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# **Disaster-Related Disability-Specific Fact Sheets with Planning Activities Outlined**



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# Hearing Impairment

## DATE COMPLETED / ACTIVITIES

\_\_\_\_\_ Store and maintain extra Batteries.

\_\_\_\_\_ Store Hearing Aids.

\_\_\_\_\_ Install both Audible Alarms and Visual Smoke Alarms.

\_\_\_\_\_ Written Communication for emergency personnel.

## Batteries

- Store extra batteries for hearing aids and implants. If available, store an extra hearing aid with emergency supplies
- Maintain TTY batteries (consult manual).
- Store extra batteries for your TTY and light phone signaler. Check the manual for proper battery maintenance.

## Hearing Aids

- Store hearing aid(s) in a strategic, consistent and secured location so they can be found and used after a quake.
- For example consider storing in a container by bedside which is attached to night stand or bed post using string or velcro. Missing or damaged hearing aids will be difficult to replace or fix immediately after a major disaster.

## Alarms

- Install both audible alarms and visual smoke alarms. At least one should be battery operated.

## Communication

- Determine how you will communicate with emergency personnel: if there is no interpreter; if you do not have your hearing aid(s). Store paper and pens.
- Consider carrying pre-printed copy of key phrase messages with you such as 'I speak American Sign Language (ASL) and need an ASL interpreter,' 'I do not write or read English.' "If you make announcements, I will need to have them written or signed."
- If possible, obtain a battery operated television that has a decoder chip for access to signed or captioned emergency reports.
- Determine which broadcasting systems will be accessible in terms of continuous news that will be captioned and/or signed. Advocate so that television stations have a plan to secure emergency interpreters for on camera emergency duty.

## **Advocacy**

- Recruit interpreters to be Red Cross emergency volunteers.
- Maintain pressure on TV stations to broadcast all news and emergency information in open caption format.
- Ensure hotels have access packets for deaf and hearing impaired persons, including audible alarms, when you travel. Ask for them when you check in.

## VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

### **DATE COMPLETED / ACTIVITIES**

\_\_\_\_\_ Store extras Canes.

\_\_\_\_\_ Label Supplies with Braille, large print, or fluorescent tape.

\_\_\_\_\_ Secure Computers and important information.

### **Canes**

- If you use a cane, keep extras in strategic, consistent and secured locations at job, home, school, volunteer site, etc. to help you maneuver around obstacles and hazards.
- Keep a spare cane in your emergency kit.

### **Alternate Mobility Cues**

- If you have some vision, place security lights in each room, to light paths of travel. These lights plug into electrical wall outlets and light up automatically if there is a loss of power. They will, depending on type, continue to operate automatically for 1 to 6 hours and can be turned off manually and used as a short-lasting flashlight.
- Store high-powered flashlights with wide beams and extra batteries.
- If you wear soft contact lenses, plan to have an alternative because you will not be able to operate the cleaning unit without power.
- Service animals may become confused, panicked, frightened or disoriented in and after a disaster. Keep them confined or securely leashed or harnessed. A leash/harness is an important item for managing a nervous or upset animal. Be prepared to use alternative ways to negotiate your environment.
- Plan for losing the auditory clues you usually rely on after a major quake.

### **Label Supplies**

- If helpful, mark emergency supplies with large print, fluorescent tape or Braille.

### **Secure Computers**

- Anchor special equipment such as computers. Create a back-up system for important data and store it off site.

### **Advocacy Issues**

- Advocate that TV news not only post important phone numbers but also announce them slowly and repeat them frequently for people who cannot read the screen.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ILLNESS / MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITIES

### DATE COMPLETED/ ACTIVITIES

\_\_\_\_\_ Emergency Supplies based on your worst days.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Carry With You" Important Supplies to keep with you at all times (medications, first aid kit, evacuation kit).

\_\_\_\_\_ Special additions to your Emergency Supplies.

\_\_\_\_\_ In case of Evacuation, know where the nearest safe places are from your home.

### Emergency Supplies

Collect emergency supplies based on your worst days. After a major quake an excess of smoke, excessive dust, molds, gas leaks, diesel from idling rescue vehicles, flashing lights, radio waves, electro magnetic fields (from generators, emergency lights, cellular phones and walkie talkies) and airborne toxins may trigger stronger reactions than you normally experience.

