

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND EXTREME WEATHER PREPAREDNESS



General Preparation:

- Have a check-in contact, extra non-perishable foods, and a back-up source of power for medical equipment.
- Include necessary medical supplies, 14-days of any medications and physical equipment, in your emergency kit.
- If your ability to communicate may be hindered during extreme weather, consider another option, like a whiteboard to write on, a flashlight, or a whistle, in case of emergency.
- Register your disability with local emergency management services, so your town knows to check on you.
- Do a personal assessment of your capabilities in emergencies (see last page). Assume worst case scenario (no water, no power, etc).
- Consider purchasing solar-powered generators or power back-ups.

Consider the type of disability you or your loved one has when planning. People with communication, cognitive functioning, or physical functioning disabilities will all require different types of aid and plans during extreme weather.

People with disabilities can be especially vulnerable during extreme weather events. Make sure to include the disability community in conversations about how your neighborhood, town, or city will respond to extreme weather. This is especially important as human-made climate change makes storms, heat, and flooding more frequent, severe, and dangerous.

For more information on how to prepare with different types of disabilities, visit:

<https://www.ready.gov/disability>

As a Loved One/Caregiver

- Make a plan before any threat of extreme weather even appears. Include your loved one in the planning process.
- Figure out a check-in system with your loved one. We recommend assuming phones will not work and going in person.
- Consider medications and health needs when creating a plan.
- Post instructions and medical information somewhere easy to see and find.
- Have a back-up plan for someone else to check in, in case you cannot.

Preparation for different events:

What to Consider in an Emergency Plan:

- The extent of personal care you need and how to get it during extreme weather events.
- Ways to use equipment that you need, if water services and electricity are cut off.
- Getting around afterwards: consider debris, transportation, and any errands that may arise.
- In the case of a building evacuation: where will you exit, how, and who can help you, if necessary.
- If you have a service animal or pet, make sure to have a care plan for them, as well, in the event of a disaster.

Storms

- Figure out who could help you move around, if you would need help during a potential evacuation.
- Find out if there is a local plan in place to help people with disabilities in emergency situations.
- Carry medical information and contact information with you at all times.
- Have someone who can help with pre or post-storm tasks, like shoveling, clearing drain pipes, and more, if necessary.

TIP: Never move somebody within their wheelchair, as most wheelchairs are not capable of this strain. Instead, if necessary, remove the individual from their wheelchair for an evacuation. Consult the individual on a plan to manage their pain and reunite them with the wheelchair ASAP.

Heat

- Make sure you can access air conditioning during extreme heat. Find a community place you can reach as a back-up plan if your living area AC does not work.
- Consider the best clothing to wear to not overheat.

Cold

- If you have a wheelchair or other physical aid, consider buying snow tires for your wheelchair or other snow equipment.
- Staying warm should be your top priority.
- Service animals should be kept warm as well, especially if you have to go outside.

For More Information and Resources:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/emergencypreparedness.html>
- <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/inclusive-preparedness-resources.html>
- www.climatecrew.org



Doing a Personal Assessment for Your Disability: Pre-Disaster

Issues to Consider:

- Personal Care: Do you need regular assistance? Does your personal care worker know how to adjust based on disaster circumstances? What if your personal care worker is stuck separate from you?
- Sanitation/Debris: What if an area is not clean due to a disaster? How can you deal with debris post-disaster?
- Transportation: What will you need to get around after a disaster?
- Electricity: Do you have a power back-up? How long will it last?

Evacuating:

- How will you exit a building? Consider all the spaces you could be in, including homes, offices, etc.
 - Do you have someone in each of these spaces who can support you?
- What emergency alarm needs to be in place for you to recognize it?
- What equipment do you need to evacuate?
- What are your possible exits? What if one is unavailable?
- How can you call for help if you are unable to exit?

Personal Support Network:

- Someone should plan to physically check on you following any disaster.
- Make sure your check-in person has a spare key, knowledge of your emergency supplies, emergency documents, health information, and equipment.
- Ask multiple people to check in on you - it never hurts to have multiple people stop by in case one person is unavailable. Ask these people in advance.
- Keep each other updated on when you are out of town.