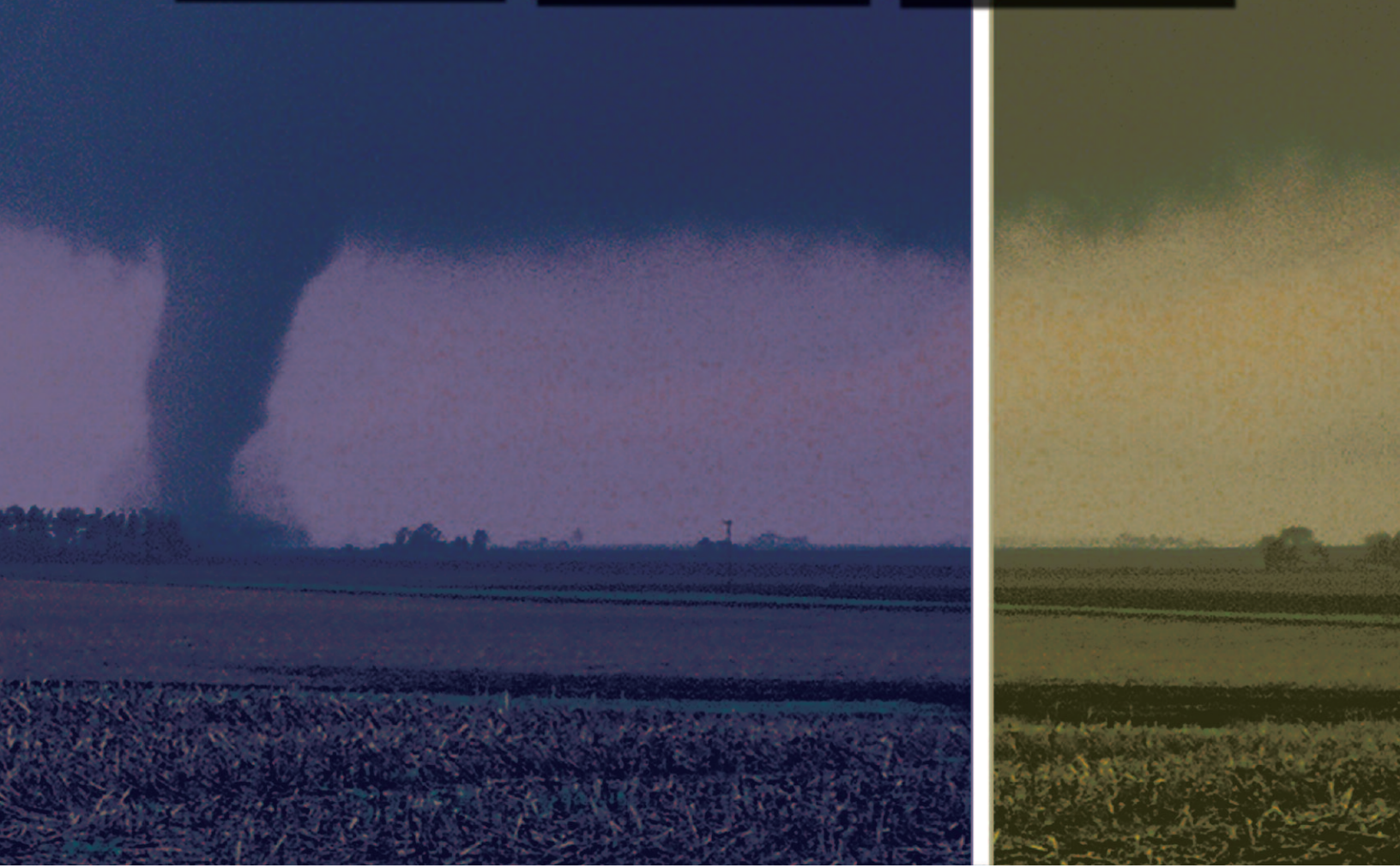
State of Illinois
Illinois Terrorism Task Force

Emergency Preparedness Tips for Those with Functional Needs



Preface

Being prepared for disasters or emergencies is critically important in today's ever changing environment. It is even more important for those with disabilities, special needs or those who may need assistance in the event of a disaster or other emergency.

This document has been specially developed by a team of emergency management and health professionals to help assist those with special needs to be better prepared for a disaster or emergency. Your ability to successfully respond to a disaster is directly related to your preparedness prior to the disaster. You should review this document with your family and any persons who may provide care for you.

Please contact your local emergency management agency or local chapter of the American Red Cross for additional information about preparing for disasters and emergencies. You can also obtain additional information from our Ready Illinois website (**www.ready.illinois.gov**) on how to become better prepared.

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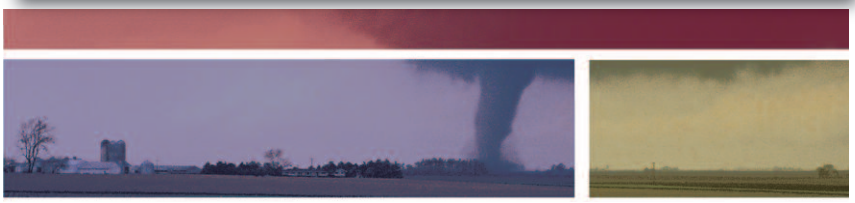


TIPS

Cognitive Impairments Disaster Tips

Disaster Tips for People With Cognitive Impairments

The State of Illinois has developed this tip sheet to prepare you for an emergency or disaster. This tip sheet is designed to be used in conjunction with "Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs" and the "Emergency Health Information Card."

1 Get a Kit

In addition to the list of recommended items to include in a Disaster Supplies Kit, which is attached to this document, people with cognitive impairments may consider including the following items:

- ☐ List of key phrases on a card for emergency personnel. Think about what someone who is helping you might need to know about you and be ready to tell them or show them your card.
- ☐ Your card might say:
  - I cannot read.
  - I communicate using an assistive communication device. I can point to simple pictures or key words, which you will find in my wallet or emergency supply kit.
  - I may have difficulty understanding what you are telling me; please speak slowly and use simple language.
  - I forget easily. Please write down information for me.

2 Make a Plan

Create a Personal Assessment. Decide what you will be able to do for yourself and what assistance you may need before, during and after a disaster. Make a list of your personal needs and resources for meeting them in a disaster environment. Some things to consider are:

- ☐ Meet with your family members, friends, and building manager to review community hazards and emergency plans. Tell them where you keep your emergency supplies.
- ☐ Choose an out-of-town contact. Following a disaster, family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know how to contact this person (e.g. TTY, email, pager, instant message, etc.).
- ☐ Decide where to meet your household members if you become separated.
- ☐ Complete an Emergency Health Information Card. Update it regularly and keep it with you at all times.
- ☐ Secure computers and anchor special equipment. Create a back-up system for important data and store it off-site.

Ask your city or county how they will warn you of a disaster situation and provide information to you before, during and after a disaster.

3 Be Informed

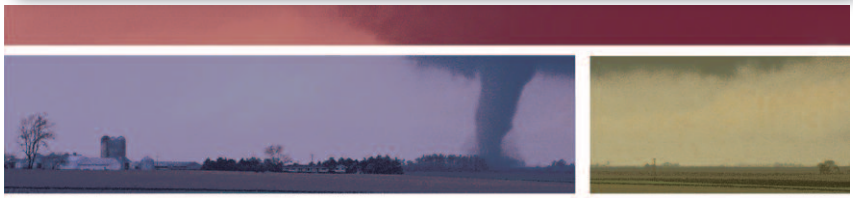
- ☐ Learn your community's response and evacuation plans.

TIPS

Cognitive Impairments Disaster Tips

- ☐ Learn the emergency plans and procedures that exist in places you and your family spend time (e.g. workplace, school, child care centers). Develop a communication plan with them.
- ☐ Ask your local fire department, police department or emergency management office about emergency special assistance programs. Some communities may ask people with a disability to register so assistance can be provided in an emergency.
- ☐ Ask your city or county how they will warn you of a disaster situation and provide information to you before, during and after a disaster.
- ☐ Know which television and radio stations in your area broadcast the Emergency Alert System.

Check Off When Completed	Date	Activity to be Completed
		Put together my Disaster Supplies Kit.
		Completed a Personal Assessment.
		Created a Support Network.
		Arranged an out-of-town contact.
		Completed my Emergency Health Information Card.
		Installed audible alarms and visual smoke alarms.
		Gathered my Emergency Documents.
		Created my Communication Plan.
		Told my family, neighbors, local emergency teams, local fire department what I need in an emergency situation.



TIPS

Deaf or Hard of Hearing Disaster Tips

Disaster Tips for People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

The State of Illinois has developed this tip sheet to prepare you for an emergency or disaster. This tip sheet is designed to be used in conjunction with "Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs" and the "Emergency Health Information Card."

1 Get a Kit

In addition to the list of recommended items to include in a Disaster Supplies Kit, which is attached to this document, people who are deaf or hard of hearing may consider including the following items:

- ☐ Extra hearing aids and batteries
- ☐ A list of key phrases for emergency personnel (e.g. "I need an interpreter," "I need announcements written")
- ☐ Battery powered television and extra batteries
- ☐ Extra batteries for: visual or sensory alarms, pagers and TTY
- ☐ Car charger for pager/communication devices

2 Make a Plan

Create a Personal Assessment. Decide what you will be able to do for yourself and what assistance you may need before, during and after a disaster. Make a list of your personal needs and resources for meeting them in a disaster environment. Some things to consider are:

- ☐ Meet with your family members, friends, and building manager to review community hazards and emergency plans. Tell them where you keep your emergency supplies.
- ☐ Choose an out-of-town contact. Following a disaster, family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know how to contact this person (e.g. TTY, email, pager, instant message, etc.).
- ☐ Decide where to meet your household members if you become separated.
- ☐ Complete an Emergency Health Information Card. Update it regularly and keep it with you at all times.
- ☐ Check that all of your visual and vibrating alerting devices have battery back-up in the event of a power outage. Replace the batteries every six months.
- ☐ Install audible alarms and visual smoke alarms.
- ☐ Secure computers and anchor special equipment. Create a back-up system for important data and store it off-site.

Learn the emergency plans and procedures that exist in places you and your family spend time (e.g. workplace, school, child care centers). Develop a communication plan with them.

3 Be Informed

- ☐ Learn your community's response and evacuation plans.
- ☐ Learn the emergency plans and procedures that exist in places you and your family spend time (e.g. workplace, school, child care centers). Develop a communication plan with them.

