According to Plan 4 of our Integrated Developmental Plan, the Municipality is mandated to foster a socially equitable environment for all its citizens. This includes ensuring that we provide effective and efficient fire and emergency services at all times.

As part of our efforts to meet this mandate, the Municipality has put together the “Community Response Guide for Emergencies”, which informs and guides citizens on the correct procedure to follow in cases of an emergency incident. Emergency situations cannot be predicted and can happen anywhere and at anytime. That is why it is important for us, as the Municipality, and our residents to be prepared and ready for such incidents at all times.

I urge all citizens to take some time and familiarize themselves with the various procedures to apply in cases of an emergency. It is also important to memorise the emergency number to call. Remember that your safety is our priority. We urge you to cooperate with us in ensuring that our City becomes the most caring and livable City by 2030.

*Be vigilant and stay safe*
Living in society today, brings with it exposure to many different hazards which may cause citizens to respond in different ways. With lack of knowledge, this may result in them being exposed to greater danger. Regardless the situation, we are all exposed to hazards of one kind or another that exists to improve the quality of our lives. Together with these improvements, the expectation that life will be free of negative impacts may harmfully affect us without our consent or knowledge. We rely on various spheres of government to provide us with protection against the consequences of these threats, all which aid in the regulatory control of risk. In most cases, these preventative efforts are adequate. However, rare cases may arise that expose us to risk levels greater than what is considered by society at large to be acceptable. Thus, actions need to be taken to ensure that the effects of the hazard are minimized. Generally the levels of risk from these hazards are managed accordingly and considered to be tolerable.

This booklet is intended to guide residents living near industries on actions to take in emergency situations. It is not-specific, but will provide a reasonable level of safety if followed in most envisaged emergency situations. The instructions provided in this “Community Response Guide for Emergencies” booklet are intended to be easy to understand and follow. The Fire and Emergency Services Department commits to ensuring the speediest turnaround time to emergency calls, because saving lives is our core function. Read this booklet and keep it handy for reference purposes.
ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

The booklet deals with emergencies involving bulk chemical facilities, pipelines, oil refineries, road and rail accidents of hazardous material, particularly within the South Durban Basin area. Due to industries and residential communities existing in close proximity to each other, response to emergency incidents will require a rapid and swift response, both from authorities and the community.

Shelter in place is a public protection action aimed at minimizing the public’s exposure to hazards that could threaten lives or wellbeing of the community. The idea is to seek refuge within a relatively contained environment until the danger has passed.

OBJECTIVE OF BOOKLET

• The booklet seeks to advise communities on what they should do in a case of an emergency.

• It further aims to answer the questions:
  - What Should I Do?
  - How Do I Report An Incident?
SHELTER IN PLACE PROCEDURES

GO IN
• Bring your children and pets indoors right away.
• Select a small, interior room with the fewest windows (such as a bathroom) and stay there.
• Seek shelter within your home/nearest building.

STAY IN
• Close and lock all windows and outside doors for security purposes and stopping other people from interfering with the shelter in place process.
• Close all curtains.
• Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems. This may make your home uncomfortable, but it will reduce the chance of exposure to chemicals outside which can cause illness and even death.
• If you have a fireplace, close it (seal it).
• Use duct tape and plastic sheeting to seal gaps around doors, windows and other openings.
• Close all windows, doors and openings and remain indoors.

TUNE IN
• Listen to your local radio station for more information.
• Remain in-doors until authorities announce that it is safe and shelter-in place can be terminated.
• Once shelter in place is terminated (and emergency is no longer a threat and it is declared safe) ventilate the house by opening doors and windows.
• Go outside until house is aired out.
• Listen to your local radio station for more information.
PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

Notifications and precautionary measures will be broadcast via the local radio stations

LOCAL RADIO STATIONS:

: FM 93.9-96.9 mHz
: FM 99.5 MHz
: FM 87.6-90.6 MHz
: FM 92-94 mHz

STANDARD EMERGENCY KIT

The following materials could prove useful in an emergency:

• Bottle water (5 litres)
• Bath towels
• Plastic sheeting/black bags
• Duct tape
• Torches with spare batteries
• Battery-powered radio
• Non-perishable food items
• First-aid kit with scissors

TYPES OF EMERGENCY INCIDENTS

Chemical Escape: Dangerous chemicals could be released into the atmosphere due to a gas leak or a liquid spillage. This may be hazardous either because the released chemical is toxic or because it is flammable and could be explosive.

Large Fire: Large amounts of smoke could be released into the atmosphere which may be thick, dark, acrid and potentially choking. This can lead to eye irritation
and breathing difficulties that could be life threatening.

Both of the above hazards have a possibility of negative long term effects.

REPORTING OF INCIDENTS

- The Emergency number: 031 361 0000
- The municipality has a 24/7 Emergency call centre for reporting all emergency incidents.
- The call centre number should be clearly displayed at home
- Keep calm when reporting an incident
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Give clear directions to the incident by making use of landmarks

COMMON TERMINOLOGIES

Incident – An incident is a relatively minor occurrence which could be dealt with by one agency or service e.g. a minor traffic accident.

Emergency – A serious incident that would require assistance from more than one department or sector e.g. a major oil spill on the highway.

Disaster – A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.

Evacuation – The process of moving people from an area that may pose a threat to life to an area of safety.

Not every incident involving bulk chemical facilities, oil refineries and
hazardous material is classified a disaster; most of these incidents may be termed and dealt with as routine emergencies.

**EVACUATION**

The circumstances necessitating authorities to consider evacuating people from the comfort of their homes are very remote; Hence the booklet will not deal with subject in detail.

Evacuation incorporates the following procedures:
- Alerting and notifying people
- Closing of road and controlling access points
- Identifying reception centers as temporary shelters
- Providing humanitarian services such as clothing, shelter, meals, and other assistance for those with special needs etc...
- Safety of pets and securing of property

All the above needs require practice and proper planning for evacuation to be effective.

Evacuation is often not the preferred option for the following reasons:
- Vulnerable populations sustain more injuries during evacuation
- Unavailability of transport exposes people to the danger
- Roads become blocked by people trying to evacuate, which defeats the purpose of evacuation
- Evacuation causes higher than normal traffic flows
- People may be unwilling to leave their property

Evacuation is by no means an easy option and may not be the safest option for the majority of those potentially at risk.
SAFETY TIPS DURING AN EMERGENCY INCIDENT

- Keep calm, do not panic
- Tune in to your local radio station at all times for further information
- Do not use appliances like fans, air conditioners, stoves or any other cooking or heating devices
- Only use your phone for emergencies to prevent the system becoming overloaded.
- Be a good neighbour, inform and help the vulnerable
For further information contact the Fire and Emergency Services Front Desk on 031 308 7000