Preparing Makes Sense For People With Disabilities, Others with Access and Functional Needs and the Whole Community.

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.


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

Get Ready Now.

This information was developed by the US. 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.

READY-RP-0406-01.
number, charge and bank accounts information, and tax records, it is best to keep needs of children and adults with disabilities (go to www.tax.gov/about/odic to learn more about functional needs support services in general population shelters). If you have options and decide to stay put and shelter in place, consider that you may be without electricity, phone service and accessible roads for days or longer, depending on circumstances.

Evacuation: There may be conditions in which you will decide to get away or there may be situations when you may be ordered to leave. Plan how you will get away and anticipate where you will go. Choose several destinations in different directions so you have options in an emergency. Ask about evacuation plans at the places where you spend time including work, school, community organizations and other places you frequent. If you typically rely on elevators, work with others to develop back-up plans for evacuation in case they are not working.

Fire Safety: Plan two ways out of every room in case of fire. Check for items such as bookcases, hanging pictures, or overhead lights that could fall and block an escape path. Check hallways, stairwells, doors, windows and other areas that may be a barrier to communicating among separated family members. You may have trouble getting through, or the phone system. If you have a friend or family member who lives in a different area, ask them to call you. Consider all of the items you would need to evacuate or seek medical treatment, do so immediately. If you require additional travel time or need transportation assistance, make the necessary arrangements in advance.

Consider Your Service Animal or Pets: Whether you decide to stay put in an emergency or evacuate to a safer location, you will need to make plans in advance of your service animal and pets. Keep in mind that what's best for you is typically what's best for your animals. If you must evacuate, take your pets with you, if possible. However, if you are going to a public shelter, it is important to understand that animals, especially service animals, must be allowed inside. Plan in advance for shelter alternatives that will work for both you and your animals; consider loved ones or friends outside of your immediate family who would be able to take you and your pets in an emergency. For more information about pet preparedness, visit www.ready.gov.

Staying Put: Whether you are at home or elsewhere, there may be situations when it's simply best to stay where you are and avoid any uncertainty outside. Consider what you can do to safely shelter-in-place alone or with friends, family or neighbors, also consider how a shelter designated for the public would meet your needs. Work with local emergency managers and others in your community on preparing shelters in advance to meet the access and functional needs of children and adults with disabilities (go to www.fema.gov).
Include Medications and Medical Supplies: If you use medications or medical supplies on a daily basis, 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 the names and numbers of everyone in your personal support network, as well as your medical and disability service providers. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, discuss the best ways to alert you in an emergency. You should consider having a technological disability, be sure to work with your employer to determine how to best notify you of an emergency and what instruction methods are easiest for you to follow. Always participate in exercises, trainings and emergency drills offered by your employer.

Reserve a Family Communications Plan: Your family may not be together when disaster strikes so plan how you will contact one and review what you will do in different situations. Consider which communications modes will work best for your family, and when and where you will go in case of a disaster. Make sure you plan how to get there and who will meet you. Communicate your plan to your family and friends, and share your plan with local emergency managers and others in your community on how to develop a family communications plan, visit www.ready.gov.

Deciding to Stay or Go: Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the emergency, the first important decision is whether you stay or go. You should have a plan for both options. For example, if you require accessible transportation be sure your alternatives are also accessible. If you have tools or aids specific to your disability, plan how you would use them if the power goes out. For example, you might use a communication device, mobility aid, or service animal, whatever you will do if these are not available? If you require life-sustaining equipment, find out what arrangements in advance you need to make to evacuate or seek medical treatment, so do immediately. If you require additional travel time or need transportation assistance, make these arrangements in advance.

Consider Your Service Animal or Pets: Whether you decide to stay put in an emergency or evacuate to a safer location, you will need to make plans in advance or your service animal and pets. Keep in mind that what is best for you is typically what’s best for your animals. If you must evacuate, take your pets with you, if possible. However, if you are going to a public shelter, it is important to understand that only service animals must be allowed to enter public shelters. Keep a copy of your animal’s health records and identification numbers in case the unthinkable were to happen. If you or those close to you are at risk of a disaster, consider using a financial services product or account that has a local or regional emergency fund, so you will be able to access your funds in case of an emergency. Be sure you understand what you can do to safely shelter in place or if you need to leave. Plan how you will get away and anticipate where you will go. Choose several destinations in different directions so you have options in an emergency. Ask about evacuation plans at the places where you spend time including work, school, community organizations and other places you frequent. If you typically rely on others for care, ask about your local emergency management plans and how to contact them in a disaster scenario.

Finance: • Manage electronic payments for your paycheck and federal benefits. • The Direct Express® prepaid debit card is designed as a safer, easier option today. • The Direct Express® prepaid debit card is designed as a safer, easier alternative to paper checks for people who don’t have a bank account. Sign up is easy, call toll-free (877) 912-9831 (phone), (866) 569-0477(TTY) or sign up online at www.USDirectExpress.com. Signing up for direct deposit or the Direct Express card is a simple but important step that can help protect your family’s access to funds in case the unthinkable were to happen. If you or those close to you are still receiving Social Security or other federal benefits by check, please consider switching to one of these safer options today.