TIPS

Deaf or Hard of Hearing Disaster Tips

- ☐ Ask your local fire department, police department or emergency management office about emergency special assistance programs. Some communities may ask people with a disability to register so assistance can be provided in an emergency.
- ☐ Ask your city or county how they will warn you of a disaster situation and provide information to you before, during and after a disaster.
- ☐ Know which television and radio stations in your area broadcast the Emergency Alert System.
- ☐ Ask your local emergency management office if they have an emergency notification system that can interface with a TTY. This system can contact people in an affected area.

Check Off When Completed	Date	Activity to be Completed
		Put together my Disaster Supplies Kit.
		Completed a Personal Assessment.
		Created a Support Network.
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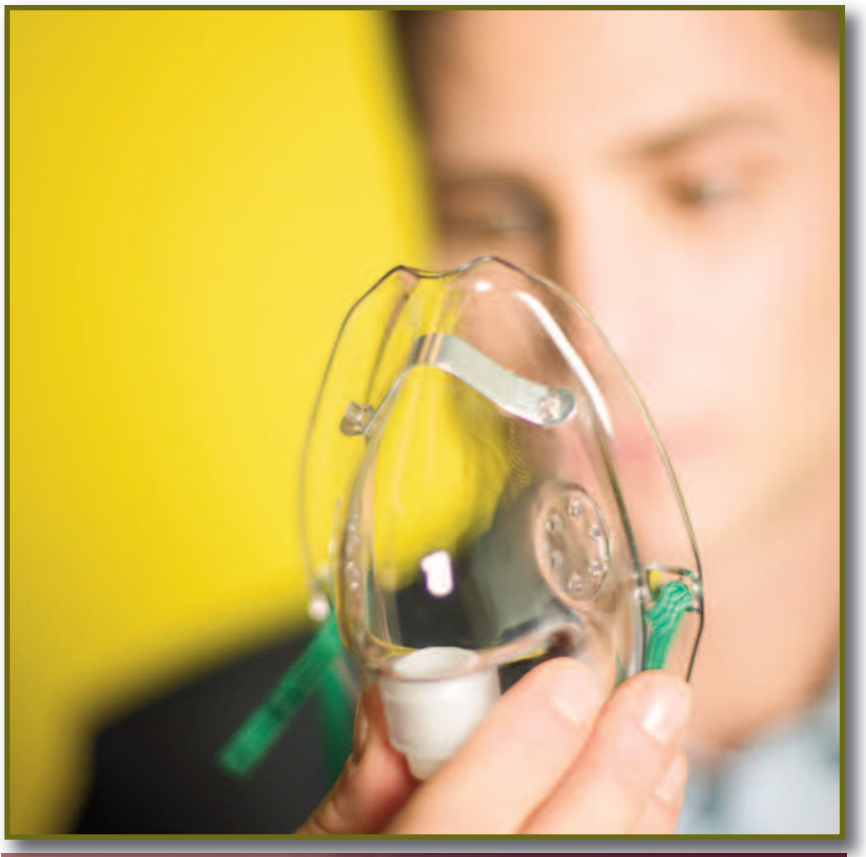
		Gathered my Emergency Documents.
		Created my Communication Plan.
		Told my family, neighbors, local emergency teams, local fire department what I need in an emergency situation.



TIPS

Life Support Systems Disaster Tips

Disaster Tips for People Who Use Life Support Systems

The State of Illinois has developed this tip sheet to prepare you for an emergency or disaster. This tip sheet is designed to be used in conjunction with "Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs" and the "Emergency Health Information Card."

1 Get A Kit

In addition to the list of recommended items to include in a Disaster Supplies Kit, which is attached to this document, people who use life support systems may consider including the following items:

- ☐ Tools and supplies needed to maintain the respirators or other electric-powered medical equipment
- ☐ Two-week supply of such items as dressings, nasal cannulas and suction catheters
- ☐ Copies of your medical records that describe your condition, prescription and medical equipment needs
- ☐ A list of key phrases for emergency personnel (e.g. "I have a condition that requires me to use a respirator or life support equipment")
- ☐ A list of the name and manufacturer of the respirator and life support equipment

2 Make a Plan

Create a Personal Assessment. Decide what you will be able to do for yourself and what assistance you may need before, during and after a disaster. Make a list of your personal needs and resources for meeting them in a disaster environment. Some things to consider are:

- ☐ Meet with your family members, friends, and building manager to review community hazards and emergency plans. Tell them where you keep your emergency supplies.

- ☐ Choose an out-of-town contact. Following a disaster, family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know how to contact this person (e.g. TTY, email, pager, instant message, etc.).

- ☐ Decide where to meet your household members if you become separated.

- ☐ Complete an Emergency Health Information Card. Update it regularly and keep it with you at all times.

- ☐ Make prior arrangements with your physician or check with your oxygen supplier about emergency plans for those on respirators or other electric-powered medical equipment.

  - If you use oxygen, check with your oxygen supplier to determine whether a reduced flow rate may be used in the event of a disaster to prolong the life of the system.

  - Alternative Equipment Suppliers: Determine which suppliers would serve you in the event that your home system becomes inoperable or your supplier is unable to provide you service.

- ☐ Inform your personal support network how to operate and safely move your equipment, if necessary.

- ☐ Label equipment. Add instruction cards. For added durability, laminate instruction cards and attach to equipment.

- ☐ Secure any life support equipment to prevent damage from falling.

Secure any life support equipment to prevent damage from falling.

TIPS

Life Support Systems Disaster Tips

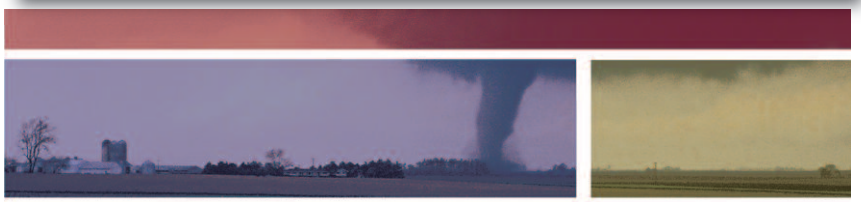
Learn your community's response and evacuation plans.

- ☐ If your power back-up system relies on storing batteries, be aware of the disadvantage.
  - Regularly check back-up or alternative power equipment to ensure it will function during an emergency.
  - Know the working duration of any batteries that support your system.
  - Discuss with your utility company the type of back-up power you plan to use; get their advice.
  - Alternate Power: Discuss with your equipment supplier alternative power sources that will provide you with support for up to five to seven days:
    - Could you use a generator? What type?
    - Could you use manually operated equipment?
    - Can your equipment be powered from a vehicle battery? If yes, obtain necessary hardware for the hook-up.
- ☐ Many utility companies maintain a list of people dependent on powered life support systems and tag their meters. If this service is available in your area, please register with your local utility company(ies). NEVER COUNT ON YOUR POWER BEING QUICKLY RESTORED. Utility personnel may not be able to get to you after a major disaster.
- ☐ Generator: Obtain a generator if appropriate and feasible.
- ☐ Secure computers and anchor special equipment. Create a back-up system for important data and store it off-site.

3 Be Informed

- ☐ Learn your community's response and evacuation plans.
- ☐ Learn the emergency plans and procedures that exist in places you and your family spend time (e.g. workplace, school, child care centers). Develop a communication plan with them.
- ☐ Ask your local fire department, police department or emergency management office about emergency special assistance programs. Many communities ask people with a disability to register so assistance can be provided in an emergency.
- ☐ Ask your city or county how they will warn you of a disaster situation and provide information to you before, during and after a disaster.
- ☐ Know which television and radio stations in your area broadcast the Emergency Alert System.

Check Off When Completed	Date	Activity to be Completed
		Put together my Disaster Supplies Kit.
		Completed a Personal Assessment.
		Created a Support Network.
		Arranged an out-of-town contact.
		Completed my Emergency Health Information Card.
		Installed audible alarms and visual smoke alarms.
		Gathered my Emergency Documents.
		Created my Communication Plan.
		Told my family, neighbors, local emergency teams, local fire department what I need in an emergency situation.



TIPS

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disaster Tips

Disaster Tips for People Who Experience Mental Health and Substance Abuse Problems

The State of Illinois has developed this tip sheet to prepare you for an emergency or disaster. This tip sheet is designed to be used in conjunction with "Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs" and the "Emergency Health Information Card."

1 Get a Kit

Include in your emergency disaster kit the name and phone number of your local mental health professional(s), your recovery sponsor and/or other persons you can rely on for support.

In addition to the list of recommended items to include in a Disaster Supplies Kit, which is attached to this document, people with mental health and/or substance abuse problems may consider including the following items:

- ☐ Include in your emergency disaster kit the name and phone number of your local mental health professional(s), your recovery sponsor and/or other persons you can rely on for support.
- ☐ List of key phrases for emergency personnel (e.g. "I have experienced mental health and/or substance abuse problems in the past")
- ☐ Name and phone number of your primary care physician and mental health and/or substance abuse professional care provider
- ☐ If you have been prescribed medication for mental health and/or substance abuse, keep a copy of information about where you receive the medication, the name of the drug(s) and dosage.

2 Make a Plan

Create a Personal Assessment. Decide what you will be able to do for yourself and what assistance you may need before, during and after a disaster. Make a list of your personal needs and resources for meeting them in a disaster environment. Some things to consider are:

- ☐ Meet with your family members, friends, and building manager to review community hazards and emergency plans. Tell them where you keep your emergency supplies.
- ☐ Choose an out-of-town contact. Following a disaster, family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know how to contact this person (e.g. TTY, email, pager, instant message, etc.).
- ☐ Decide where to meet your household members if you become separated.
- ☐ Complete an Emergency Health Information Card. Update it regularly and keep it with you at all times.
- ☐ Know the signs and symptoms and common reactions to a disaster and develop and discuss coping skills with your family and friends who offer you support. Disasters can affect us in many ways: physically, emotionally and mentally. They can make people feel angry, enraged, confused, sad, or even guilty. When those feelings don't go away over a few weeks, or when they seem to get worse, it may be appropriate to seek help for yourself or the person in your life who is experiencing these difficulties. Among the signs to look for over time are:

- Feeling tense and nervous
- Being tired all the time
- Having sleep problems
- Crying often or easily
- Wanting to be alone most of the time
- Drinking alcohol or taking drugs more often or excessively
- Feeling numb
- Being angry or irritable
- Having problems concentrating and remembering things

☐ If you have ever experienced a problem with alcohol or other drugs:

- Practice how to communicate your needs.
- Stress is a trigger for beginning or resuming substance abuse. Anticipate the types of reactions you may have after a disaster, such as beginning or resuming abusing substances. Discuss this with your sponsor or other persons you rely on for support.
- Practice techniques to avoid alcohol, drugs, and excessive caffeine.
- Stay clear of persons or places that may trigger relapse.

