

Emergency Preparedness for Special Needs

If you or someone close to you has a disability or a special need, you may have to take additional steps to protect yourself and your family in an emergency.

- ◆ Consider how a disaster might affect your individual needs.
- ◆ Create a support network to help in an emergency.
- ◆ Tell these people where you keep your emergency supplies.
- ◆ Give one member of your support network a key to your house or apartment.
- ◆ Contact your city or county government's emergency information management office. Many local offices keep lists of people with disabilities so they can be located quickly in a sudden emergency.
- ◆ Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to help identify your disability.
- ◆ If you are dependent on dialysis or other life sustaining treatment, know the location and availability of more than one facility.
- ◆ Show others how to operate your wheelchair.



If you have special needs: Find out about special assistance that may be available in your community.

Check for Hazards in the Home

During and right after a disaster, ordinary items in the home can cause injury or damage. Anything that can move, fall, break or cause fire is a home hazard. Check for items such as bookcases, hanging pictures, or overhead lights that could fall in an earthquake or a flood and block an escape path.

Be Ready to Evacuate

Have a plan for getting out of your home or building (ask your family or friends for assistance, if necessary). Also, plan two evacuation routes because some roads may be closed or blocked in a disaster.

- ◆ Discuss your needs with your employer.
- ◆ If you are mobility impaired and live or work in a high-rise building, have an escape chair.
- ◆ If you live in an apartment building, ask the management to mark accessible exits clearly and to make arrangements to help you leave the building.

- ◆ Keep specialized items ready, including extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, prescriptions, food for service animals, and any other items you might need.
- ◆ Be sure to make provisions for medications that require refrigeration.
- ◆ Keep a list of the type and model numbers of the medical devices you require.
- ◆ 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.

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Disability/Special Need	Additional Steps
Visually impaired	May be extremely reluctant to leave familiar surroundings when the request for evacuation comes from a stranger. A guide dog could become confused or disoriented in a disaster. People who are blind or partially sighted may have to depend on others to lead them, as well as their dog, to safety during a disaster.
Hearing impaired	May need to make special arrangements to receive warnings.
Mobility impaired	May need special assistance to get to a shelter.
Non-English speaking persons	May need assistance planning for and responding to emergencies. Community and cultural groups may be able to help keep people informed.
People with special dietary needs	Should take special precautions to have an adequate emergency food supply.
People with medical conditions	Should know the location and availability of more than one facility if dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment or treatment.
People with cognitive disabilities	May need help responding to emergencies and getting to a shelter.
People with dementia	Should be registered in the Alzheimer's Association Safe Return Program at http://www.alz.org/we_can_help_medicalert_safereturn.asp

For more information on emergency preparedness, please visit our website at <http://Ready.wi.gov>.

You'll find guidance on:

- ◆ Getting a Kit — of emergency supplies for your home, car and workplace.
- ◆ Making a Plan — to communicate with and locate your loved ones during an emergency.
- ◆ Being Informed — about the types of emergencies that occur and the safety measures you should take.

You can also get additional information from your county emergency management director.