

Emergency Preparedness Tool Kit for People with Disabilities



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Table of Contents

Why an Emergency Preparedness Tool Kit?	4
Emergency Preparedness Tool Kit Checklist.	6
Emergency Telephone List.	7
Personal Support Group.	8
Health Information Card.	9
Sample Health Information Card.	10
Emergency Supply Kit.	11
Emergency Papers	13
Emergency Escape Plans.	14
Ability Assessment of Emergency Preparedness.	15
Tips for Specific Disabilities.	16
Special Considerations.	22
Specific Emergency Situations.	23
Helpful Resources.	28
References.	29

Why an Emergency Preparedness Tool Kit?

Planning ahead in case of emergencies such as hurricanes, tornadoes, fires or terrorist attacks is an important part of being responsible for your own life. Disaster preparedness is a term used to describe a plan to prepare you in case of an emergency. This is an important part of life for all people regardless of gender, race, or disability. People with disabilities may have special needs to consider in an emergency. Having a disability may require extra planning to handle an emergency.

The purpose of this tool kit is to give you a guide for preparing for an emergency. The Preparedness Checklist on page 6 can be used as a step-by-step guide to develop an emergency plan.

Keep in mind that developing an emergency plan and putting together your emergency tool kit is a big job and a complex task. Your plan may include family, friends, neighbors, and organizations that can help you make some decisions and support you in an emergency. Do the best you can to plan for an emergency. Your tool kit does not have to be perfect but it is important to think and plan ahead so that you are ready. Remember, **SOME PLAN IS BETTER THAN NO PLAN.** You can do it!

Because everyone's situation is different, all aspects of emergency preparedness are not covered in this guide. Think about your personal needs and plan ahead for safety in an emergency.





Emergency Preparedness Tool Kit Checklist

Below is a list of important information to review as you prepare for an emergency or natural disaster. When you have finished reviewing a step put a check in the box. In this packet you will find forms and tools to help you develop an emergency plan.

- Emergency Telephone List (page 7)
- Personal Support Group (page 8)
- Health Information Card (page 9)
- Emergency Supply Kit (page 11)
- Emergency Papers (page 13)
- Emergency Escape Plans (page 14)
- Ability Self-Assessment (page 15)
- Tips for Specific Disabilities (page 16)
- Special Considerations (page 22)
- Specific Emergency Situations (page 23)

Emergency Telephone List

Important telephone numbers to be used in case of an emergency:

Post this list in a visible area of your home and put a copy with your emergency papers in a separate folder.

EMERGENCY - DIAL 911	
Name	Number
Police Department (non-emergency)	
Fire Department	
Other:	

FAMILY	
Name	Number

FRIENDS/CO-WORKERS/NEIGHBORS	
Name	Number

DOCTORS	
Name	Number

OTHERS (Day Care Center, Personal Attendant, etc.)	
Name	Number

Personal Support Group

To prepare for an emergency, it is important to have a plan involving at least three other people to contact in an emergency situation. These people are responsible for checking in during and after an emergency to make sure everything is OK or provide help. Never depend on just one person. They may not be present when you need them.

People to include in your Personal Support Group:

- Family (parents, siblings, other relatives)
- Friends
- People you work with
- Personal care attendant
- Neighbors
- Roommates
- People who go to your church, temple or place of worship



Important things to discuss with your Personal Support Group:

- Agree on and practice communication during an emergency. Think about how you would communicate if telephones are not working. What if electricity is out and computers and communication devices do not work? What if telephones and electricity are both not working?
- Give a copy of your keys to someone you trust.
- Show your support people where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Share copies of your escape plan, emergency documents, and health information card with your support people.
- Let your support people know when you will be going out of town.

Source: Adapted from Independent Living Resource San Francisco Center.¹

Health Information Card

Fill out the card, cut it out, fold along the lines, and keep it with you at all times. To give you an idea of what information to put on the card, see the next page.