Stay clear of persons or places that may trigger relapse.

☐ Secure computers and anchor special equipment. Create a back-up system for important data and store it off-site.

3 Be Informed

- ☐ Learn your community's response and evacuation plans.
- ☐ Learn the emergency plans and procedures that exist in places you and your family spend time (e.g. workplace, school, child care centers). Develop a communication plan with them.
- ☐ Ask your local fire department, police department or emergency management office about emergency special assistance programs. Some communities may ask people with a disability to register so assistance can be provided in an emergency.
- ☐ Ask your city or county how they will warn you of a disaster situation and provide information to you before, during and after a disaster.
- ☐ Know which television and radio stations in your area broadcast the Emergency Alert System.

Check Off When Completed	Date	Activity to be Completed
		Put together my Disaster Supplies Kit.
		Completed a Personal Assessment.
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		Arranged an out-of-town contact.
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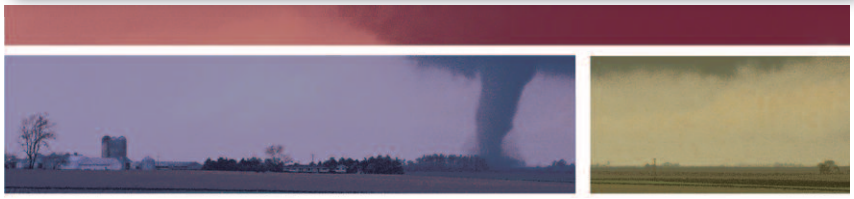
		Installed audible alarms and visual smoke alarms.
		Gathered my Emergency Documents.
		Created my Communication Plan.
		Told my family, neighbors, local emergency teams, local fire department what I need in an emergency situation.



TIPS

Mobility Impairments Disaster Tips

Disaster Tips for People with Mobility Impairments

The State of Illinois has developed this tip sheet to prepare you for an emergency or disaster. This tip sheet is designed to be used in conjunction with "Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs" and the "Emergency Health Information Card."

1 Get A Kit

In addition to the list of recommended items to include in a Disaster Supplies Kit, which is attached to this document, people who have mobility impairments may consider including the following items:

- ☐ Keep a pair of heavy gloves in your supply kit to use while wheeling or making your way over glass and debris.
- ☐ If you use a motorized wheelchair/scooter, consider having an extra battery available.
- ☐ If you do not have puncture proof tires, keep a patch kit or can of "seal-in-air product" to repair flat tires and/or also keep an extra supply of inner tubes.
- ☐ Store a lightweight manual wheelchair, if available.
- ☐ Have electrical back-up for any medical equipment.

2 Make a Plan

Create a Personal Assessment. Decide what you will be able to do for yourself and what assistance you may need before, during and after a disaster. Make a list of your personal needs and resources for meeting them in a disaster environment. Some things to consider are:

- ☐ Meet with your family members, friends, and building manager to review community hazards and emergency plans. Tell them where you keep your emergency supplies.
- ☐ Choose an out-of-town contact. Following a disaster, family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know how to contact this person (e.g. TTY, email, pager, instant message, etc.).
- ☐ Decide where to meet your household members if you become separated.
- ☐ Complete an Emergency Health Information Card. Update it regularly and keep it with you at all times.
- ☐ If you use a motorized wheelchair/scooter, consider having an extra battery available. A car battery can be substituted for a wheelchair battery, but this type of battery will not last as long as a wheelchair's deep-cycle battery. Check with your vendor to see if you will 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 your vehicle's cigarette lighter in the event of loss of electricity.
- ☐ Arrange and secure furniture and other items to provide paths of travel and barrier free passages.
- ☐ If you spend time above the first floor of an elevator building, plan and practice using alternate methods of evacuation. If needed, enlist the help of your personal support network.
- ☐ If you cannot use stairs, discuss lifting and carrying techniques that will work for you. There will be instances where wheelchair users will have to leave their chairs behind in order to safely evacuate a structure. Sometimes transporting someone

Complete an Emergency Health Information Card. Update it regularly and keep it with you at all times.

downstairs is not a practical solution unless there are at least two or more strong people to control the chair. Therefore, it is very important to discuss the safest way to transport you if you need to be carried, and alert those assisting you to any areas of vulnerability. For example: the traditional "fire fighter's carry" may be hazardous for some people with respiratory weakness. You need to be able to give brief instructions regarding how to move you.

- ☐ Make prior arrangements with your physician or check with your oxygen supplier about emergency plans for those on respirators or other electric-powered medical equipment. Be sure to have electrical back-up for any medical equipment.

- ☐ Secure computers and anchor special equipment. Create a back-up system for important data and store it off-site.

3 Be Informed

- ☐ Learn your community's response and evacuation plans.

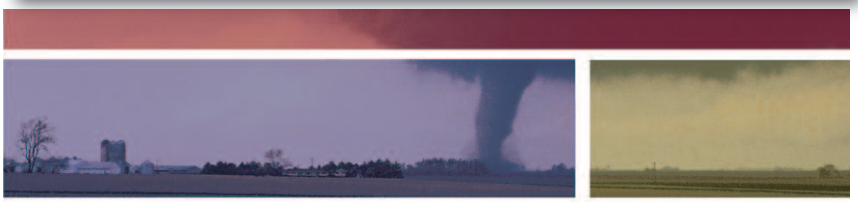
- ☐ Learn the emergency plans and procedures that exist in places you and your family spend time (e.g. workplace, school, child care centers). Develop a communication plan with them.

- ☐ Ask your local fire department, police department or emergency management office about emergency special assistance programs. Some communities may ask people with a disability to register so assistance can be provided in an emergency.

- ☐ Ask your city or county how they will warn you of a disaster situation and provide information to you before, during and after a disaster.

- ☐ Know which television and radio stations in your area broadcast the Emergency Alert System.
- ☐ Ask your local emergency management office if they have an emergency notification system that can interface with a TTY. This system can contact people in an affected area.

Check Off When Completed	Date	Activity to be Completed
		Put together my Disaster Supplies Kit.
		Completed a Personal Assessment.
		Created a Support Network.
		Arranged an out-of-town contact.
		Completed my Emergency Health Information Card.
		Installed audible alarms and visual smoke alarms.
		Gathered my Emergency Documents.
		Created my Communication Plan.
		Told my family, neighbors, local emergency teams, local fire department what I need in an emergency situation.



TIPS

Senior Disaster Tips

Disaster Tips for Seniors

The State of Illinois has developed this tip sheet to prepare you for an emergency or disaster. This tip sheet is designed to be used in conjunction with "Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs" and the "Emergency Health Information Card."

1 Get A Kit

In addition to the list of recommended items to include in a Disaster Supplies Kit, which is attached to this document, seniors may consider including the following items:

- ☐ Extra hearing aids and batteries
- ☐ Have a three-day supply of any medication you are prescribed and/or a copy of your prescription medications and dosages. Make sure you have a list of any allergies.
- ☐ Extra eyeglasses and hearing aid batteries
- ☐ Extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen
- ☐ List of the style and serial number of medical devices, such as pacemakers
- ☐ Medical insurance and Medicaid/Medicare cards
- ☐ List of doctors and relatives or friends who should be notified if you are injured
- ☐ Any other items you may need

- ☐ List of key phrases for emergency personnel about any special needs such as mobility impairment, visual impairment, hearing impairment, any medical conditions you may have that require special care and any medications that you are prescribed (e.g. "I need an interpreter," "I need announcements written," "I am prescribed a medication and know the name of the drug and required dosage")

2 Make a Plan

Create a Personal Assessment. Decide what you will be able to do for yourself and what assistance you may need before, during and after a disaster. Make a list of your personal needs and resources for meeting them in a disaster environment. Some things to consider are:

- ☐ Meet with your family members, friends, and building manager to review community hazards and emergency plans. Tell them where you keep your emergency supplies.
- ☐ Choose an out-of-town contact. Following a disaster, family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know how to contact this person (e.g. TTY, email, pager, instant message, etc.).
- ☐ Decide where to meet your household members if you become separated.
- ☐ Complete an Emergency Health Information Card. Update it regularly and keep it with you at all times.
- ☐ Plan and practice the escape route from your home.
- ☐ Plan for transportation if you need to evacuate to a shelter.
- ☐ Discuss your plan with family and friends. Discuss who will check on you in the event of an emergency.

Check that all of your visual and vibrating alerting devices have battery back-up in the event of a power outage. Replace the batteries every six months.

TIPS

Disaster Tips for Seniors

- ☐ Make sure that person has an extra key to your home and knows where you keep your emergency supplies.
- ☐ Find the safe spots in your home for each type of emergency.
- ☐ Have a plan to signal for help.
- ☐ Post emergency phone numbers near the phone.
- ☐ If you have home health care service, plan ahead with your agency for emergency procedures.
- ☐ Teach those who may need to assist you in an emergency on how to operate necessary equipment. Be sure they will be able to reach you.
- ☐ Ask your local fire department, police department or emergency management office about emergency special assistance programs. Many communities ask people with a disability to register so assistance can be provided in an emergency.
- ☐ Contact your local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) to see if they have a Special Needs Registry. To find your local AAA, please call the Illinois Department on Aging's Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 or visit their website at: www.state.il.us/aging/
- ☐ Include in your plan the name and phone number of your local Area Agency on Aging.
- ☐ Check that all of your visual and vibrating alerting devices have battery back-up in the event of a power outage. Replace the batteries every six months.
- ☐ Install audible alarms and visual smoke alarms.
- ☐ Secure computers and anchor special equipment. Create a back-up system for important data and store it off-site.

3 Be Informed

- ☐ Learn your community's response and evacuation plans.
- ☐ Learn the emergency plans and procedures that exist in places you and your family spend time (e.g. workplace, school, child care centers). Develop a communication plan with them.
- ☐ Ask your city or county how they will warn you of a disaster situation and provide information to you before, during and after a disaster.
- ☐ Know which television and radio stations in your area broadcast the Emergency Alert System.

