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

Get Ready Now.

Preparedness and emergency supplies are important for anyone, but for people with disabilities, others with access and functional needs, and the whole community, they are crucial.

Get a Kit

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.
Include Medications and Medical Supplies: If you take medications or use medical equipment 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 your medical identification. If it is not possible to have a week-long supply of medicines and supplies, keep as much as possible on hand and talk to your pharmacist or doctor about what else you should to prepare.

If you undergo routine treatments administered by a clinic or hospital or if you receive regular services at home, such as home health care, meals, oxygen or other forms of medical care, it is important to know where your medical providers within your area and the areas you might evacuate to. If you use medical equipment in your home that requires electricity to operate, talk to your health care provider about what you can do to prepare for its use during a power outage.

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

- Extra eyeglasses, hearing aids if you have them, or have coverage for them
- Extra batteries for hearing aids
- Battery chargers for, motorized wheelchairs or other battery-operated medical or assistive technology devices
- Copies of medical prescriptions, doctors orders, and the style and serial numbers of the support devices you use
- Medical alert tags or bracelets written descriptions of your disability and support needs, in case you are unable to describe the situation to others
- Supplies for your service animal
- Medical insurance cards, Medicare/Medicaid cards, orthodox or alternative medical treatment, require expensive medical equipment or medications, medications, and supplies, keep as much as possible on hand and talk to your pharmacist or doctor about what else you should to prepare.

Make a Plan

For What You Will Do in an Emergency

The reality of a disaster situation is that you will likely not have access to everyday conveniences. To plan in advance, think through the details of your everyday life. If there are people who assist you on a daily basis, list who they are and how you will contact them in an emergency. Create your own “Go Kit,” a kit for both you and any others who might need to stay. Include a communication device, mobility aid, or service animal, what you will do if the kit is used in an emergency. This is particularly important if you need to contact others outside of your family members. You may have trouble getting through, or the phone system may be down altogether, but be patient. For more information on how to develop a communications plan, visit www.ready.gov.

Make a Personal Support Network: If you anticipate having a disability, have a plan in place to the extent that you can. Include a friend or relative in another area who would not be impacted by the same emergency. If you are not in a position to help others, consider that you may be able to be a support network. Make sure everyone knows how you plan to evacuate your home, school or workplace and where you will go in case of a disaster. Make sure you have someone in your area who can support you in an emergency. Make sure you have someone in your area who can support you in an emergency. Keep key to your home and knows where you keep your emergency supplies. Teach them how to use any lifesaving equipment or administer medical care in case of an emergency. If you use a wheelchair, oxygen or other medical equipment show family friends how to use these devices so they can move you if necessary or help you practice your plan with those who have agreed to be part of your personal support network.

Inform your employer and co-workers about the assistance you will need in an emergency. This is particularly important if you need to be lifted or cared for. Talk about communication difficulties, physical limitations, equipment or medication processing that you may be deaf or hard of hearing, discuss the best ways to alert you in an emergency. A plan for an intellectual 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.

Develop a Family Communications Plan: Your family may not be together when disaster strikes so plan how you will contact one another and review what you will do in different situations. Consider who each family member calls, sends messages to, or is assigned to meet with in an emergency. Information about pet preparedness, 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 should evacuate. In both these situations, the first important decision is whether you should evacuate. You should keep as much as possible on hand and talk to your pharmacist or doctor about what else you should to prepare.

- Medical insurance cards, Medicare/Medicaid cards, extra batteries for hearing aids
- Extra batteries for hearing aids
- Battery chargers for, motorized wheelchairs or other battery-operated medical or assistive technology devices
- Copies of medical prescriptions, doctors orders, and the style and serial numbers of the support devices you use
- Medical alert tags or bracelets written descriptions of your disability and support needs, in case you are unable to describe the situation to others
- Supplies for your service animal
- Medical insurance cards, Medicare/Medicaid cards, orthodox or alternative medical treatment, require expensive medical equipment or medications, medications, and supplies, keep as much as possible on hand and talk to your pharmacist or doctor about what else you should to prepare.

Financials:
- Manage electronic payments for your paycheck and federal benefits
- The Direct Express® prepaid debit card designed as a special benefit for individuals with disabilities. You don’t need a bank account. Sign up is easy, call toll-free (877) 921-9381 (phone), (866) 569-0477(TTY) or sign up online. 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 unbankable 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 easier options today.
Include Medications and Medical Supplies: If you have a medical condition or use devices, you must have backup supplies. Be sure you have what you need on hand to make it on your own for at least a week. You should also keep a copy of your prescriptions as well as a list of your medications. If it is not possible to have a week-long supply of medicines and supplies, keep as much as possible on hand and talk to your pharmacist or doctor about what else you should to prepare.

If you undergo routine treatments administered by a clinic or hospital or if you receive regular services at home, such as home health care, meals, oxygen or door-to-door transportation, talk to your service provider about their emergency plans. Work with them to identify back-up service providers within your area and the areas you might evacuate to. If you use medical equipment in your home that requires electricity to operate, talk to your health care provider about what you can do to prepare for its use during a power outage.