Front panel

Emergency Information
Name _____
Address _____ _____
Home Phone _____
Cell Phone _____
Emergency Contact (Name & Phone Numbers) _____

Back panel

Diagnosis
_____ _____
Medications- What it is for & Dose
_____ _____
Medical technology needed:
_____ _____

CRITICAL CONTACTS	
Name	Doctor- Name & Phone Number
Phone	
_____ _____	_____ _____
Emergency Room	Other Considerations
_____	_____

Source: Adapted from American Red Cross,² and British Columbia Medical Association.³

Sample Health Information Card

Use this card as an example of how to fill out your own card.

Front panel

Emergency Information
Name <u>Sally Smith</u>
Address <u>200 Grace Boulevard</u> <u>Richmond, VA 12123</u>
Home Phone <u>(804) 345-6789</u>
Cell Phone <u>(804) 234-5678</u>
Emergency Contact <u>Karen Smith (mother)</u>

Back panel

Diagnosis <u>ADHD</u> <u>Chronic Migraines</u>
Medications- What it is for & Dose <u>Ritalin - 10mg 2x/day for ADHD</u> <u>Atenolol - 50mg 1x/day for Hypertension</u>
Medical Technology Needed: <u>PDA for ADHD</u> <u>Prism Glassess for Migraines</u>

CRITICAL CONTACTS	
Name Phone	Doctor- Name & Phone Number
<u>Mrs. Smith (804) 123-4567</u>	<u>Dr. Pepper (804) 111-2222</u>
Emergency Room	Other Considerations: Allergic to Penicillin
Johnston-Willis Richmond, VA	Health Insurance: Humana Rx ID #: A000987324273

Emergency Supply Kit

Your Emergency Supply Kit should include important items to help you in an emergency situation when you may be away from the safety of your home. Think about the things you will need and where you will keep your kit. It should be in a place you can easily reach or kept in a vehicle.

You might also want to think about your most prized possessions, and keep them where you can grab them to take along in case of a major disaster. An example would be a photograph album, jewelry, recipe box or awards.

It is a good idea to keep a purse or bag with you most of the time which holds your keys, cell phone, wallet, credit cards, identification cards, money, checkbooks, calendar or schedule book, etc. Be SURE to take this bag with you in case of any emergency! The list below is designed to supplement what is already in this bag.

Emergency Supplies:

- Your usual purse or bag holding the items listed above.
- Extra cash – in small amounts (fives, ones, quarters)
- Food – non-perishable foods for at least 3 -5 days
- Bottled water – at least 1 gallon per person per day for at least 3 - 5 days
- Can opener, toilet paper, paper towels, plastic bags for discarding trash, hand sanitizer, liquid soap, writing paper, pens
- Cell phone. If you have a cell phone program it with an emergency contact number or someone in your support network under the name ICE. This stands for **In Case of Emergency**. Rescue workers will know to look for this number in your listing of numbers.
- Health information card (see page 9)
- Emergency papers (see page 13)
- Medications/copies of prescriptions (at least a week's supply)

Emergency Supply Kit

(continued)

- Flashlight
- Signaling device (whistle, beeper, bell)
- Small battery-operated or wind-up radio
- Watch or clock (battery-operated or wind-up)
- Extra batteries (for flashlight and radio)
- Special equipment specific to your needs – for example, a spare pair of glasses or contact lenses, communication device, laptop computer, writing paper and pens, mobility aid, etc.
- Clothing – a full change of clothing for the season, spare jacket, extra pair of shoes.

Source: Adapted from Citizen Corps,⁴ and American Red Cross.⁵

Emergency Papers

Think about the important papers you may need if you have to move to a new city or state. Add these to your Emergency Supply Kit. Think about how you will store these papers. A waterproof binder or folder that can fit in a bag may be used to keep them safe and dry.

Emergency Papers Include:

- Social Security Card/Number
- Map of Area
- Medical Equipment/Supply Needs
- Style/Serial Numbers of Medical Devices (e.g. pacemakers)
- Health Information Card (see page 9)
- Legal papers such as Wills/Deeds/Marriage Certificate
- Charge/Bank Account Information
- Insurance Policy Numbers
- Inventory of Household Goods
- Important School Papers



Emergency Escape Plans

In some emergency situations you may decide to leave your home or you may be ordered to leave.