Check Off When Completed	Date	Activity to be Completed
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		Created a Support Network.
		Arranged an out-of-town contact.
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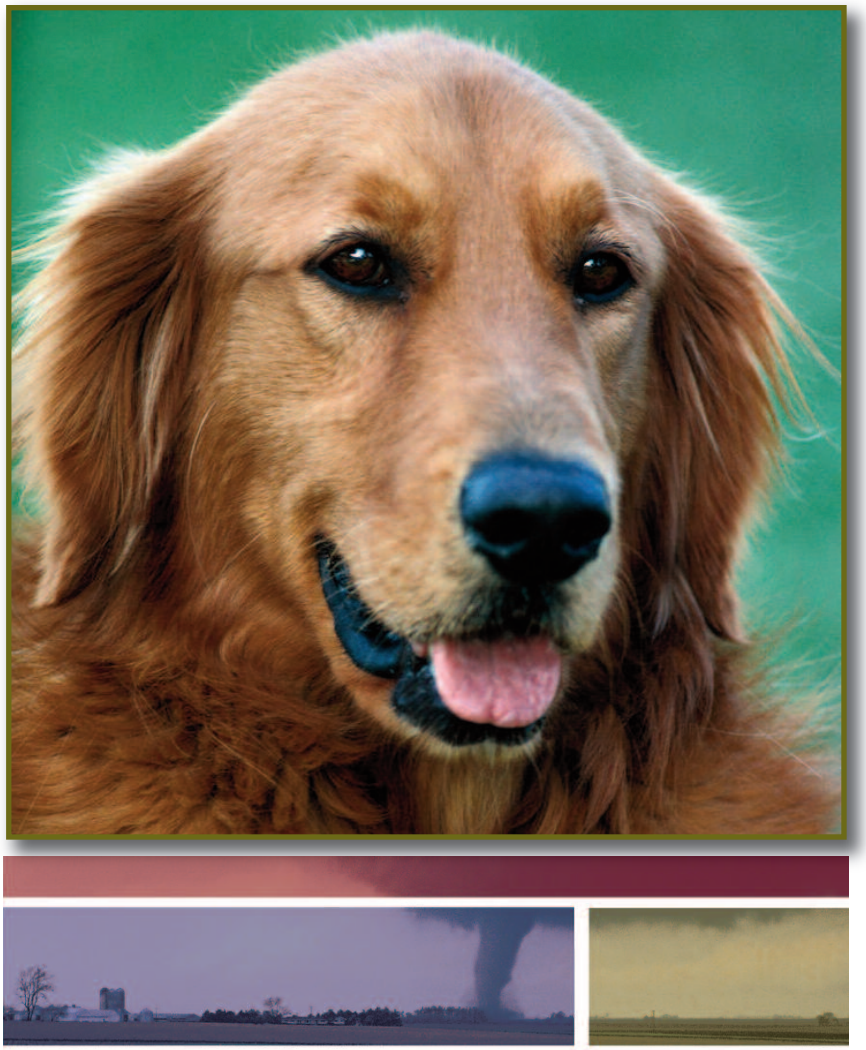


TIPS

Service Animals and Pets Disaster Tips

Disaster Tips for People Who Care for Service Animals and Pets

The State of Illinois has developed this tip sheet to prepare you for an emergency or disaster. This tip sheet is designed to be used in conjunction with "Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs" and the "Emergency Health Information Card."

1 Get A Kit

In addition to the list of recommended items to include in a Disaster Supplies Kit, which is attached to this document, people who care for service animals and pets may consider including the following items:

☐ Create an Animal Supply Kit and Take-Along-Bag:

For each animal:

- Two-week supply of water (plastic gallon jugs) and food
- Non-spill food and water dishes
- Manual can opener and spoons
- Animal/service animal identification information, veterinary records and proof of ownership
- Cage/carrier (labeled with contact information: pet's name, owner's name, address and phone number and an emergency name and phone number)
- Favorite toys, treats, blankets
- Leash, collar, harness, muzzle, stakes and tie downs

- Litter, litter pan, litter scoop
- Newspaper (for bedding or litter)
- Paper towels and plastic baggies
- First aid kit and manual (call your vet)

2 Make a Plan

Create a Personal Assessment. Decide what you will be able to do for yourself and what assistance you may need before, during and after a disaster. Make a list of your personal needs and resources for meeting them in a disaster environment. Such things to consider are:

- ☐ Meet with your family members, friends, and building manager to review community hazards and emergency plans. Tell them where you keep your emergency supplies.
- ☐ Choose an out-of-town contact. Following a disaster, family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know how to contact this person (e.g. TTY, e-mail, pager, instant message, etc.).
- ☐ Decide where to meet your household members if you become separated.
- ☐ Complete an Emergency Health Information Card. Update it regularly and keep it with you at all times.
- ☐ Check your Animal Supply Kit and Take-A-Long Bag every six months to keep information current and supplies fresh.
- ☐ Make sure your service animals and pets have current I.D. tags. Consider other methods of identification, such as microchip.

Don't forget your animal/service animal indentification information, veterinary records and proof of ownership.

- ☐ Plan how your pets will be cared for if you have to evacuate. Pets, in contrast to service animals, are not allowed in emergency shelters due to health regulations. So, have some animal shelters identified!
- ☐ Establish relationships with other animal owners in your neighborhood, so in case you are not home, there will be someone to help your animal.
- ☐ Pets and service animals may become confused or frightened during and after a disaster: keep them confined or securely leashed/harnessed. A leash/harness is an important item for managing a nervous animal. Be prepared to use alternative ways to negotiate your environment.
- ☐ Secure computers and anchor special equipment. Create a back-up system for important data and store it off-site.

3 Be Informed

- ☐ Learn your community's response and evacuation plans.
- ☐ Learn the emergency plans and procedures that exist in places you and your family spend time (e.g. workplace, school, child care centers). Develop a communication plan with them.
- ☐ Ask your local fire department, police department or emergency management office about emergency special assistance programs. Many communities ask people with a disability to register so assistance can be provided in an emergency.
- ☐ Ask your city or county how they will warn you of a disaster situation and provide information to you before, during and after a disaster.

- ☐ Know which television and radio stations in your area broadcast the Emergency Alert System.
- ☐ Ask your local emergency management office if they have an emergency notification system that can interface with a TTY. This system can contact people in an affected area.

Check Off When Completed	Date	Activity to be Completed
		Put together my Disaster Supplies Kit.
		Completed a Personal Assessment.
		Created a Support Network.
		Arranged an out-of-town contact.
		Completed my Emergency Health Information Card.
		Installed audible alarms and visual smoke alarms.
		Gathered my Emergency Documents.
		Created my Communication Plan.
		Told my family, neighbors, local emergency teams, local fire department what I need in an emergency situation.

TIPS

Visual Impairments Disaster Tips

Disaster Tips for People Who Have Visual Impairments

The State of Illinois has developed this tip sheet to prepare you for an emergency or disaster. This tip sheet is designed to be used in conjunction with "Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs" and the "Emergency Health Information Card."

1 Get A Kit

In addition to the list of recommended items to include in a Disaster Supplies Kit, which is attached to this document, people who have visual impairments may consider including the following items:

- ☐ Medications and Special Items – extra folding mobility cane, extra pair of dark glasses (if medically required)
- ☐ Tape recorder & extra batteries
- ☐ Create an Animal Supply Kit and Take-Along-Bag (if necessary):

  For each animal:

  - Two-week supply of water (plastic gallon jugs) and food
  - Non-spill food and water dishes
  - Manual can opener and spoons
  - Animal/Service Animal identification information, veterinary records and proof of ownership

- Cage/carrier (labeled with contact information: pet's name, owner's name, address and phone number and an emergency name and phone number)
- Favorite toys, treats, blankets
- Leash, collar, harness, muzzle, stakes and tie downs
- Litter, litter pan, litter scoop
- Newspaper (for bedding or litter)
- Paper towels and plastic baggies
- First aid kit and manual (call your vet)

2 Make a Plan

Create a Personal Assessment. Decide what you will be able to do for yourself and what assistance you may need before, during and after a disaster. Make a list of your personal needs and resources for meeting them in a disaster environment. Such things to consider are:

- ☐ Meet with your family members, friends, and building manager to review community hazards and emergency plans. Tell them where you keep your emergency supplies.
- ☐ Choose an out-of-town contact. Following a disaster, family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know how to contact this person (e.g. TTY, email, pager, instant message, etc.).
- ☐ Decide where to meet your household members if you become separated.

TIPS

Visual Impairments Disaster Tips

Ask your local fire department, police department or emergency management office about emergency special assistance programs. Some communities may ask people with a disability to register so assistance can be provided in an emergency.

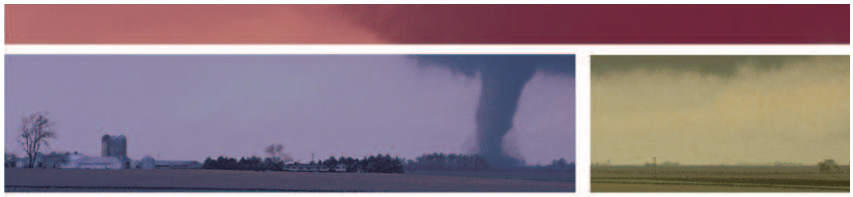
- ☐ Complete an Emergency Health Information Card. Update it regularly and keep it with you at all times.
- ☐ Canes: If you use a cane, keep extras in strategic, consistent and secured locations at job, home, school, volunteer site, etc. to help you maneuver around obstacles and hazards.
- ☐ Service animals may become confused or frightened during and after a disaster: keep them confined or securely leashed or harnessed. A leash/harness is an important item for managing a nervous or upset animal. Be prepared to use alternative ways to negotiate your environment.
- ☐ Plan for losing the auditory cues you usually rely on after a major disaster.
- ☐ Mark emergency supplies with large print, fluorescent tape or Braille.
- ☐ If you have some vision, place security lights in each room to light paths of travel. These lights plug into electrical wall outlets and light up automatically if there is a loss of power. They will, depending on type, continue to operate automatically for 1 to 6 hours and can be turned off manually and used as a short-lasting flashlight; and
- ☐ Secure computers and anchor special equipment. Create a back-up system for important data and store it off-site.