### "Carry With You" Emergency Supplies

- Emergency Health Information Card should clearly explain your sensitivities and reactions, most helpful treatments, and treatments which are harmful, Be specific, as environmental illness is not commonly understood. Remember that some reactions (disorientation, aphasia, panic) may be diagnosed and treated as something other than chemical sensitivity and you may not be able to describe your needs verbally.
- Medications including: inhalers, epinephrine shots, anticonvulsant.
- Prescriptions and Treatment Authorization Request (T.A.R.'s) from your doctor for unusual, orphan or hard-to-find medications.
- Supplements, herbs, homeopathic remedies.

### First Aid Kit:

- Cotton bandages, gauze, and paper tape.
- Hydrogen peroxide, zephiran chloride or your tolerated disinfectant.

### Emergency Supplies

- Charcoal mask and/or respirator.
- Well aired-out (outgassed) plastic or steel tubing and ceramic mask or outgassed plastic mask for oxygen.
- Rolls of aluminum foil for such things as covering chairs, sleeping area, food, etc.
- Baking soda stored in a waterproof container (for washing).
- Food that requires no cooking.

- Water, if storage in glass containers is necessary, consider using one quart bottles, stored inside layers of thick socks to protect the glass and to enable carrying.  
Note: glass bottles will break if the water freezes and expands.
- Portable charcoal water filter.
- Before purchasing a fire extinguisher, check your sensitivity to the contents.

### **Evacuation Plan**

- Know where the nearest safe places are, especially open air places, such as a beach, up wind from traffic, refineries and fires.
- Avoid hermetically sealed shelters.

## MOBILITY DISABILITY

### DATE COMPLETED /ACTIVITIES

\_\_\_\_\_ Store Needed Aids in consistent, convenient and secured location.

\_\_\_\_\_ Emergency Kit Extras.

\_\_\_\_\_ Arrange and Secure Furniture and other items to provide multiple barrier-free passages.

\_\_\_\_\_ Practice using Alternate Methods of Evacuation.

### Storage

- Store emergency supplies in a pack or backpack attached to walker, wheelchair, scooter, etc.
- Store needed mobility aids (canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs) close to you in a consistent, convenient and secured location. Keep extra aids in several locations, if available.

### Emergency Kit

- Keep a pair of heavy gloves in your supply kit to use while wheeling or making your way over glass and debris.
- If you use a motorized wheelchair/scooter consider having an extra battery available. A car battery can be substituted for a wheelchair battery but this type of battery will not last as long as a wheelchair's deep-cycle battery. Check with your vendor to see if you will be able to charge batteries by either connecting jumper cables to a vehicle battery or by connecting batteries to a specific type of converter that plugs into your vehicle's cigarette lighter in the event of loss of electricity.
- If you do not have puncture proof tires, keep a patch kit or can of "seal-in-air product" to repair flat tires and/or also keep an extra supply of inner tubes.
- Store a lightweight manual wheelchair, if available

### Evacuation Plan

- Arrange and secure furniture and other items to provide paths of travel and barrier free passages.
- If you spend time above the first floor of an elevator building, plan and practice using alternate methods of evacuation. If needed, enlist the help of your personal support network.
- If you cannot use stairs, discuss lifting and carrying techniques that will work for you. There will be instances where wheelchair users will have to leave their chairs behind in order to safely evacuate a structure.
- Sometimes transporting someone downstairs is not a practical solution unless there are at least two or more strong people to control the chair. Therefore, it is

very important to discuss the safest way to transport you if you need to be carried, and alert them to any areas of vulnerability.

- For example: the traditional "fire fighter's carry" may be hazardous for some people with some respiratory weakness. You need to be able to give brief instructions regarding how to move you.



## LIFE SUPPORT

### DATE COMPLETED /ACTIVITIES

\_\_\_\_\_ Secure Equipment.

\_\_\_\_\_ Maintain current list of Alternate Providers.

\_\_\_\_\_ Obtain Alternate Power source.

\_\_\_\_\_ Obtain a Generator.

\_\_\_\_\_ Oxygen Users.

\_\_\_\_\_ Regularly Test and Back Up power supply.

\_\_\_\_\_ Register with Utility Company.

\_\_\_\_\_ Teach a Personal Support Network how to operate and safely move your equipment.

### **Secure Equipment.**

Secure any life support equipment to prevent damage from falling. If you use a chain to secure equipment, make sure it is a welded (not bent) chain.