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

• Extra eyeglasses, hearing aids if you have them, or have coverage for them
• Extra batteries for hearing aids
• Battery chargers for, motorized wheelchairs or other battery-powered medical or assistive technology devices
• Copies of medical prescriptions, doctors orders, and the style and serial numbers of the support devices you use
• Medical alert tags or bracelets with written descriptions of your disability and support needs, in case you are unable to describe the situation in an emergency
• Supplies for your service animal
• Medical insurance cards, Medicare/Medicaid cards, physician contact information, and copies of recent medical records and health history
• A list of the local non-profit or community-based organizations that know you or assist people with your type of disability and support needs
• A laminated personal communication board, if you might need assistance with being understood or understanding others

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

If you use a motorized wheelchair, have a light weight manual chair available in case the motor is not available.

Knives, ropes, hand tools, and a flashlight and extra batteries will be useful in an emergency.

Create a Personal Support Network: If you are planning to evacuate, talk to your family and friends about what to do with your pets if you evacuate. Practice your plan with those who have agreed to care for your animals. If you must evacuate, take your pets with you. However, if you are going to a public shelter, it is important to understand that law only service animals must be allowed in. Pet shelters are not required to house pets. In an emergency, plan in advance for shelters that will work for both you and your animal; consider loved ones or friends outside of your immediate area. Remember to make sure you have the contacts of people who would be willing to take in your pets and you in an emergency. For more information about pet preparedness, visit www.ready.gov.

Emergency Documents: Include copies of important documents in your emergency supply kits such as family records, medical records, wills, deeds, social security number, charge and bank accounts information, and tax records. Make sure that you practice your plan with those who have agreed to be part of your pet support network.

Make a Plan:

For What You Will Do in an Emergency:

The reality of a disaster situation is that you will likely not have access to everyday conveniences. To plan in advance, think through the details of your everyday life. If there are people who assist you on a daily basis, list who they are and how you will contact them in an emergency. Create your own emergency plan that describes who will help you in an emergency. Think about what modes of transportation you use and what alternative modes could serve as back-ups. If you require accessible transportation be sure your alternatives are also accessible. If you have tools or aids specific to your disability, plan to use them in an emergency. For example, if you use a communication device, mobility aid, or service animal, what will you do if these are not available? If you require life-sustaining equipment, such as oxygen or a ventilator, include description of the equipment’s size, weight and location and availability of more than one facility. For every aspect of your daily routine, plan an alternative procedure. Make a plan and write it down. Keep a copy of your emergency plan with you at all times. Keep copies of emergency supply kits and a list of important information and contacts in your wallet. Share your plan with your family, friends, service providers and others in your personal support network.

Develop a Family Communications Plan: Your family may not be together when disaster strikes so plan how you will contact one another. Consider where each family member can be reached by the same emergency who can help if necessary. Make sure that you have the contact information for the people you plan to contact in an emergency. Think about what modes of transportation you use and how you will contact them in an emergency. Create your own communications plan that describes who will contact whom and how you will contact them. Consider a plan where each family member calls, sends a text message or e-mails the same friend or relative in the event of an emergency. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to use a cellular phone, and satellites, not the internet, may still be operational in an emergency. In an emergency, you may be able to use your cell phone, or a phone with a battery that can be charged using a power strip or portable battery charger, for emergency calls. Make sure that you have extra battery packs and chargers.

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. It is important to understand that law only service animals must be allowed in. Pet shelters are not required to house pets. In an emergency, plan in advance for shelters that will work for both you and your animal; consider loved ones or friends outside of your immediate area. Remember to make sure you have the contacts of people who would be willing to take in your pets and you in an emergency. For more information about pet preparedness, visit www.ready.gov.

Stay Put: Whether you are at home or elsewhere, there may be situations in which 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 individuals with disabilities (go to www.ready.gov/odic to learn more about functional needs support services in general population shelters). If you have options and decide to stay put, consider an alternative shelter that has access to electricity, phone service and accessible roads for days or longer, depending on circumstances.

Evacuation: There may be conditions in which you will decide to go 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 someone else to take care of your health or support needs, plan ahead to make sure that you understand their evacuation plans and their ability to evacuate.

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 and stairways to ensure that they are clear and not blocked. Smoke detectors may be a good idea to help keep you safe from a building during an emergency. Smoke detectors are a surefire way for people with disabilities to be alerted to 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 individuals with disabilities (go to www.ready.gov/odic to learn more about functional needs support services in general population shelters). If you have options and decide to stay put, consider an alternative shelter that has access to electricity, phone service and accessible roads for days or longer, depending on circumstances.

Contact Your Local Emergency Information

Information Office: Some local emergency management offices maintain registries for people with disabilities. Some registries are only used to collect planning information, others may be used to call or send assistance directly to you. In any emergency, local authorities may or may not be able to provide information on what is happening where you are. If you have a disability, be sure to contact local authorities as soon as you are able to describe the situation in an emergency. For more information about registries, visit www.ready.gov/odic.

Consider creating a plan to inform your employer and co-workers about the assistance you will need in an emergency. This is particularly important if you need to be lifted or carried. Talk about communication difficulties, physical limitations, equipment and medication procedures. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, discuss the best ways to alert you in an emergency. It may be best 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.

Financial: Manage your education payments for your paycheck and federal benefits.

• The Direct Express® prepaid debit card designed as a cash advance which does not require a bank account. Sign up is easy, call toll-free at 877-212-9813 (phone), (866) 569-0447 (TTY) or sign up online at directexpress.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 Supplemental Security Income or other federal benefits by check, please consider switching to one of these easier options today.