Follow these steps if you are ordered to leave your home:

- Decide where you will go - plan several locations. Consider a relative's or friend's house. Sometimes public shelters do not provide all the assistance you may need.
- Call for transportation help if needed - plan more than one method of transportation and plan to leave early. How will you plan for transportation if phones and electricity are not working?
- Pack your emergency supplies (Emergency Kit, Documents, Medications, etc.).
- Turn off your electrical power at the main box (except for the refrigerator or freezer).
- Put important items in a safe location or take them with you.
- Call or speak with people in your personal support group to let them know where you are going.

Source: Adapted from American Red Cross,² Lee County Division of Public Safety,⁶ and Federal Emergency Management Agency.⁷

Ability Assessment of Emergency Preparedness

Before an emergency happens, you should think about your skills for dealing with an emergency. There are certain things you need to be able to do or have a different plan to do these things to be safe in an emergency. Think about the following skills. Review the list and check off whether you can do it, or whether you need help with a skill or need to have a different plan. If you need help, talk about this with your support group. You should have at least one check for each skill.



Skill you need for an emergency	I can do it!	I need help or a different plan
Turn off water & lights		
Work a fire extinguisher		
Carry your emergency supplies		
Leave your home fast & easily		
Have a paper with your plan of getting out of your home & getting to a safe place		
Travel to your safe meeting place fast & easily		

Source: Adapted from Independent Living Resource Center San Francisco,¹ and American Red Cross.²

Tips for Specific Disabilities

Different people have different disabilities, so you should think about things that you need to consider or steps you need to take related to your own disability.

Communication Disabilities

Communication Aids

- In your emergency kit, put paper, pencils or pens, and a written statement of how you can communicate what you need in an emergency.

Emergency Health Information Card

- Make sure your emergency health information card tells the best way for people to communicate with you.

Powering Your Communication

- Find batteries or another way to make sure your communication aid can stay on for a long time after an emergency.



Checklist

- Find a way to talk to people in an emergency and practice it.
- Put communication aids in all of your emergency kits.
- Put batteries for your communication aids in your emergency kits.

Cognitive Disabilities

Practice

- What to do during and after an emergency.
- Leaving places where you spend time until you feel comfortable and confident that you will know what to do during and after an emergency.

Emergency Plan

- Keep a paper with your emergency plan with you and at other locations. Make sure it is easy to read and understand.
- Think about the things you will need to do after an emergency and how to do them.
- Keep a list of things you need to do and a way to help you remember things in case of an emergency.

Communication

- Think about what a policeman or fireman might need to know about you and be prepared to say it, or write it down and keep it with you. For example:
 - "I talk to other people in a different way. I can point to simple pictures or key words, which you will find in my wallet or emergency supply kit."
 - "I may have a hard time understanding what you are telling me, please speak slowly and use simple words."
 - "I forget easily. Please write down information for me."



Checklist

- Think of ways to help you remember important things.
- Practice how to tell someone what you need.

Hearing Impairments

Batteries

- Keep extra batteries for the things you need to help you hear.

Hearing Aids

- Keep hearing aids in a good place, so you can quickly and easily find them after an emergency.

Alarms

- Put different kinds of alarms in places you spend a lot of time to help you see if an emergency is happening.

Communication

- Think about how you will communicate with policemen and firemen. Have paper and pens with you.
- Think about having a paper with things you need to say, like "I speak American Sign Language (ASL) and need an ASL interpreter."



Checklist

- Keep things you need to hear and batteries.
- Put in alarms that will help you see if an emergency is happening.
- Write down things you need to say for policemen and firemen.

Mobility Impairments

- Keep your emergency kit in a pack or backpack attached to your walker, wheelchair or scooter.
- Keep things that help you get around close to you.

Emergency Kit

- Keep gloves in your emergency supply kit to keep your hands clean if you have to go over glass, dirt, or trash.
- Keep batteries to keep the way you get around on for a long time in an emergency.
- Make sure you can fix a tire if it goes flat.
- Make sure you have the easiest way for you to get around.