3 Be Informed

- ☐ Learn your community's response and evacuation plans.

- ☐ Learn the emergency plans and procedures that exist in places you and your family spend time (e.g. workplace, school, child care centers). Develop a communication plan with them.
- ☐ Ask your local fire department, police department or emergency management office about emergency special assistance programs. Some communities may ask people with a disability to register so assistance can be provided in an emergency.
- ☐ Ask your city or county how they will warn you of a disaster situation and provide information to you before, during and after a disaster.
- ☐ Know which television and radio stations in your area broadcast the Emergency Alert System.

Check Off When Completed	Date	Activity to be Completed
		Put together my Disaster Supplies Kit.
		Completed a Personal Assessment.
		Created a Support Network.
		Arranged an out-of-town contact.
		Completed my Emergency Health Information Card.
		Installed audible alarms and visual smoke alarms.
		Gathered my Emergency Documents.
		Created my Communication Plan.
		Told my family, neighbors, local emergency teams, local fire department what I need in an emergency situation.



Parents or Caregivers of Children Disaster Tips

Disaster Tips for Parents or Caregivers of Children

The State of Illinois has developed this TIP sheet to prepare you for an emergency or disaster. This TIP sheet is designed to be used in conjunction with the "Emergency Health Information Card," which can be found at the end of this document.

1 Get A Kit

In addition to the list of recommended items to include in a Disaster Supplies Kit, which is available at www.ready.illinois.gov, Parents or Caregivers of Children should consider including the following items:

- ☐ A list of children for whom they are providing care, including:
  - Full name and nicknames
  - Date of birth
  - Copy of birth certificate
  - Recent photograph
  - Name of legal guardian
  - Authorization for medical treatment
  - List of allergies
  - List of medications taken on a regular basis (include dosage), what it's prescribed for and pharmacy name and phone number

- ☐ If child has "functional needs" (diabetes, cerebral palsy, visual impairment, etc.), please list the following:
  - Type of functional need
  - Medications (include: dosage, what it's prescribed for and pharmacy name and phone number)
  - Physician's name, office address and phone number
- ☐ Name, address and phone number of school (daycare, elementary, middle school, high school or college) child attends along with the name of teacher and class (e.g. Ms. Smith's 3rd grade).
- ☐ Name, address and phone number of specialized school/facility (e.g. Hope School for the Blind).
- ☐ List of other caregivers along with contact information (name, address and phone number) and what their roles are (e.g. pick up from school/daycare).
- ☐ Caregiver should have alternate contact numbers for parents or others who can pick up children.
- ☐ Digital picture of child along with pertinent information (height, weight, color of hair, color of eyes, any distinguishing marks). E-mail to self so you will always have it with you.

Choose an out-of-town contact. Following a disaster, family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know how to contact this person (e.g. TTY, e-mail, pager, instant message, etc.).

2 Make a Plan

Create a Personal Assessment. Decide what you will be able to do for the children you care for and what assistance you may need before, during and after a disaster. Make a list of your needs and resources for meeting them in a disaster environment. Such things to consider are:

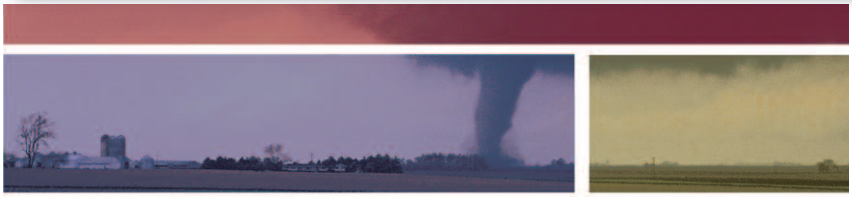
- ☐ Meet with your family members, friends, and others who care for your children to review community hazards and emergency plans. Tell them where you keep your emergency supplies.
- ☐ Choose an out-of-town contact. Following a disaster, family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know how to contact this person (e.g. TTY, e-mail, pager, instant message, etc.).
- ☐ Daycares/Schools Note: If daycare center/school is not accessible, list a primary and a secondary reunification site.
- ☐ Complete an Emergency Health Information Card for each child. Update it regularly and keep it with you at all times.
- ☐ Install audible and visual alarms and smoke detectors.

3 Be Informed

- ☐ Learn your community's response and evacuation plans.
- ☐ Learn the emergency plans and procedures for places where you and your family spend time (e.g. work place, school, child care centers). Develop a communication plan with them.

- ☐ Ask your local fire department, police department or emergency management office about emergency special assistance programs. Some communities may ask people with a disability to register so assistance can be provided in an emergency.
- ☐ Ask your city or county how they will warn you of a disaster situation and provide information to you before, during and after a disaster.
- ☐ Know which television stations in your area broadcast the Emergency Alert System and close caption the entire emergency broadcast.
- ☐ Ask your local emergency management office if they have an emergency notification system that can interface with a communication system for the deaf and hard of hearing. This system can contact people in an affected area.

Check Off When Completed	Date	Activity to be Completed
		Put together my Disaster Supplies Kit.
		Completed a Personal Assessment.
		Created a Support Network.
		Arranged an Out-of-Town Contact.
		Completed an Emergency Health Information Card for each family member.
		Installed audible and visual alarms and smoke detectors.
		Gathered my Emergency Documents.
		Created my Communication Plan.
		Told my family, neighbors and local emergency teams (fire, EMS and police) what I need in an emergency situation.



DISASTER KIT

Make A Disaster Supplies Kit

Make a Disaster Supplies Kit

A 72 hour disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items a family would probably need to stay safe and be more comfortable during and after a disaster.

A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items a family would probably need to stay safe and be more comfortable during and after a disaster. Disaster supplies kit items should be stored in a portable container(s) as close as possible to the exit door. Review the contents of your kit at least once per year or as your family's needs change. Also, consider having emergency supplies in each vehicle and at your place of employment.

Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Disaster Supplies Kit:

WATER - Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers and ill people will need more.

- ☐ Store one gallon of water per person per day. (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for food preparation and sanitation).
- ☐ Keep at least a three-day supply of water for each person in your household.

FOOD - Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of sterno. Select food items that are compact and lightweight. Include a selection of the following foods in your Disaster Supplies Kit:

- ☐ Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits & vegetables
- ☐ Canned juices, milk, soup (if powdered, store extra water)

- ☐ Staples such as sugar, salt, pepper
- ☐ High-energy foods - peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix
- ☐ Vitamins
- ☐ Foods for infants, elderly person or persons with special diets
- ☐ Comfort/stress food - cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereal, lollipops, instant coffee, tea bags

FIRST-AID KIT - assemble a kit for your home and one for each car. A first-aid kit should include:

- ☐ Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- ☐ 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- ☐ 4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- ☐ Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- ☐ Triangular bandages (3)
- ☐ 2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- ☐ 3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- ☐ Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
- ☐ Assorted sizes of safety pins
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Cleansing agent/soap
- ☐ Needles
- ☐ Latex gloves (2 pairs)

- ☐ Tweezers
- ☐ Moistened towelettes
- ☐ Antiseptic
- ☐ Thermometer (medical)
- ☐ Tongue depressors (2)
- ☐ Sunscreen

NON-PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

- ☐ Aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever
- ☐ Anti-diarrhea medication
- ☐ Laxative
- ☐ Antacid (for stomach upset)

TOOLS and SANITATION

- ☐ Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and utensils
- ☐ Battery operated radio and extra batteries
- ☐ Flashlight and extra batteries
- ☐ Cash, traveler's checks, change
- ☐ Non-electric can opener, utility knife
- ☐ Map of the area (for locating shelters)
- ☐ Emergency Preparedness Manual
- ☐ Fire extinguisher: small - ABC type

- ☐ Tent
- ☐ Pliers
- ☐ Tape (duct)
- ☐ Compass
- ☐ Paper, pencil
- ☐ Signal flare
- ☐ Whistle
- ☐ Plastic sheeting
- ☐ Medicine dropper
- ☐ Matches in a waterproof container
- ☐ Plastic storage containers, bags
- ☐ Shut-off wrench, to turn off house gas & water
- ☐ Sewing kit (needles, thread)
- ☐ Aluminum foil

Sanitation

- ☐ Toilet paper, towelettes
- ☐ Soap, liquid detergent
- ☐ Feminine supplies
- ☐ Plastic garbage bags, ties
- ☐ Plastic bucket with tight lid

CLOTHING and BEDDING - Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

- ☐ Sturdy shoes or work boots
- ☐ Rain gear
- ☐ Blankets or sleeping bags
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Thermal underwear
- ☐ Hat and gloves

SPECIAL ITEMS - Remember family members with special needs, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons.

For Baby:

- ☐ Formula
- ☐ Diapers
- ☐ Bottles
- ☐ Medications
- ☐ Powdered Milk

For Adults:

- ☐ Heart and high blood pressure medication
- ☐ Other prescription drugs
- ☐ Insulin
- ☐ Extra eye glasses

- ☐ Contact lenses and supplies
- ☐ Denture needs

IMPORTANT FAMILY DOCUMENTS - Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container.

- ☐ Will, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds
- ☐ Passports, social security cards, immunization records

List for Disaster Supplies Kit courtesy of: www.ready.illinois.gov

HEALTH CARD

Emergency Health Information Card

Emergency Health Information Card

1. This card should be duplicated as needed.

2. Cut out the card along the dotted lines.

3. Write in contact information for each household member. Use the back side of this card if you need additional space.

4. Fold the card so it fits into your pocket, wallet or purse.

5. Carry your card at all times so it is available in the event of a disaster or other emergency. Place it near your driver's license, school I.D., etc.

