Be Informed About What Might Happen

Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as assembling an emergency supply kit and making an emergency plan are the same regardless of the type of emergency. However, it’s important to stay informed about what might happen and know what types of emergencies are likely to affect your region. For more information about specific types of emergencies, visit www.ready.gov.

Be prepared to adapt this information to your personal circumstances and make every effort to follow instructions received from authorities on the scene. Above all, stay calm, be patient and think before you act. With these simple preparations, you can be ready for the unexpected.

In addition to your personal preparedness, consider getting involved in neighborhood and community emergency preparedness activities. Assist emergency planners and others in considering the preparedness needs of the whole community, including people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. Communities are stronger and more resilient when everyone joins the team. People with disabilities often have experience in adapting and problem solving that can be very useful skills in emergencies.


Preparation For Emergencies Now: Information For People With Disabilities

Get Ready Now.


The likelihood that you and your family will recover from an emergency tomorrow often depends on the planning and preparation done today. While each person’s abilities and needs are unique, every individual can take steps to prepare for all kinds of emergencies from fires and floods to potential terrorist attacks. By evaluating your own personal needs and making an emergency plan that fits those needs, you and your loved ones can be better prepared. This guide outlines commonsense measures individuals with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs, and the people who assist and support them can take to start preparing for emergencies before they happen. Preparing makes sense for people with disabilities, others with access and functional needs and the whole community.

Get Ready Now.

This information was developed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in consultation with AARP, the American Red Cross and the National Organization on Disability and updated by the FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination.

Get a Kit Of Emergency Supplies

The first step is to consider how an emergency might affect your individual needs. Plan to make it on your own, for at least three days. It’s possible that you will not have access to disaster assistance, a medical facility or even a drugstore. It is crucial that you and your family think about what kinds of resources you use on a daily basis and what you might do if those resources are limited or not available.

Basic Supplies: Think first about the basics for survival - food, water, clean air and any life-sustaining items you require to maintain your health, safety and independence. Consider two kits. In one kit put everything you will need to stay where you are and make it on your own for a period of time. The other kit should be a lightweight, smaller version you can take with you if you have to leave your home. Recommended basic emergency supplies include:

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food and a can opener if kit contains canned food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Battery-powered or hand crank cell phone charger
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Local maps
- Pet food, extra water and supplies for your pet or service animal
Include Medications and Medical Supplies: If you take medicine or use other health aids, be sure you have what you need on hand to make it on your own for at least a week. You should also keep a copy of your prescriptions as well as a list of medications you use, and also make sure that you trusted friend or family member has a copy of these documents. Include the names and numbers of everyone in your personal support network, as well as your medical and disability service providers. If you have a cognitive or intellectual disability, make sure your emergency information includes instructions for the best way to communicate with you. Also be sure you have cash or travelers checks in your kits in case you need to purchase supplies.

If you have allergies or chemical sensitivities, be sure to include items that are appropriate for your personal hygiene and for cleaning.

For What You Will Do in an Emergency

Include:

- Extra eyeglasses, hearing aids if you have them, or have coverage for hearing aids
- Extra batteries for motorized wheelchairs or other battery-operated medical or assistive technology devices
- Copies of medical prescriptions, doctors’ orders, and the style and serial numbers of the support devices you use
- Medical alert tags or bracelets or written descriptions of your disability and support needs, in case you are unable to describe the situation to someone who might help you in an emergency.
- Supplies for your service animal
- Medical insurance cards, Medicare/Medicaid cards, pharmacy registration cards, and other insurance cards
- Medicare/Medicaid, Medicare/Medicaid cards, pharmacy registration cards, and other insurance cards
- Pharmacy identification number and contact information
- A laminated personal communication board, if you might need assistance with being understood or understanding others

If possible, extra oxygen, insulin, catheters, or other medical supplies you use regularly

- If you use a motorized wheelchair, have a light weight manual chair available for emergencies. Know how to fold and store it and where your wheelchair, in addition to whether or not it is collapsible, in case it has to be transported.

- Even if you do not use a computer yourself, consider putting important information about how to use it in plain language on a light weight brochure that can be handed out to friends and others who will be part of your plan. Talk to these people and ask them to be part of your support network. Share each aspect of your emergency plan that you think is important. For example, if you have a friend or relative in another area who would not be impacted by the same emergency who can help if necessary. Make sure everyone knows how you plan to evacuate your home, school or workplace and where you will go in case of a disaster. Make sure each key item you plan to take is useful to supply and a key to your home and knows where you keep your emergency supplies. Teach them how to use any lifesaving equipment or administer medicine in case of an emergency. If you use a wheelchair, oxygen or other medical equipment show friends how to use these devices so they can move you if necessary or help you move if you have an injury.

Depending on your needs, items for your Go Kit may include:

Create a Personal Support Network: If you anticipate needing assistance, make a list of friends and others who will be part of your plan. Talk to these people and ask them to be part of your support network. Share each aspect of your emergency plan that you think is important. For example, if you have a friend or relative in another area who would not be impacted by the same emergency who can help if necessary. Make sure everyone knows how you plan to evacuate your home, school or workplace and where you will go in case of a disaster. Make sure each key item you plan to take is useful to supply and a key to your home and knows where you keep your emergency supplies. Teach them how to use any lifesaving equipment or administer medicine in case of an emergency. If you use a wheelchair, oxygen or other medical equipment show friends how to use these devices so they can move you if necessary or help you move if you have an injury.