



**Wayne County
Emergency Management &
Emergency Communications Department**
401 East Main St.
Richmond, IN 47374



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358 NW F Street Fire

FAQ/ Fact Sheet

As of 4/12/2023 at 13:00 (1:00pm EST)

Community Help Line: 765-973-9300

Website: www.richmondindiana.gov/news/warehouse-fire-information

- 1) Q: What is the evacuation area?
 - a. A: The evacuation area remains at 0.5 mile radius of the incident site (358 NW F St). This is roughly an area from Sheridan St (east) to 700 Blk Indiana Ave (west) and NW L St (north) to Lincoln St (south)
- 2) Q: Am I safe outside of the evacuation zone?
 - a. A: Outside of the evacuation zone and especially downwind (to the east, northeast) of the incident site (358 NW F St), residents should continue to shelter in place; keeping windows and doors closed, turning off HVAC units if they draw outside air, and keeping pets inside.
- 3) Q: What if I smell smoke or smell a burnt plastic smell where I'm located?
 - a. A: Smoke is not good for anyone, especially those that are respiratory compromised due to preexisting conditions. However, if you are in an area with excessive smoke or in the direct smoke plume, remove yourself from the hazard and seek safety.
- 4) Q: What if I am displaced. Where can I stay?
 - a. A: Oak Park Pentecostal Church located at 1920 Chester Blvd, Richmond. The shelter is being staffed by volunteers and those from the American Red Cross. They are prepared to shelter residents any time day or night.
- 5) Q: How do I get to the shelter if I don't have any transportation?
 - a. A: The City of Richmond and Roseview Transit are providing bus transportation from the evacuation area. Please call (765) 983-7580 to arrange for pick-up.
- 6) Q: Is the fire under control?
 - a. A: The fire is under control and has not spread to surrounding properties. Because of the nature of the fire and the material it is burning, it is expected to continue burning and producing smoke, soot, and ash for several more days. The Richmond Fire Department has made substantial progress in fighting the fire.

- 7) Q: Where and how did the fire start?
- a. A: The cause of the fire is unknown and likely will not be known until after the fire has been extinguished. The State Fire Marshal's Office is on scene to assist with the investigation. Per the State Fire Marshal's Office, it will be "days" before the property is safe for their investigators to enter.
- 8) Q: What should I do if I find debris in my yard or on my property?
- a. A: It is recommended to leave any debris alone and do not disturb or touch the debris. It is unknown what chemicals may or may not be in the debris. Do not mow over debris to further disseminate the debris. Concern is that due to the age of the building, these products could contain asbestos. Samples of this debris have been taken and sent to the EPA labs and we are awaiting those results. Once they determine what was burned, additional information will be shared how to dispose of the debris.
- 9) Q: What are the health effects of this fire and the smoke?
- a. A: Exact effects are unknown since officials are unsure of what burned. Everyone should avoid breathing the smoke. Persons with heart or lung disease and older adults are more sensitive to smoke exposure. Symptoms that may be related to breathing smoke include repeated coughing, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain, palpitations, nausea, or lightheadedness. If you experience these symptoms, you should contact your healthcare provider.
- 10) Q: Should we be wearing cloth, surgical, or N95 masks in the area?
- a. A: Cloth and surgical masks do filter out the larger particulate matter, however finer particles would require an N95-type mask. Per the Wayne County Health Department, it is just much safer to remain out of the area and if you find yourself in the plume of smoke, remove yourself from the hazardous condition and seek safety.
- 11) Q: What has been found in the air monitoring so far?
- a. A: The US EPA is responsible for the air monitoring in the area. Their samples are picking up particulate matter (smoke), as expected during a fire. The agency is also monitoring the air for products of combustion expected from a plastics fire including particulates, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, benzene, chlorine, hydrogen cyanide, mineral acids (H₂SO₄ and HCl). So far, they *have not* detected any of those specific toxic compounds in their air monitoring. Testing is continuous and on-going around the clock. The EPA has five (5) on-scene coordinators on site.
- 12) Q: Who is in charge of the incident?
- a. A: The Richmond Fire Department is the responsible agency but is being assisted by multiple surrounding agencies within and around the County. Agencies at the scene include Indiana Fire Marshal's Office, Indiana Department of Homeland Security, Indiana Department of Environmental Management, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and several local departments.

- 13) Q: When will it be safe to return to the area? When can I go home?
- a. A: Unfortunately, we are unable to provide an exact time or estimate when evacuation orders will be lifted. As air monitoring results come back from lab testing, we are hoping to be able to allow residents to return to their homes. However, the primary focus is on the health and well-being of those residents, and we want to ensure it is safe before they reenter the area.
- 14) Q: How when I know it is safe to return to the area? How will I be alerted to any changes?
- a. A: The Wayne County Emergency Management Agency along with the City of Richmond will continue to keep their social media pages updated. For EMA- www.facebook.com/IN89EMA For City of Richmond- www.facebook.com/StellarRichmond The City of Richmond has an information page on their website: www.richmondindiana.gov/news/warehouse-fire-information Wayne County EMA also utilizes Everbridge Nixle alerts which are also used to push out information. You may subscribe to receive these alerts by texting your zip code to “888-777” or online at www.nixle.com
- 15) Q: What if I have additional questions or concerns? Who can I call?
- a. A: The Wayne County Health Department has set up a community “help line” for anyone that has additional questions or to triage concerns from the public. **This number for the public is 765-973-9300** and will be staffed and answered 24hrs a day.
- 16) Q: How long will the investigation take? When will we know definitive answers?
- a. A: The investigation surrounding this fire will take several weeks. Several agencies are going to be involved and it is important for those agencies to take their time to ensure an objective investigation.
- 17) Q: How can I help? Do First Responders need any supplies?
- a. A: At this time, donated supplies are not needed by responders. There has been an outpouring of support and donated items already which is very appreciated.
- 18) Q: Will the morning commute be impacted by the fire? Will schools or businesses close?
- a. A: School officials continue to be apprised of the situation from the scene and provided with what information is known and schools/businesses will be making their own decisions on whether they will operate under normal or alternative practices. If in question, please call ahead to the location to ensure they are open.
- 19) Q: Are there additional resources available for information to the public or media?
- a. A: City of Richmond Website
www.richmondindiana.gov/news/warehouse-fire-information
- b. U.S. EPA Public Information Officer
Rachel Linduska
312.886.6238
linduska.rachel@epa.gov
https://response.epa.gov/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=16003
- c. Indiana Department of Homeland Security
Indiana Fire Marshal’s Office (all media inquiries)
pio@dhs.in.gov
463.202.4063