

- ◆ Cover all exposed skin
- ◆ Cover mouth and nose with a cloth
- ◆ Leave area immediately
- ◆ Call 9-1-1



### **What Can You Do Now?**



#### **Be Informed ~ Stay Informed**

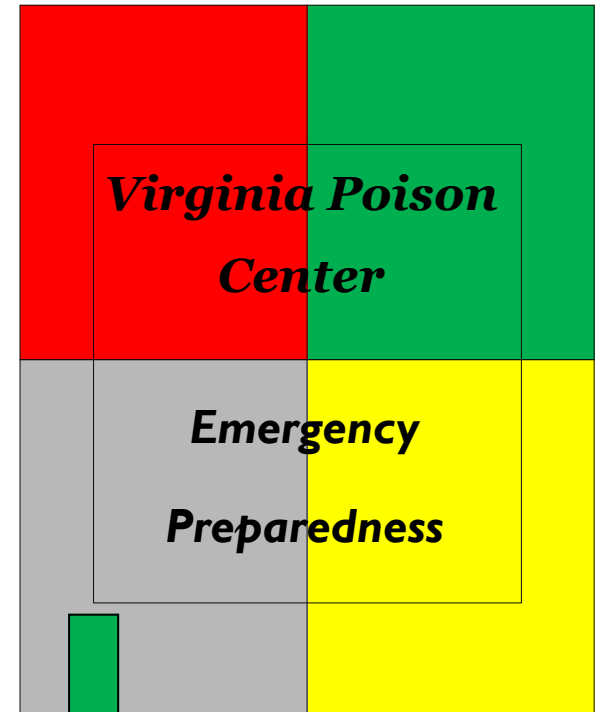
It's important for you and your family to be prepared for **ANY** emergency. This means understanding of all potential emergencies in your local area. Sign up for text alerts, listen for emergency sirens and media emergency alert system announcements. Obtain a battery powered radio and always keep extra batteries. Replace them every 6 months or with "Spring Forward" and "Fall Back" time changes.

A **WATCH** gives advance notice that conditions are favorable for dangerous events.

A **WARNING** requires **IMMEDIATE** action and is only used when potential severe events are about to strike.

Virginia Poison Center  
VCU Health System  
PO Box 980522  
Richmond, VA 23298

Emergency Phone: 1-800-222-1222  
Office: 804-828-4780

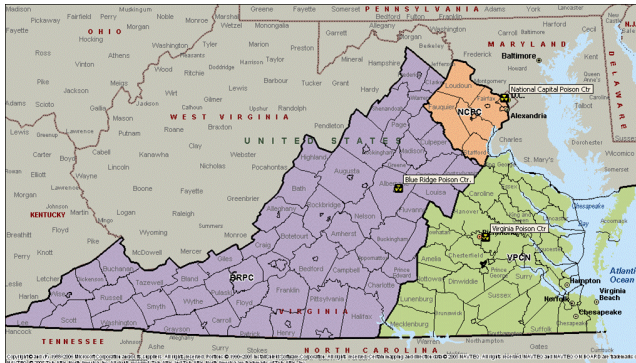


[www.vapoison.org](http://www.vapoison.org)



# Virginia Poison Center And TERRORISM

Since September 11, 2001 local, county/city and state domestic preparation for emergency response to terrorism has been a public health priority. The Virginia Poison Center is one of three poison centers that serve the state of Virginia, all of which take active roles in preparing for chemical, biological or radiation emergencies. The Virginia Poison Center can help recognize and detect potential threats and assist in response by providing expertise needed to ensure appropriate treatment should an event occur.



The **Virginia Poison Center** has highly trained and certified poison specialists (all of whom are registered nurses) who respond to calls about drugs, chemicals, natural toxins and envenomations, as well as calls concerning bioterrorism, chemical spills, or other events involving hazardous materials. Board Certified Toxicologists (and Toxicology Fellows in training) are available for consultation 24 hours a day.



## Bioterrorism

**What is it?** The Center for Disease Control defines bioterrorism as “a deliberate release of viruses, bacteria, or germ agents used to cause illness or death in people, animals, or plants.”

**Where are they?** These agents are typically found in nature, but have the ability to be changed or altered by terrorists to increase the potential harmful effects.

**How are we exposed?** They can be inhaled, ingested, or absorbed through an open cut or wound. Some agents can spread from one person to another while others do not. Effects can be immediate or delayed, mild or life threatening. For specific agent information, go to: [www.cdc.gov/bioterrorism/](http://www.cdc.gov/bioterrorism/)

### What can I do to be prepared?

- ◆ Maintain an Emergency Evacuation Kit
- ◆ Make a Family Emergency Evacuation Plan
- ◆ Keep informed of current emergency planning and training events in your local area.

### Who do I call for Possible Biological or Chemical Events?

- ◆ Call 9-1-1 for Fire, Rescue, Police or Hazardous Materials teams.
- ◆ Call Virginia Poison Center 1-800-222-1222 for treatment and management advice.
- ◆ Call CDC for general non-emergency information at 1-800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636).



## Chemical Emergencies

**What is it?** The CDC defines a chemical emergency as one which occurs when any hazardous chemical or material has been released into the home or public environment or a chemical which has the potential for harming a person's health.

**Where are they?** Potentially dangerous chemicals are in our homes, places of worship, our workplaces and local businesses.

**How are we exposed?** People can be exposed to chemicals by not taking proper precautions with normal product use. Product labels provide recommendations for safe use and proper personal protection. Exposures can also occur from unintentional spills in our daily lives within our home, work or while shopping. On a larger scale, industrial accidents and spills and even terrorist use of chemicals can harm large numbers of people.

Chemicals can be inhaled, ingested, or absorbed through the skin. Common sources are through food, water, or air. Effects can be immediate or delayed.

There are five groups of chemicals that may be associated with intentional release:

- ◆ Riot Control Agents such as tear gas and pepper sprays
- ◆ Blister agents (ex: Mustard “gas”)
- ◆ Lung agents (ex: Chlorine, and Ammonia)
- ◆ “Blood agents” (ex: Cyanide)
- ◆ Nerve agents (ex: Sarin)

For specific chemical information, go to: [www.cdc.gov/chemical/](http://www.cdc.gov/chemical/)

**For further poison information  
Call Virginia Poison Center  
1-800-222-1222**