Escape Plan

- Make sure furniture and other things will not get in your way if you need to get out of your house quickly.
- If you spend time in a building with an elevator and several floors, plan and practice using the stairs to escape.
- If you cannot use your wheelchair or cannot use the stairs, learn how to tell people how to lift and carry you safely. Do not wait to ask for help!



Checklist

- Store the aids you need close to you.
- Get extra things for your emergency kit together.
- Make sure you have a good way to get out of your house or work quickly.
- Practice using different ways of escaping.

Mental Health Disorders

- Think about what a policeman or fireman might need to know about you and be ready to say it briefly, or keep a written copy on hand. For example:
 - "I have a mental health disability and may become confused in an emergency. Help me find a quiet corner and I should be fine shortly."
 - "I have a panic disorder. If I panic, give me (name of medication and dosage) located in my (purse, wallet, pocket)."
 - "I take <medication> and my blood level needs to be checked."

Reactions

- There are a number of emotional reactions that may happen or become worse after a disaster. These include confusion, memory and thinking difficulties, anxiety, paranoia, crying, fear, panic, sleep problems, pacing, shouting, depression, withdrawal, irritability, and shaking.
- Think about the reactions you may have and plan ways to deal with them.
- Think about getting advice from loved ones or therapists.
- You may need medical help or to go to the hospital. Keep papers you signed with a lawyer in plastic bags so the person your chose to help you will be contacted.



Checklist

- Practice how to communicate your needs to others.
- Think about the types of reactions you may have after a disaster and plan strategies for managing them.

Visual Impairments

- If you have some vision, put security lights in each room to light paths of travel.
- Store high-powered flashlights (with wide beams) and extra batteries.
- Make sure you have extra glasses or contacts. You might need to have other things to help you see during an emergency.
- Service animals may not handle an emergency well. Make sure you have a way to keep the animal safe and other people safe from the animal. Be prepared to have another way to get around.
- If you use a cane, keep extras at work, home, school, volunteer sites, to help you get around obstacles and hazards.
- Keep a spare cane in your emergency kit.



Checklist

- Plan on losing the hearing clues you normally use after an emergency.
- If helpful, mark emergency supplies with large print, fluorescent tape or Braille.
- Make sure the things you use to help you get around, such as a cane, will be safe and will not be ruined in the emergency.

Source: Adapted from Independent Living Resource Center San Francisco.¹

Special Considerations

Emergencies do not always happen in your home and you may not be the only one to consider. If you are traveling, there are things you should consider just in case an emergency happens. If you have pets, especially a dog guide, you should include them in preparing your emergency supplies.

Pets

If you have pets, include the following in your emergency supply kit:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water and food bowl(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Supplies for minor wounds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pet Food | <input type="checkbox"/> Medications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blanket for bedding | <input type="checkbox"/> Favorite Toy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic bags and paper towels
for cleaning up dog or cat mess | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra harness/collar/leash |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nail clippers and a brush | <input type="checkbox"/> Crate or carrying case for travel |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Litter, litter box, and scooper |



Hotels

Let the hotel staff know you are a person who will need help in an emergency. Let them know what kind of help you would need. There is more information for train or airplane travel on the resource page.



Source: Adapted from Humane Society of the United States.⁸

Specific Emergency Situations

Natural disasters and other emergencies require a basic understanding of things to do to prevent injury, damage to property, and general destruction. Maintaining your health, your family's health, safety, and the well-being of the community is important to every person, regardless of gender, race, disability, or financial status. Checking the weather online, on TV, or local radio is the first step to being aware of developing local emergencies. Keep the following tips in mind during an emergency:

- ★ A WATCH means an emergency is possible in your area.
- ★ A WARNING means an emergency is occurring or will occur *very* soon.
- ★ Follow the news or radio and prepare yourself, get your emergency kit, and your home ready when a natural disaster is coming in your area

Earthquake, Hurricanes, Tornados:



If Indoors:

- Get under a desk, bed or table immediately.
- If you are not close to a desk, bed, or table, get under a door frame for protection.
- Get away from windows or glass.
- Get as low as you can, cover your head, and hold on to something big and strong near you!
- Stay where you are until things are safe again.

