

Emergency Preparedness

Care Provider Bulletin

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Did you Know?

Emergencies can take many forms, from winter storms, wildfires, power outages, earthquakes, to terrorism. Individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities are often at higher risk if they rely on others for care and support.

Who is at Increased Risk?

- Individuals with mobility barriers
- Individuals with medical conditions
- Individuals with communication barriers

Did you Know?

- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers a free application for mobile devices with weather/emergency alert notification as well as emergency tips, resources for disasters, and it also allows you to enter information about your own disaster/emergency plan.
- You can register with the power company to receive alerts about power outages and restoration. Many companies have free applications for mobile devices.
- You can sign up for Smart 911, a service that allows you to text 911. By signing up ahead of time you can enter your address and other information for first responders, such as medical issues.



Assess Your Emergency Preparedness

- Do you have up-to-date CPR and first aid training?
- Do you know your home's evacuation route/plans?
- Where are the main gas, water and electricity shut-offs? Do you know how to turn them off?
- Do you know where emergency supplies are stored?
- Can you operate a fire extinguisher?
- Can you carry or transport someone if necessary?
- Do you have a complete first aid kit?
- Do you have an evacuation kit and is it portable?
- Do you have an identified place to go and know how to get there?
- Do you know where to access emergency information?
- How will you charge mobile and other devices?
- Do you have a plan for how to obtain power if it goes out, especially if you have clients who use any equipment that needs to be plugged in? Do you have backup batteries, generators, or other resources?

Prepare and Make a Plan

Individuals with Mobility Needs

- Store emergency supplies such as gloves, batteries, patch kits, etc., in a pack attached to or near the equipment.
- If the person uses a cane or other device, keep an extra one in a strategic place, if possible.
- Arrange and secure furniture and other items for a barrier-free passage. Be sure all pathways are wide and unblocked.
- If a power wheelchair is used, have a backup lightweight manual chair. Know the size and weight of the power wheelchair in case it needs to be transported.
- Purchase extra batteries for power wheelchairs or adaptive equipment and keep them charged.
- Identify options for accessible transportation, if needed, and write them down.

Individuals with Medical Needs

- Develop and maintain an emergency health information card for local police, fire, emergency personnel, and others who may not know the person.
- Keep a current emergency contact list readily available, including phone numbers for doctors, the pharmacy, service providers, and medical facilities.
- Keep copies of medical insurance cards, a list of allergies, and health history information.
- Keep a list of medications and medically prescribed devices, including hard copies of prescriptions and doctor's orders for any equipment or supplies. Write down serial numbers and types of equipment used.
- Always have at least a week's supply of medication or other needed supplies such as oxygen, catheters, feeding tubes, cannulas, tubing, trach tubes, pads, undergarments, and ostomy supplies on hand.
- If any medications require refrigeration, include this in the plan.
- Store emergency medical supplies where they are readily accessible and make sure others know where they are.
- Consider a medical tag or bracelet describing medical needs.
- If life sustaining medical treatment is provided by others (such as dialysis, oxygen, cancer treatment), find out alternative locations, if needed.
- Alert the power company if oxygen or mechanical ventilation is used and ask what can be expected during a power outage.
- Make arrangements for at least two people to check in and see if the person is okay after a disaster strikes.

Individuals with Communication Needs

- Develop a communication plan to use with emergency personnel quickly.
- Store paper, writing materials, etc., with emergency preparedness kits to help with communication. Laminated cards with pictures may help if communication devices are not available.
- If communication devices are used, keep serial numbers and model information.
- Make sure the person's emergency health card contains information on the best ways to communicate with the person.

Other Considerations

- Consider having items available to decrease stimulation or offer privacy, if needed (pop up tent, headphones, comfort snacks or items).
- Identify shelter options and let friends and family know where to look.

Practice

- Practice regularly what to do during and after an emergency.
- Make sure the person has a clear, written plan that can be easily located and shared with others if you are not around.



More information:

Washington Emergency Management Division

<http://mil.wa.gov/emergency-management-division>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

<https://www.fema.gov/>

Individuals with Disabilities and Others with Access and Functional Needs

<https://www.ready.gov/individuals-access-functional-needs>

Smart911

<https://www.smart911.com/>

Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/disabilities>