

Emergency Preparedness for Persons with Disabilities

For the millions of Americans who have physical, medical, sensory or cognitive disabilities, emergencies such as fires, floods and acts of terrorism can present a real challenge.

Disaster Tips for People with Visual or Hearing Disabilities

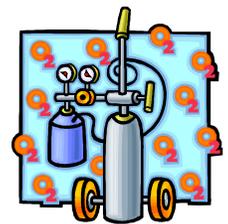
- ✓ If you use a cane, special glasses or hearing aids be sure to keep extras in at least two locations and one in your emergency supply kit.
- ✓ Service animals may become confused, frightened or disoriented during and after a disaster. Keep them confined or securely leashed.
- ✓ Be prepared to use alternative ways to navigate your environment.
- ✓ Temporary shelters must accept service animals, however they are not required to accept companion or therapy animals. Be sure to have documentation that your dog is a *service or guide dog*.
- ✓ Store extra hearing aid batteries in your emergency supply kit.
- ✓ Determine how you will communicate with emergency personnel if there is no interpreter available. Store pens and paper for this purpose.
- ✓ If possible, obtain a battery operated television that has a decoder chip for access to signed or captioned emergency reports.



You are in the best position to know your abilities and needs before, during and after a disaster.

Disaster Tips for People with Special Medical Needs

- ✓ Always have at least a three day supply of all of your medications and any medical supplies you might use.
- ✓ Store your medications in one location in their original containers.
- ✓ Make a list of all of your medications: name of medication, dose, frequency and the name of your doctor.
- ✓ If you have medical equipment that requires electricity, consider purchasing a back up power source such as battery or generator.
- ✓ If you use oxygen, have an emergency supply.
- ✓ Make sure your oxygen tanks are securely braced and will not fall over.
- ✓ If you use IV and feeding tube equipment, make sure you have an infusion pump with battery back-up.
- ✓ In the event that you must evacuate your home, have an emergency bag ready that contains medication and supplies and copies of vital medical papers such as insurance cards and power of attorney.



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Disaster Tips for People with Mobility Disabilities

- ✓ Store a small emergency kit in a pack attached to a walker, wheelchair or scooter.
- ✓ Store needed mobility aids (canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs) close to you in a convenient location. Keep extras if possible.
- ✓ Keep a pair of heavy gloves in your supply kit in case you have to wheel over broken glass or debris.



- ✓ If you use a motorized wheelchair or scooter, consider having an extra battery available.
- ✓ Check with your vendor to see if you would be able to charge batteries by either connecting jumper cables to a vehicle battery or by connecting batteries to a specific type of converter that plugs into a vehicle's cigarette lighter in the event of a prolonged power outage.
- ✓ If your chair does not have puncture-proof tires, keep a patch kit or a can of "seal-in" air product to repair flat tires.
- ✓ Make sure furniture is secured so that it doesn't block your normal pathway in case of an earthquake.

Disaster Tips for People with Cognitive Disabilities

- ✓ Practice what to do during and after specific disasters that occur in your area.
- ✓ Practice evacuating from places where you spend time until you feel comfortable that you will know what to do during and after an emergency.
- ✓ Keep a written emergency plan with you and in several locations. Make sure it is easy to read and understand.
- ✓ After a disaster, information often comes at you quickly. Think through ways to do things you will need to do after a disaster. Keep a list of tasks, a calendar with room for notes or a small tape recorder to help you remember things.
- ✓ Think about what a rescuer might need to know about you and be prepared to say it briefly, or keep a written copy with you. For example:
 - I may have difficulty understanding what you are telling me, please speak slowly and use simple language.
 - Please write down information for me.
 - I have a panic disorder. If I panic, give me one (name, description of medication) located in my (purse, wallet, bag, pocket).
- ✓ Give copies of your written emergency plan to your personal support network.