If Outdoors:

- Try to get to a protected and safe area away from buildings, windows, glass, telephone poles or any place where there could be falling objects.
- If you are in a car, slow down and drive to a clear place away from buildings, trees, and power lines. Stay in the car until the shaking stops.
- If you are told to leave wherever you are, listen and leave!

Winter Weather:

- Try to stay safe, warm, dry and calm.
- Do not drive if you don't need to. If you must drive, bring supplies.
- Dress warmly and in layers!
- Do not go outside if you don't have to.
- Keep extra jacket, hat, and gloves in car.
- Keep a blanket, first-aid kit, drinking water, and a few non-perishable foods in car.



In a car:

- In extreme cold or in heavy snow, stay with your car until you can be rescued.
- Run the motor about ten minutes each hour for heat.
- Open the window a little for fresh air.
- Make sure you can be seen for people to help you. Tie a bright cloth to your antenna or door to alert rescuers.
- Exercise from time to time by moving arms, legs, fingers and toes to keep warm.

Drought:

Indoor Water Use:

- Never pour water down the drain when there may be another use for it. Use it to water your indoor plants or garden.

Bathroom

- Take shorter showers.
- Place a bucket in the shower to catch extra water for watering plants.
- In the shower, turn the water on to get wet; turn off to use soap; then turn the water back on to wash off. Do it again when washing your hair.
- Do not let the water run while brushing your teeth, washing your face or shaving.
- Avoid flushing the toilet when it is not needed.

Kitchen

- Use dishwashers only when they are full.
- When hand washing dishes, save water by filling two containers - one with soapy water and the other with rinse water.
- Do not use running water to thaw meat or other frozen foods.
- Do not let the tap run while you are waiting for water to cool. Instead, keep a jug or bottles of cold water in the refrigerator for drinking.

Laundry

- Operate automatic clothes washers only when they are fully loaded.

Drought:

Outdoor Water Use:

Car Washing

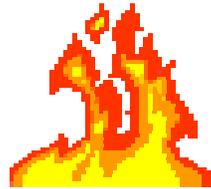
- Use a shut-off nozzle on your hose. When you're finished, turn it off at the faucet instead of at the nozzle to avoid leaks.
- Consider using a commercial car wash that recycles water. If you wash your own car, park on the grass so that you will be watering it at the same time.

Lawn Care

- Do not over water your lawn.
- Avoid over fertilizing your lawn. Using fertilizer increases the need for water.



Fires:



- Plan in advance at least two fire escape routes from your home.
- Once you are out, stay out! Call the fire department from a neighbor's home.
- If you see smoke or fire in your first escape route, use your second way out. If you have to exit through smoke, crawl low under the smoke to your exit.
- If you are escaping through a closed door, feel the door before opening it. If it is warm, use your second way out.

Terrorism



- Remain calm and be patient.
- Follow the advice of policemen, firemen, and people on the news.
- Listen to your radio or television for news and instructions.
- If the disaster occurs near your home while you are there, check for damage using a flashlight.
- Make sure your pets are safe.
- Call your family contact—do not use the telephone again unless you have to.

Source: Adapted from American Red Cross,² Lee County Division of Public Safety,⁶ Tempe Fire Department.⁹

Helpful Resources

If you would like more information on emergency preparedness, visit the following websites:

- ✓ American Red Cross Disaster Services for People With Disabilities
<http://www.hhs.gov/od/documents/disabilityAmericanRedCross.pdf>

- ✓ Department of Homeland Security's Ready Campaign
http://www.ready.gov/america/_downloads/disabilities_508.pdf

- ✓ American Red Cross: General Disaster Services
<http://www.prepare.org/index.htm>

- ✓ FEMA: Tips for Individuals with Specific Needs
<http://www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/specialplans.shtm>



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