Emergency Health Information Card

Date Updated:
Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Day Phone:
Evening Phone:
Cell Phone:
E-mail:
Birth Date: Blood Type:
Health Plan:
Individual #: Group #:

Doctor's Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Phone: Fax:
E-mail:

Pharmacist's Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Phone: Fax:
E-mail:

Emergency Health Information Card

Emergency Contact #1:
Relationship:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Day Phone:
Evening Phone:
Cell Phone:
E-mail:

Emergency Contact #2:
Relationship:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Day Phone:
Evening Phone:
Cell Phone:
E-mail:

Special Conditions:

Medications/Dosages:

Allergies:

Communications/Devices/Equipment/
Other:

REFERENCES

Agency Listings & Websites

Office of the Attorney General

500 South Second Street
Springfield, IL 62706
p: 217-782-1090
TTY: 217-785-2771

100 West Randolph Street
Chicago, IL 60601
p: 312-814-3000
TTY: 312-814-3374

1001 East Main Street
Carbondale, IL 62901
p: 618-529-6400/6401
TTY: 618-529-6403

www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov

Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities

830 South Spring Street
Springfield, IL 62704
p: 217-782-9696
f: 217-524-5339
TTY: 888-261-2717

100 West Randolph, Suite 10-600
Chicago, IL 60601
p: 312-814-2080
f: 312-814-7141
TTY: 888-261-2717

www.state.il.us/agency/icdd

Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission

1630 South 6th Street
Springfield, IL 62703
V/TTY: 217-557-4495
f: 217-557-4492
V/TTY: 877-455-3323
videophone: 217-557-4487
IP:163.191.76.17

www.idhhc.state.il.us/

Illinois Department of Human Services

Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse

100 West Randolph, Suite 5-600
Chicago, IL 60601
V/TTY: 217-557-4495
p: 312-814-1510
f: 312-814-2419
DHS Office Locator: 1-800-843-6154

Division of Community Health and Prevention

535 West Jefferson, 3rd Floor
Springfield, IL 62702
p: 217-782-5945
f: 217-524-5586
DHS Office Locator: 1-800-843-6154

1112 South Wabash, 3rd Floor
Chicago, IL 60605
p: 312-793-4605
f: 312-793-4666
DHS Office Locator: 1-800-843-6154

Division of Developmental Disabilities

319 East Madison, Suite 4N
Springfield, IL 62701
p: 217-524-7065
f: 217-557-6856
DHS Office Locator: 1-800-843-6154

100 West Randolph, Suite 6-400
Springfield, IL 60601
p: 312-814-8327
f: 312-814-4175

Division of Mental Health

160 North LaSalle, Suite S-1000
Chicago, IL 60601
p: 312-814-8926
f: 312-814-4832
DHS Office Locator: 1-800-843-6154

100 West Randolph, Suite 6-400
Springfield, IL 60601
p: 312-814-8327
f: 312-814-417

Division of Rehab Services

400 West Lawrence
Springfield, IL 62794-9429
p: 217-529-4089
f: 217-524-2352
DHS Office Locator: 1-800-843-6154

www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx

Illinois Department on Aging

421 East Capitol Avenue, #100
Springfield, IL 62701-1789
p: 217-785-3356
f: 217-785-4477
1-800-252-8966
TTY: 888-206-1327

160 North LaSalle Street, Suite N-700
Chicago, IL 60601-3031
p: 312-814-2630
f: 312-814-2916
1-800-252-8966
TTY: 888-206-1327

www.state.il.us/aging

Illinois Emergency Management Agency

2200 South Dirksen Parkway
Springfield, Illinois 62703
(217)782-2700
TTY/TDD: 888-614-2381

www.iema.illinois.gov/

www.ready.illinois.gov

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

www.fema.gov

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

www.dhs.gov

www.ready.gov

National Organization on Disability

www.nod.org

Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration

http://www.samhsa.gov/Matrix/matrix_disaster.aspx

http://www.samhsa.gov/trauma/index.aspx

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY/ AMERICAN RED CROSS GUIDE

Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and other Special Needs

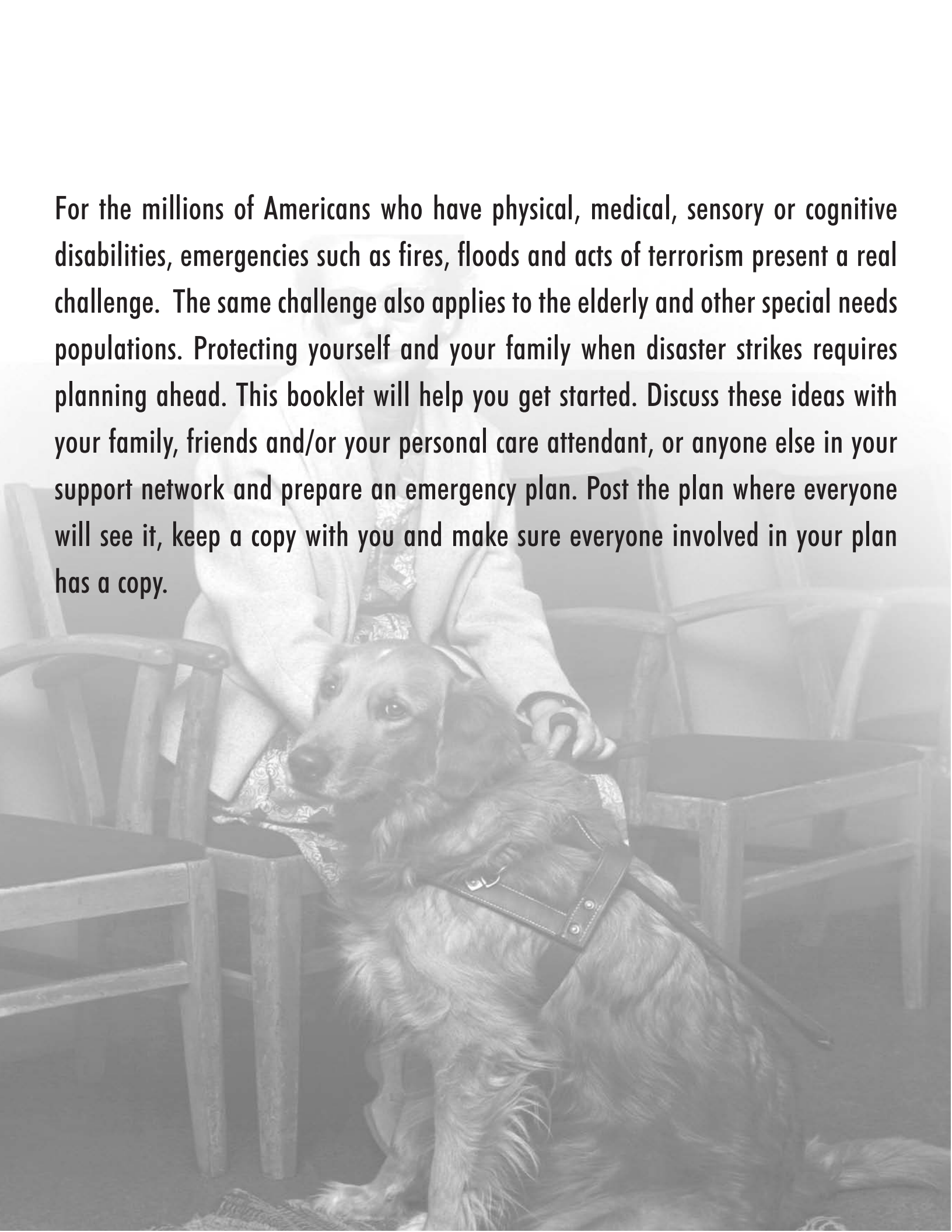
Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and other Special Needs

Visit the websites listed below to obtain additional information:

www.access-board.gov The Access Board
www.aoa.dhhs.gov DHHS Administration on Aging
www.ncd.gov National Council on Disability
www.nod.org/emergency National Organization on Disability
www.prepare.org Prepare.org
www.aapd.com American Association for People with Disabilities
www.afb.org American Foundation for the Blind
www.nad.org National Association of the Deaf
www.lacity.org/DOD Los Angeles City Department on Disability
www.easter-seals.org Easter Seals

For more in-depth information, get a copy of "Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities" (A5091) from the American Red Cross, or visit www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/disability.pdf

For the millions of Americans who have physical, medical, sensory or cognitive disabilities, emergencies such as fires, floods and acts of terrorism present a real challenge. The same challenge also applies to the elderly and other special needs populations. Protecting yourself and your family when disaster strikes requires planning ahead. This booklet will help you get started. Discuss these ideas with your family, friends and/or your personal care attendant, or anyone else in your support network and prepare an emergency plan. Post the plan where everyone will see it, keep a copy with you and make sure everyone involved in your plan has a copy.



Why Prepare?

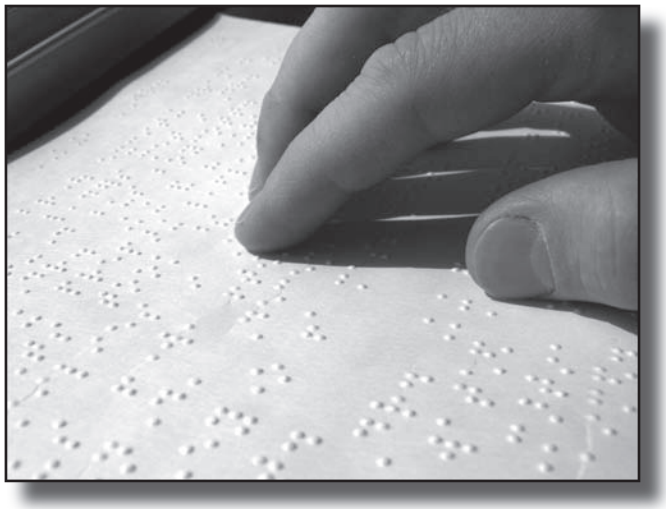
Where will you, your family, your friends or personal care attendants be when an emergency or disaster strikes?

You, and those you care about, could be anywhere – at home, work, school or in transit. How will you find each other? Will you know your loved ones will be safe?

Emergencies and disasters can strike quickly and without warning and can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. What would you do if basic services – water, gas, electricity or telephones – were cut off?

Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone right away.

You are in the best position to plan for your own safety as you are best able to know your functional abilities and possible needs during and after an emergency or disaster situation. You can cope with disaster by preparing in advance with your family and care attendants. You will need to create a personal support network and complete a personal assessment. You will also need to follow the four preparedness steps listed in this booklet.



1. Get informed
2. Make a plan
3. Assemble a kit
4. Maintain your plan and kit

Knowing what to do is your best protection and your responsibility.

What You Need to Do

Create a Personal Support Network

A personal support network (sometimes called a self-help team) can help you prepare for a disaster. They can do this by helping you identify and get the resources you need to cope effectively. Network members can also assist you after a disaster happens.

Organize a network that includes your home, school, workplace, volunteer site, and any other places where you spend a lot of time. Members of your network can be roommates, relatives, neighbors, friends, and co-workers. They should be people you trust and who can check to see if you need assistance. They should know your capabilities and needs, and be able to provide help within minutes.

