

## Evacuation Planning for Persons with Disabilities and Caregivers

### Your Personal Support Networks

If you think you may need assistance in an emergency, discuss your requirements with relatives, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. For example, if you need help moving or require special arrangements to receive emergency messages, make a plan with friends. Make sure they know where you keep emergency supplies.



#### Create personal support networks to assist in an evacuation

Organize networks for your home, school, workplace, volunteer site, and any other place where you spend a lot of time. Members of your networks should be people you can depend on to check to see if you need assistance. They should know your capabilities and needs and be able to offer help within minutes. Rather than depending on just one person, include at least three people in each network.

#### Checklist

- Arrange with your networks to check on you immediately if local officials give an evacuation order or if a terrorist incident occurs. Also, ask your networks to notify you of an emergency you may not know about. For example, if a siren or loudspeaker system notifies a neighborhood of a disaster and you are deaf or are hard of hearing, be sure that your networks know to alert you. Ask them to give you any other pertinent information that is not already in writing, such as radio reports about the location of shelters.
- Think of what your needs would be during a disaster and discuss these with each of your networks. Complete a written assessment of your needs(see page 15 of “**Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities**”). This can help your network members learn the best ways to assist you and offer additional ideas for you to think about.
- Give your network members copies of your emergency information, such as a medical information list, disability-related supplies and special equipment list, evacuation plans, **emergency contacts**, and other relevant emergency documents.
- Agree on how you and your networks will contact each other during an emergency. Do not depend on the telephone working.
- Give the members of your networks all the keys they may need to get into your home, car, office, or other locations.
- Show your networks how to operate and safely move any equipment you use for your disability. Ask them to practice with any special equipment. This will help them feel more comfortable when using it during an emergency.

- Label your equipment and attach instruction cards on how to use and move each item. Laminate the instruction cards for added durability.
- Make sure your service animal knows the people in your networks. This will make it easier for the animal to accept care from someone other than you.
- Explain to your networks any assistance for personal care that you may need. Give them written instructions on how best to assist you and your animal.
- Select with your networks a signal that you can use to let them know you are okay and have left the area.
- Give your networks your travel dates if you will be traveling.

## More tips

Wearing medical alert tags or bracelets to identify your disability may help in case of an emergency.

If you use a wheelchair, show friends how to operate it so they can move you if necessary. Make sure they know the size of your wheelchair in case it has to be transported.

Know the location and availability of more than one facility if you are dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment or treatment.



### If you have a speech, language, or hearing disability:

- When you dial 9-1-1, tap the space bar to indicate TDD call.
- Store a writing pad and pencils to communicate with others.
- Keep a flashlight and fresh batteries handy to signal whereabouts to other people and for illumination to aid in communication.
- Remind friends if you cannot hear warnings or emergency instructions. Ask them to be your source of emergency information as it comes over their radio.
- Text pagers, weather radios, and radio alert equipment with strobe lights or vibrators, and pop-up computer notifications may augment your situational awareness.
- Note that closed captioning capability is not required on televisions with screens under 13 inches.

### Now, learn more about—

**Your Evacuation Plan | Your Disaster Supplies Kit | Considerations for Caregivers**

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