

**Emergency
Preparedness
for
Individuals
with
Non-Typical
Functional
Needs**

Emergency Preparedness For Individuals with Non-Typical Functional Needs

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Introduction

Disasters can strike at any time whether by a natural event such as a hurricane, snow storm, tornado, or a terrorist attack. It can be a very stressful and dangerous time for you and your family. However, there are things you can do now. Preparing for an emergency takes time and effort, but you can take important steps to better prepare you and your family for an emergency.

During a disaster, you may be more vulnerable and need additional assistance such as with evacuation, hearing emergency warnings, and sheltering. You may have a disability, medical condition, limited mobility, or other condition.

There are things that you can do to be better prepared such as creating an emergency supply kit, collecting special needs supplies, completing an emergency contact list, and creating an emergency health information card. This pamphlet is

intended to help you in preparing for an emergency.

Emergency Preparedness Personal Checklist

The following checklist is provided to assist you in taking the first steps to be prepared. The checklist should be completed in order, one activity at a time. Be sure to fill in the date as you complete each activity on the checklist. If you are unable to complete this checklist on your own, encourage a friend or family member to assist you.

Activity: Check off when completed

- Establish a personal support network
- Complete an emergency supply kit
- Collect special needs supplies
- Collect “carry-with-you” supplies
- Conduct an ability assessment
- Complete an emergency contact List
- Collect and store emergency documents
- Prepare an emergency kit for your Service animal or pet
- Create an Emergency Health Information Card

Establish a Personal Support Network

Every person should have a personal support network that includes friends, roommates, family members, relatives, personal attendants, co-workers, and neighbors. Identify a minimum of three people where you regularly spend a significant part of your week: job, home, school, or volunteer site.

Your personal support network can check with you in an emergency to ensure you are okay.

In spite of your best planning, sometimes a personal support network must be created on the spot. For example, you may find yourself in a shelter and needing to assemble help for immediate assistance. Think about what you will need, how you want it done, and what kind of person you would select.

Six Important Items for Your Personal Support Network:

1. Make arrangements, prior to an emergency, for your support network to immediately check on you after a disaster, and if needed, offer assistance.
2. Exchange important keys.
3. Share copies of your relevant emergency documents, evacuation plans, and emergency health information card.
4. Practice a communication system regarding how to contact each other in an emergency. Do not count on the telephone working.
5. Notify each other when you are going out of town and when you will return.
6. Learn about each others' questions and needs, and know how to help each other in an emergency.

Supplies

Create an Emergency Supply Kit

An emergency supply kit includes basic items such as water, food, clothing, and supplies. You need to have at least a three day supply of these items:

- Water – One gallon per person, per day
- Food – Non-perishable item such as foods that require no refrigeration. Include a manual can opener.
- Clothing – A change of clothing.
- Supplies – Battery powered radio, flashlights, extra batteries, paper and pens, and plastic utensils.

For more information on how to create a family disaster plan and emergency supply kit, visit www.ready.gov, or call – 800-BE-READY, TTY# 1-800-464-6161.

Collect Needed Supplies

In an emergency, supplies may be limited. Do not expect shelters or other first aid stations to meet your supply needs. In addition to the supplies kept in your emergency kit, you should plan for enough needed supplies to last up to two weeks. Store supplies in areas you anticipate will be easy to reach during a disaster and labeled in a separate bag.

Supplies to Consider:

- Respiratory equipment
- Medications, prescription and non-prescription
- Disposable supplies such as dressings and catheters
- Eyeglasses
- Batteries for hearing aides, and communication devices

Collect Carry-With-You Supplies

These supplies can be kept in your car or at your place of work. Using a fanny pack or a back pack is ideal.

- Emergency Health Information Card
- Instructions on personal assistance needs and how best to provide them
- Copy of emergency documents
- Essential medications/copies of prescriptions (at least one week supply)
- Flashlight on a key ring
- Signaling device (whistle, beeper, bell, screecher)
- Small battery-operated radio and extra batteries

Assessment and Emergency Information

Conduct an Ability Assessment

It is important to evaluate your capabilities, limitations, and needs, as well as your surroundings, to determine what type of help you will need in an emergency.

- Will you be able to shut off the necessary utilities (gas, water, electricity)?
- Can you operate a fire extinguisher?
- Will you be able to carry your emergency supply kit?
- Have you moved or secured large objects that might block your escape path?
- How will you evacuate? Are there barriers? Do you have an alternative exit path?

Complete an Emergency Contact List

An emergency contact list includes phone numbers of relatives or friends who live outside of your immediate area that act as a clearinghouse for information about you and your family after a disaster or other emergency.

The list should also include:

- Your personal support network
- Equipments vendors
- Doctors
- Utility company
- Employer
- School
- Day care center
- Household members
- Alternate dialysis facility (if needed)

Collect and Store Emergency Documents

Store emergency documents in home emergency supply kits. Include information on:

- Medical equipment
- Medications
- Family records
- Wills
- Deeds
- Social Security Number
- Bank and credit card information

These should be stored in sealed plastic/freezer bags with a copy sent to emergency support network and out-of-state contacts.

Service Animals and Pets

Identifications (I.D.s) and Licenses

Make sure your service animals and pets have I.D. tags with both your home telephone number and that of a primary out-of-town contact person. Make sure your animal's license and vaccinations are current.

Animal Care

Plan how your pets will be cared for if you have to evacuate. Pets, in contrast to service animals, may not be allowed in emergency shelters due to health regulations, so have some animal shelters identified. Contact your local Red Cross chapter or local office of emergency management for guidance.

Establish relationships with animal owners in your neighborhood. If you are not home, there will be someone to help your animal.

Alternate Mobility Cues

Pets and service animals may become confused, frightened, panicked, or disoriented during 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 alternate ways to negotiate your environment, if necessary.

Animal Emergency Kit

Put supplies in a pack that your animal can carry in case you need to evacuate. The kit should include:

- Bowls for water and food
- Food
- Water (one gallon per day per animal)
- Blanket for bedding
- Plastic bags and paper towels for disposing of feces

- Neosporin ointment for minor wounds (see your vet for more specific medications)
- Your service animal or pet's favorite toy, or blanket
- Extra leash/harness

Emergency Health Information Card

Individuals who have a disability or medical condition can develop an emergency health information card.

What is an Emergency Health Card?

An emergency health information card communicates to rescuers what they need to know about you if they find you unconscious or incoherent, or if they need to quickly help evacuate you. An emergency health information card should contain information about medications, equipment you use, allergies and

sensitivities, communication difficulties you may have, preferred treatment and medical providers, and important contact people.

Copies of Card

Make multiple copies of your emergency health information card to keep in emergency supply kits, emergency carry-with-you kits, car, work, wallet, purse (behind driver's license or primary identification card), and wheelchair pack.

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