Do not depend on only one person. Include a minimum of three people in your network for each location where you regularly spend a lot of time since people work different shifts, take vacations and are not always available.

Complete a Personal Assessment

Decide what you will be able to do for yourself and what assistance you may need before, during and after a disaster. This will be based on the environment after the disaster, your capabilities and your limitations.

To complete a personal assessment, make a list of your personal needs and your resources for meeting them in a disaster environment. Think about the following questions and note your answers in writing or record them on a tape cassette that you will share with your network. These answers should describe both your current capabilities and the assistance you will need. Base your plan on your lowest anticipated level of functioning.

Daily Living

- Personal Care
  Do you regularly need assistance with personal care, such as bathing and grooming? Do you use adaptive equipment to help you get dressed?

- Water Service
  What will you do if water service is cut off for several days or if you are unable to heat water?

- Personal Care Equipment
  Do you use a shower chair, tub-transfer bench or other similar equipment?

- Adaptive Feeding Devices
  Do you use special utensils that help you prepare or eat food independently?

- Electricity-Dependent Equipment
  How will you continue to use equipment that runs on electricity, such as dialysis, electrical lifts, etc.? Do you have a safe back-up power supply and how long will it last?

Getting Around

- Disaster Debris
  How will you cope with the debris in your home or along your planned exit route following the disaster?

- Transportation
  Do you need a specially equipped vehicle or accessible transportation?

- Errands
  Do you need help to get groceries, medications and medical supplies? What if your caregiver cannot reach you because roads are blocked or the disaster has affected him or her as well?

Evacuating

- Building Evacuation
  Do you need help to leave your home or office? Can you reach and activate an alarm? Will you be able to evacuate independently without relying on auditory cues (such as noise from a machine near the stairs – these cues may be absent if the electricity is off or alarms are sounding)?

- Building Exits
  Are there other exits (stairs, windows or ramps) if the elevator is not working or cannot be used? Can you read emergency signs in print or Braille? Do emergency alarms have audible and visible features (marking escape routes and exits) that will work even if electrical service is disrupted?

- Getting Help
  How will you call or summon for the help you will need to leave the building? Do you know the locations of text telephones and phones that have amplification? Will your hearing aids work if they get wet from emergency sprinklers? Have you determined how to communicate with emergency personnel if you don't have an interpreter, your hearing aids aren't working, or if you don't have a word board or other augmentative communication device?

- Mobility Aids / Ramp Access
  What will you do if you cannot find your mobility aids? What will you do if your ramps are shaken loose or become separated from the building?

- Service Animals/Pets
  Will you be able to care for your animal (provide food, shelter, veterinary attention, etc.) during and after a disaster? Do you have another caregiver for your animal if you are unable to meet its needs? Do you have the appropriate licenses for your service animal so you will be permitted to keep it with you should you need or choose to use an emergency public shelter?

1. Get Informed

Contact your local emergency management office or American Red Cross Chapter to gather information you will need to create a plan.

• **Community Hazards.** Ask about the specific hazards that threaten your community (e.g. hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes) and about your risk from those hazards. Additionally, hazard information for your local area can be obtained at www.hazardmaps.gov.

• **Community Disaster Plans.** Learn about community response plans, evacuation plans and designated emergency shelters. Ask about the emergency plans and procedures that exist in places you and your family spend time such as places of employment, schools and child care centers. If you do not own a vehicle or drive, find out in advance what your community's plans are for evacuating those without private transportation.

• **Community Warning Systems.** Find out how local authorities will warn you of a pending disaster and how they will provide information to you during and after a disaster. Learn about NOAA Weather Radio and its alerting capabilities (www.noaa.gov).

• **Assistance Programs.** Ask about special assistance programs available in the event of an emergency. Many communities ask people with a disability to register, usually with the local fire or police department, or the local emergency management office so needed help can be provided quickly in an emergency. Let your personal care attendant know you have registered, and with whom. If you are electric-dependent, be sure to register with your local utility company.

2. Make a Plan

Because a disaster can disrupt your primary emergency plan, it is also important for you to develop a back-up plan to ensure your safety.

☐ **Meet with Your Family/Personal Care Attendants/Building Manager.** Review the information you gathered about community hazards and emergency plans.

☐ **Choose an "Out-of-Town" Contact.** Ask an out-of-town friend or relative to be your contact. Following a disaster, family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know the contact's phone numbers. After a disaster, it is often easier to make a long distance call than a local call from a disaster area.

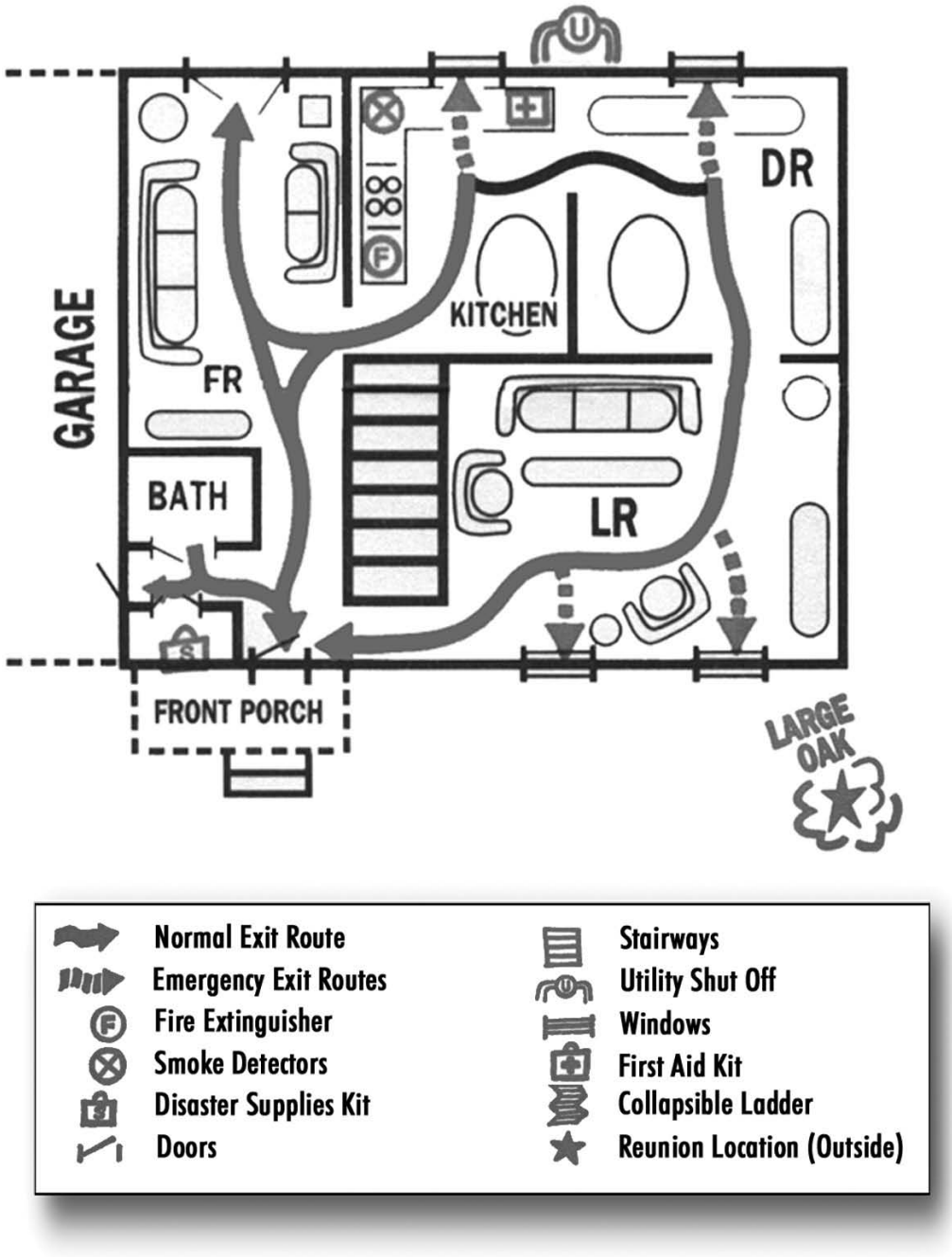
☐ **Decide Where to Meet.** In the event of an emergency, you may become separated from household members. Choose a place right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire. Choose a location outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home.

☐ **Complete a Communications Plan.** Your plan should include contact information for family members, members of your support network, caregivers, work, and school. Your plan should also include information for your out-of-town contact, meeting locations, emergency services, and the National Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222). A form for recording this information can be found at www.ready.gov - or at www.redcross.org/prepare/pdfs/card.pdf. These websites also provide blank wallet cards on which contact information can be recorded and carried in a wallet, purse, backpack, etc, for quick reference. Teach your children how to call the emergency phone numbers and when it is appropriate to do so. Be sure each family member has a copy of your communication plan and post it near your telephone for use in an emergency.

☐ Escape Routes and Safe Places. In a fire or other emergency, you may need to evacuate on a moment's notice. Be ready to get out fast. Be sure everyone in your family knows the best escape routes out of your home as well as where the safe places are in your home for each type of disaster (i.e., if a tornado approaches, go to the basement or the lowest floor of your home or an interior room or closet with no windows).

Use a blank sheet of paper to draw the floor plans of your home. Show the location of doors, windows, stairways, large furniture, your disaster supplies kit, fire extinguisher, smoke alarms, other visual and auditory alarms, collapsible ladders, first-aid kits, and utility shut-off points. Show important points outside such as garages, patios, stairways, elevators, driveways, and porches.

Indicate at least two escape routes from each room, and mark a place outside of the home where household members and/or your personal care attendant should meet in case of fire. If you or someone in your household uses a wheelchair, make exits from your home wheelchair accessible.



Practice emergency evacuation drills at least two times a year, but as often as you update your escape plan. Be sure to include family and/or your personal care attendant in the drills.

- **Plan for Your Pets.** Take your pets with you if you evacuate. However, be aware that pets (other than service animals) usually are not permitted in emergency public shelters for health reasons. Prepare a list of family, friends, boarding facilities, veterinarians, and "pet-friendly" hotels that could shelter your pets in an emergency.

