

Planning for Persons with Special Needs

As you prepare, consider all the strategies, services, devices, tools and techniques you use to live with a disability on a daily basis. Keep in mind that you may need medications, durable medical equipment, consumable medical supplies, your service animal, assistive technology, communications tools, disability service providers, accessible housing, transportation, and health-related items.

- Create a support network to help you plan for an emergency. Consider family, neighbors, and friends, people who provide services to you, faith-based and community groups. Tell these people where you keep your emergency supplies. Give at least one member of your support network a key to your house or apartment.
- If you receive dialysis or other life sustaining medical treatment, identify the location and availability of more than one facility and work with your provider to develop your personal emergency plan.
- Show others how to operate your wheelchair or other assistive devices.
- Keep contact information for local independent living centers and other disability services organizations in a safe and easy-to-access place. If you provide any organizations or service providers with information about your functional needs and what you may require in an emergency, keep that data up to date.
- If you use in-home support services, Meals-on-Wheels, Life Alert or other support services, work with them to personalize emergency preparedness plans to meet your needs so you can keep in touch with them during and after an emergency. That contact may be your lifeline to other services in a disaster.
- Work with local transportation and disability services (e.g., Paratransit, Independent Living Centers) to plan ahead for accessible transportation if you may need that for evacuation or other reasons during a disaster.
- Develop back-up plans for personal assistance services, hospice, or other forms of in-home assistance.
- Keep in mind that during an emergency, you may need to explain to first responders and emergency officials that you need to evacuate and shelter with your family, service animal, caregiver, or personal assistance provider so they can provide the support you need to maintain your health, safety and independence.

Depending On Your Needs, Items For Your Emergency Kit Include:

- Extra eyeglasses, hearing aids if you have them, or have coverage for them
- Battery chargers and extra batteries for hearing aids, 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 or 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, list of your allergies and health history
- A list of the local non-profit or community-based organizations that know you or assist people with access and functional needs similar to yours.
- A list of personal contacts, family and friends that you may need to contact in an emergency
- A laminated personal communication board, if you might need assistance with being understood
- If possible, extra medicine, oxygen, insulin, catheters, or other medical supplies you use regularly
- If you use a motorized wheelchair, have a lightweight manual chair available for emergencies. Know the size and weight of your wheelchair, in addition to whether or not it is collapsible, in case it has to be transported.
- Even if you do not use a computer yourself, consider putting important information onto a portable thumb drive for easy transport in an evacuation.

Finances:

If you receive federal disability benefits, register your bank account information in advance with the U.S. Department of the Treasury online at www.GoDirect.org so you can continue to access your money during an emergency.