### **Alternate Providers**

Determine which facilities/providers would serve you in the event that your home system becomes inoperable or your provider is unable to provide you service.

### **Alternate Power**

- Discuss with your vendor alternative power sources that will provide you with support for up to five to seven days.
- Could you use a generator? What type?
- Could you use manually operated equipment?
- Can your equipment be powered from a vehicle battery? If yes, obtain necessary hardware for the hook-up.

### **Obtain a Generator**

- Obtain a generator, if appropriate and feasible. To run generators in an emergency, fuel must be safely stored. Generators need to be operated in an open area to ensure good ventilation. A 2,000 to 2,500-watt gas-powered portable generator can power a refrigerator and several lamps. (A refrigerator needs to run only 15 minutes an hour to stay cool if you keep the door closed. So, you could unplug it to operate a microwave or other appliance.)

## **Oxygen Users**

- Check with your provider to determine whether a reduced flow rate may be used in the event of a disaster to prolong the life of the system. Record on your equipment the reduced flow numbers so that you can easily refer to them.
- Be keenly aware of oxygen safety; avoid areas where gas leaks or open flames may be present.
- Post "Oxygen in Use" signs.
- Keep the shut-off switch for oxygen equipment near you so you can get to it quickly in case of emergency.

## **Regular Test Backup**

- If your power backup system relies on storing batteries, be aware of the disadvantage. Stored batteries require periodic charging even when they are unused. So, if your survival strategy depends on storing batteries, a battery charging routine will have to be strictly followed.
- Regularly check back-up or alternative power equipment to ensure it will function during an emergency.
- Know the working duration of any batteries that support your system.
- Discuss with your power company the type of back up power you plan to use; get their advice.

## **Utility Company Registry**

- Register with your local utility company(ies) if this service is available in your community. Many utility companies maintain a list and map of your location in the event of an emergency. Contact the customer service department for additional information.
- In order to restore power as soon as possible to those who need it most when there are power outages, many power utility companies keep a list of names of people dependent on powered life support systems and tag their meters. In some instances, this list is prioritized by the time a person is able to tolerate being off a life support system. Information is given to local power stations. Registering for this service may also qualify you for a discount rate. NEVER COUNT ON YOUR POWER BEING QUICKLY RESTORED. Utility personnel may not be able to get to you after a major emergency or disaster.

## **Personal Support Network**

- Inform your personal support network how to operate and safely move your equipment if necessary.
- Label equipment, add instruction cards, laminate instruction cards for added durability, attach to equipment.

## COMMUNICATION AND SPEECH RELATED DISABILITIES

### DATE COMPLETED/ ACTIVITIES

\_\_\_\_\_ How Will You Communicate?

\_\_\_\_\_ Store Communication Aids in all Emergency Kits.

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete Emergency Health Information Card with Communication Information.

\_\_\_\_\_ Batteries or Chargers for Communication Equipment.

### Communication

Determine how you will communicate with emergency personnel if you do not have your communication devices (augmentative communication device, word board, artificial larynx).

### Communication Aids

Store copies of a word or letter board, paper and writing materials, pre-printed messages and key phrases specific to an anticipated emergency, in all your emergency kits, your wallet, purse, etc.

### Emergency Health Information Card

Make sure emergency health information card explains the best method to communicate with you, ie: written notes, pointing to letters/words/pictures, finding a quiet place.

### Alternate Power Source

Obtain an alternative power source (i.e., power converter, batteries) if you use a computer or laptop computer as a means of frequent communication.

## PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES

### DATE COMPLETED / ACTIVITIES

\_\_\_\_\_ Practice how to Communicate your needs.

\_\_\_\_\_ Anticipate the types of Reactions you may have after a quake and plan strategies for coping with these reactions.

\_\_\_\_\_ Keep with you Instructions for Treatment if you are hospitalized.

### Communication

Think through what a rescuer might need to know about you and be prepared to say it briefly, or keep a written copy with you- for example:

- I have a psychiatric disability. In an emergency I may become confused. Help me find quiet corner and I should be fine in approximately 10 minutes.
- I have a panic disorder. If I panic, give me one green pill (name of medication) located in my (purse, wallet, pocket, etc.)
- I take Lithium and my blood level needs to be checked every \_\_\_\_\_.

