Disaster Preparedness Checklist for People with Disabilities

The following list is intended to provide suggestions for disaster preparedness planning that may be taken by individuals with disabilities.

Self-Networks
____ Discuss your disability and needs with relatives and friends.
____ Develop a network of people who know your needs and location, who will be able to assist you or alert emergency personnel on your behalf. Do not depend on only one person.

Medical Equipment and Supplies
____ Evaluate equipment for repairs and obtain and keep spare parts.
____ Order the full allotment of supplies that your insurance allows, such as protective briefs, leg bags, suction tubing, hearing aid batteries, etc. Stockpile unused items.
____ Assemble a first aid kit. It should include: sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes, assorted sizes of safety pins, cleansing agents/soaps, latex gloves (2 pairs), 4-6 sterile gauze pads (2-inch and 4-inch), three triangular bandages, non-prescription drugs, three rolls each of 2 and 3 inch sterile roller bandages, scissors, tweezers, needle, moistened towelettes, antiseptic, thermometer, two tongue depressors, and a tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant.

Medications and Medical Needs
____ Create a list of current prescriptions, names and dosages. Remember to update this list, as needed.
____ Keep a list of the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of doctors and pharmacists.
____ Prepare a detailed description of your medical regimen and personal care needs.
____ Order a full 30-day supply of necessary medications. Check with your insurance carrier.

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Communication

- Make sure your cell phone battery and any extra batteries are kept fully charged.
- Pre-arrange alternative methods to reach family, friends, or personal care attendants if ordinary communications are disrupted.
- Consider keeping a notepad, portable white board, or picture boards available to facilitate communication.

Personal Assistant Care

- Consider checking into a nursing home or hospital if a disaster is anticipated. Staff will be available to meet personal care needs. Also, backup generators will be operating to assist people who use power wheelchairs and/or ventilators.
- Contact your personal care attendant provider to discuss disaster preparedness and maintain a list of phone numbers of those who can assist in obtaining personal care for you.

Food and Water

- Three day supply of water/three gallons of water per person
- Keep a supply of canned, dehydrated, and no-cook foods.
- Keep cases of nutrients available for tube feeding.
- Keep foods for special dietary needs, such as diabetic and high caloric diets.
- Pack adaptive equipment needed for eating or drinking such as large grip utensils, or cup-holders.

Service Dog

- The animal always should wear an identification tag with all necessary contact information.
- Keep shots and medical records current and service animal ID numbers available.
- Your animal will need plenty of food and water, kept in sturdy storage containers.
- Consider large capacity self-feeders and water dispensers.
- Keep contact information on your service animal’s veterinarian available.
- Check with your local emergency management officials for companion animal procedures in emergency shelters.

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Power

- Extended power outages may affect ventilators, heating and/or cooling units, which may be a matter of life or death for some people with disabilities. **Contact your utility provider if you require power to support your special need or circumstance.**

- Investigate emergency contingency plans in your building/community/municipality.

- Explore care facilities, especially if you use a ventilator or have other complex medical needs.

- Consider staying with friends or family out of your area if you anticipate possible power outages, especially if you have medical equipment that is dependent upon power.

- Contact your local fire department and Red Cross for information and registries of people with disabilities.

- Keep clear pathways in your home to allow for safer mobility if lighting is affected.

Oxygen

- Buildings where oxygen is kept must display an “Oxygen in Use” emblem.

- Oxygen must be kept in containers specifically manufactured for that purpose.

- Alert emergency response staff to the use of oxygen.

- Oxygen is flammable, so avoid sparks and flame. Demand that people not smoke near an oxygen container.

Miscellaneous

- Keep battery-operated flashlights and/or lanterns with lots of extra batteries.

- Blankets and warm clothes should be packed in an emergency.

- Keep the gas tank in your car full.

- Have a battery-powered radio and extra batteries on hand.

- Keep ample cash on-hand. ATMs and banks may not function during power outages.

- Have a non-electric can opener.

- Keep a supply of assorted plastic bags.
For more information on developing an individualized disaster preparedness plan, or for current information on Homeland Security Advisory System recommendations, contact:

**State**

NJ Special Needs Registry  
[www.registerready.nj.gov](http://www.registerready.nj.gov)  
*(Call 211 for registration or help)*

New Jersey Office of Emergency Management  
[www.ready.nj.gov](http://www.ready.nj.gov)

County Emergency Management Coordinators:  

New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness  
[www.njhomelandsecurity.gov](http://www.njhomelandsecurity.gov)

**Federal**

US Department of Homeland Security  
[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)  
1-800-BE-Ready

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)  
1-800-621-FEMA (1-800-621-3362)  
[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

**Local**

American Red Cross  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

**Residential Disability and Oxygen Emblems Program**

The Division of Fire Safety distributes emblems you can display to alert first responders of an oxygen hazard or that an individual with a disability resides in the home. Emblems are distributed free of charge. An application can be obtained online at: [https://www.state.nj.us/dca/divisions/dfs/forms/](https://www.state.nj.us/dca/divisions/dfs/forms/)

For more information, contact the Division of Fire Safety at (609) 633-6106.