- **Prepare for Different Hazards.** Include in your plan how to prepare for each hazard that could impact your local community and how to protect yourself. For instance, most people shelter in a basement when there is a tornado warning, but most basements are not wheelchair-accessible. Determine in advance what your alternative shelter will be and how you will get there. Other hazards, like a home fire, will require you to leave. Make sure both primary and secondary exits are accessible and that you can locate them by touch or feel (since lights may be out and thick, black smoke may make it very hard to see). Reference the websites listed on the back cover to learn more about the different actions required for different hazards.

- **Considerations for people with disabilities**
  Those with disabilities or other special needs often have unique needs that require more detailed planning in the event of a disaster. Consider the following actions as you prepare:

  - Learn what to do in case of power outages and personal injuries. Know how to connect and start a back-up power supply for essential medical equipment.
  - Consider getting a medical alert system that will allow you to call for help if you are immobilized in an emergency. Most alert systems require a working phone line, so have a back-up plan, such as a cell phone or pager, if the regular landlines are disrupted.
  - If you use an electric wheelchair or scooter, have a manual wheelchair for backup.
  - Teach those who may need to assist you in an emergency how to operate necessary equipment. Also, label equipment and attach laminated instructions for equipment use.
  - Store back-up equipment (mobility, medical, etc.) at your neighbor's home, school, or your workplace.
  - Arrange for more than one person from your personal support network to check on you in an emergency, so there is at least one back-up if the primary person you rely on cannot.
  - If you are vision impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, plan ahead for someone to convey essential emergency information to you if you are unable to use the TV or radio.
  - If you use a personal care attendant obtained from an agency, check to see if the agency has special provisions for emergencies (e.g., providing services at another location should an evacuation be ordered).
  - If you live in an apartment, ask the management to identify and mark accessible exits and access to all areas designated for emergency shelter or safe rooms. Ask about plans for alerting and evacuating those with sensory disabilities.
  - Have a cell phone with an extra battery. If you are unable to get out of a building, you can let someone know where you are and guide them to you. Keep the numbers you may need to call with you if the 9-1-1 emergency number is overloaded.

- Learn about devices and other technology available (PDA's, text radio, pagers, etc.) to assist you in receiving emergency instructions and warnings from local officials.
- Be prepared to provide clear, specific and concise instructions to rescue personnel. Practice giving these instructions (verbally, pre-printed phrases, word board, etc.) clearly and quickly.
- Prepare your personal support network to assist you with anticipated reactions and emotions associated with disaster and traumatic events (i.e. confusion, thought processing and memory difficulties, agitation, fear, panic, and anxiety).
- You don't have to be the only one prepared – encourage others to be prepared and consider volunteering or working with local authorities on disability and other special needs preparedness efforts.

- **Utilities**

  Know how and when to turn off water, gas and electricity at the main switches or valves and share this information with your family and caregivers. Keep any tools you will need near gas and water shut off valves. Turn off the utilities only if you suspect the lines are damaged, you suspect a leak, or if local officials instruct you to do so.

  (Note: Gas shut-off procedure - As part of the learning process, do not actually turn off the gas. If the gas is turned off for any reason, only a qualified professional can turn it back on. It might take several weeks for a professional to respond. In the meantime, you will require alternate sources to heat your home, make hot water and cook.)

- **Fire Extinguisher**
  Be sure everyone knows how to use your fire extinguishers (ABC type) and where they are kept.

- **Smoke Alarms**
  Install smoke alarms on each level of your home, especially near the bedrooms. Individuals with sensory disabilities should consider installing smoke alarms that have strobe lights and vibrating pads. Follow local codes and manufacturer's instructions about installation requirements. Also, consider installing a carbon monoxide alarm in your home.

- **Insurance Coverage**
  Check if you have adequate insurance coverage. Homeowners insurance does not cover flood damage and may not provide full coverage for other hazards. Talk with your insurance agent and make sure you have adequate coverage to protect your family against financial loss.

- **First Aid/CPR & AED (Automated External Defibrillation)**
  Take American Red Cross first aid and CPR/AED classes. Red Cross courses can accommodate people with disabilities. Discuss your needs when registering for the classes.

- **Inventory Home Possessions**
  Make a record of your possessions to help you claim reimbursement in case of loss or damage. Store this information in a safe deposit box or other secure (flood/fire safe) location to ensure the records survive a disaster. Include photographs or video of the interior and exterior of your home as well as cars, boats and recreational vehicles. Also, have photos of durable medical equipment and be sure to make a record of the make and model numbers for each item. Get professional appraisals of jewelry, collectibles, artwork or other items that may be difficult to evaluate. Make copies of receipts and canceled checks showing the cost for valuable items.

- Vital Records and Documents
  Vital family records and other important documents such as birth and marriage certificates, social security cards, passports, wills, deeds, and financial, insurance, and immunizations records should be kept in a safe deposit box or other safe location.

- Reduce Home Hazards
  In a disaster, ordinary items in the home can cause injury and damage. Take these steps to reduce your risk.

  - Keep the shut-off switch for oxygen equipment near your bed or chair, so you can get to it quickly if there is a fire.
  - Have a professional repair defective electrical wiring and leaky gas connections.
  - Place large, heavy objects on lower shelves, and hang pictures and mirrors away from beds.
  - Use straps or other restraints to secure tall cabinets, bookshelves, large appliances (especially water heater, furnace and refrigerator), mirrors, shelves, large picture frames, and light fixtures to wall studs.
  - Repair cracks in ceilings and foundations.
  - Store weed killers, pesticides and flammable products away from heat sources.
  - Place oily rags or waste in covered metal cans and dispose of them according to local regulations.
  - Have a professional clean and repair chimneys, flue pipes, connectors, and gas vents.

3. Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit

In the event you need to evacuate at a moment's notice and take essentials with you, you probably will not have the opportunity to shop or search for the supplies you and your family will need. Every household should assemble a disaster supplies kit and keep it up to date.

A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items a family would probably need to stay safe and be more comfortable during and after a disaster. Disaster supplies kit items should be stored in a portable container(s) as close as possible to the exit door. Review the contents of your kit at least once per year or as your family's needs change. Also, consider having emergency supplies in each vehicle and at your place of employment.

The following should be included in your basic disaster supplies kit:

- Three-day supply of nonperishable food and manual can opener.
- Three-day supply of water (one gallon of water per person, per day).
- Portable, battery-powered radio or television and extra batteries.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- First aid kit and manual.
- Sanitation and hygiene items (hand sanitizer, moist towelettes, and toilet paper).
- Matches in waterproof container.
- Whistle.
- Extra clothing and blankets.
- Kitchen accessories and cooking utensils.
- Photocopies of identification and credit cards.
- Cash and coins.
- Special needs items such as prescription medications, eye glasses, contact lens solution, and hearing aid batteries.
- Items for infants, such as formula, diapers, bottles, and pacifiers.
- Tools, pet supplies, a map of the local area, and other items to meet your unique family needs.

If you live in a cold climate, you must think about warmth. It is possible that you will not have heat during or after a disaster. Think about your clothing and bedding needs. Be sure to include one set of the following for each person:

- Jacket or coat.
- Long pants and long sleeve shirt.
- Sturdy shoes.
- Hat, mittens, and scarf.
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket.

Supplies for your vehicle include:

- Flashlight, extra batteries and maps.
- First aid kit and manual.
- White distress flag.
- Tire repair kit, booster/jumper cables, pump and flares.
- Bottled water and non-perishable foods such as granola bars.
- Seasonal supplies: Winter - blanket, hat, mittens, shovel, sand, tire chains, windshield scraper, florescent distress flag; Summer – sunscreen lotion (SPF 15 or greater), shade item (umbrella, wide brimmed hat, etc).

4. Maintain Your Plan

Quiz: Review your plan every six months and quiz your family about what to do.
Drill: Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills on a regular basis with your family.
Restock: Check food supplies for expiration dates and discard, or replace stored water and food every six months.
Test: Read the indicator on your fire extinguisher(s) and follow the manufacturer's instructions to recharge. Test your smoke alarms monthly and change the batteries at least once a year. Replace alarms every 10 years.

Plan Maintenance Chart

Check off task and enter date performed:

	6 months	1 year	18 months	2 years
Review plan and quiz	☐	☐	☐	☐
Date	_____	_____	_____	_____
Hold fire and emergency evacuation drills	☐	☐	☐	☐
Date	_____	_____	_____	_____
Replace stored food and water	☐	☐	☐	☐
Date	_____	_____	_____	_____
Check fire extinguishers and recharge	☐	☐	☐	☐
Date	_____	_____	_____	_____

Smoke Alarm Maintenance Chart

Check off task and enter date performed:

Test monthly	☐	☐	☐	☐
Date	_____	_____	_____	_____
Change batteries	☐	☐	☐	☐
Date	_____	_____	_____	_____
Replace alarms	☐	☐	☐	☐
Date	_____	_____	_____	_____

If you are instructed to take shelter immediately, do so at once

If you are instructed to evacuate

Should you need to leave, your first option and plan should always be to family or friends first; they can accommodate you, your pets, and help you be most comfortable in a stressful situation. Emergency public shelters will be available, and can provide a safe place to stay and meals while you are there. However, they do not provide personal health care. If you require the care of a personal attendant and choose to go to a shelter, bring the attendant with you.

- Listen to the radio or television for the location of emergency shelters. Note those that are accessible to those with physical disabilities and those that have other disability friendly assistance features such as TTY lines.
- Shut off water, gas and electricity if instructed to do so and if time permits.
- Wear appropriate clothing and sturdy shoes.
- Take your disaster supplies kit.
- Lock your home.
- Use travel routes specified by local authorities and don't use shortcuts because certain areas may be impassable or dangerous.
- Confirm upon arrival at an emergency shelter that it can meet your special care needs.
- Inform members of your support network and out-of-town contact of your location and status.

Learn More

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community and Family Preparedness Program and American Red Cross Community Disaster Education are nationwide efforts to help people prepare for disasters of all types.

For more information, please contact your local emergency management office or American Red Cross chapter. This booklet and the preparedness materials listed below are online at www.fema.gov and www.redcross.org. Other preparedness materials are available at these sites, as well as at www.ready.gov.

These publications are also available by calling FEMA at 1-800-480-2520, or writing:

FEMA
P.O. Box 2012
Jessup, MD 20794-2012

Publications with an "A" number are available from your local American Red Cross chapter.

- Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness (IS-22)
- Preparing for Disaster (FEMA 475) (A4600)
- Food and Water in an Emergency (FEMA 477) (A5055)
- Helping Children Cope with Disaster (FEMA 478) (A4499)

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