MEMA RECOMMENDS SHELTER-IN-PLACE FOR SOUTHERN BERKSHIRE COUNTY COMMUNITIES

FRAMINGHAM, MA - Due to the eastward track of the plume from the industrial fire in Ghent, NY, located ten miles from the Massachusetts border, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is following the lead of the State of New York and recommending that residents within 15 miles of the fire shelter-in-place. This is particularly for citizens in the communities in the Southern Berkshire County east and south of Alford and Great Barrington.

This is a precautionary action and is recommended is until the exact impact of the chemicals that could be contained in the plume can be determined by Health officials. Those individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions should particularly stay indoors.

Sheltering-in-Place is a standard protective action utilized in Emergency Management during an accident or event in which hazardous materials have been released into the atmosphere. The purpose is to create as airtight as possible enclosures to prevent the exposure hazardous materials.

The following are steps to be taken only when instructed to 'Shelter-in-Place', not to be completed ahead of time:

- Those located within the impacted area should immediately go indoors.
- Close and lock all doors and windows. Locking is preferred since it generally ensures that the door or window is shut tight.
- Turn off all air handling systems such as window fans, kitchen & bath exhaust fans, air conditioners, and other sources of outside air. Shut off clothes dryers and seal exhaust vent.
- Close the fireplace flue if it is not in use. (A structure with a burning fire in the fireplace is not a good candidate for sheltering-in-place.)
- Seal off any cracks that could cause leakage to the outside.
- Keep pets indoors.
- If you have livestock, shelter them, also. Provide them with stored feed and water from a covered source.
- Go to an above-ground room with the fewest windows and doors.
- If you are traveling in a motor vehicle, close the windows and air vents. Turn off the heater and air conditioner. Keep the radio tuned to an Emergency Alert Station.
- Go inside a nearby building. If none is available, leave the area immediately.
- Continue to monitor media for official messages and instructions.
- Stay inside until officials say otherwise. Persons with respiratory conditions should not go out at all.