### Reactions

- There are a number of emotional reactions that may occur or become more severe after an emergency or disaster. These reactions include: confusion, thought processing and memory difficulties, agitation, paranoia, crying, fear, panic, steep disturbance, pacing, shouting, depression, withdrawal, irritability, anxiety, shaking, and sleep disturbance.
- Think through the types of reactions you may anticipate having and plan strategies for coping with these reactions.
- Consider seeking input from your friends, family, therapist or service provider(s).
- Be prepared to have members of your **personal support** network offer emotional support so you can acknowledge and express feelings about the quake.

### Treatment Instructions

You may need medical assistance. You even may be hospitalized. Keep with you instructions for your care and treatment, or a copy of a durable power of attorney for health so that someone you have chosen may intervene for you.

## Cognitive Disability

### DATE COMPLETED / ACTIVITIES

\_\_\_\_\_ Practice what to do during and after an emergency or disaster.

\_\_\_\_\_ Keep a written Emergency Plan with you.

\_\_\_\_\_ Copies of plan to Personal Support Network.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ways to Help Remember.

\_\_\_\_\_ Practice how to tell someone about what you need.

## **Before, During and After an Emergency or disaster**

- Practice what to do during and after an emergency or disaster. Practice leaving places where you spend time (job, home, school, volunteer assignment, etc.) until you feel comfortable and feel confident that you will know what to do during and after a quake.

## **Emergency Plan**

- Keep a written emergency plan with you and in several locations. Make sure your emergency plan is easy to read and understand.
- After a quake, information often comes at you quickly. Think through ways to do things you will need to do after a quake. Small tape recorder, calendar with room for notes, to do lists, etc., will help you remember things.
- Give copies of your written emergency plan to your personal support network buddies.

## **Communication**

- Think through what a rescuer might need to know about you and be prepared to say it briefly, or keep a written copy with you:

I cannot read. I communicate using an augmentative communication device. I can point to simple pictures or key words which you will find in my wallet or emergency supply kit.

I may have difficulty understanding what you are telling me, please speak slowly and use simple language.

I forget easily. Please write down information for me.

## SERVICE ANIMALS OR PETS

### DATE COMPLETED/ ACTIVITIES

\_\_\_\_\_ I.D. Tags and License are current.

\_\_\_\_\_ Animal Care Plan.

\_\_\_\_\_ Be prepared to Function Without Assistance from service animal - Identify Alternate Mobility Cues.

\_\_\_\_\_ Assemble Service Animal's Emergency Kit.

### I.D.'s and Licenses

Make sure your service animals and pets have I.D. tags with both your home telephone number and that of a your primary out of town contact person. Make sure your animal's license is current.

### Animal Care

Plan how your pets will be cared for if you have to evacuate. Pets, in contrast to service animals, may not be allowed in emergency shelters due to health regulations, so have some animal shelters identified! Contact your local Red Cross chapter or state office of emergency management for guidance.

Establish relationships with other animal owners in your neighborhood. In case you are not home, there will be someone to help your animal.

### Alternate Mobility Cues

Pets and service animals may become confused, panicked, frightened or disoriented in and after a disaster: keep them confined or securely leashed or harnessed. A leash/harness is an important item for managing a nervous or upset animal. Be prepared to use alternative ways to negotiate your environment.

### Service Animals Emergency or Disaster Kit (for 7 days)

Container suggestions: pack supplies in a pack that your animal can carry in case you need to evacuate.

# PERSONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

## DATE COMPLETED/ACTIVITIES

- \_\_\_\_\_ Establish a **Personal Support Network**.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Customize an **Emergency Health Information Card**.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Keep copies in wallet, purse and emergency supply kits.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete an **Emergency Contact List** (see Emergency or disaster Tips for Collecting Emergency Documents).
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Collect Emergency Documents** (see Emergency or disaster Tips For Collecting Emergency Documents).
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Store Emergency Documents** in emergency supply kits, wallet, safe deposit box and give copies to personal support network and out of area contact (see Emergency or disaster Tips for Collecting Emergency Documents).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conduct an **Ability Self-Assessment**.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Collect **Carry With You Supplies** to keep with you at all times.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Collect **Disability-Related Supplies** for emergency kits.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Maintain a seven day supply of **Essential Medications**.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Keep important **Equipment and Assistive Devices** in consistent, convenient and secured place.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Write Out Instructions** for items you will need help with in an emergency.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If you use a **Service Animal** (see Emergency or disaster Tips for Service Animal and Pet Owners).
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Complete Disability-Specific Sheets** as appropriate