



Make a Plan. Make a Difference.

# Plan for Disability and Access and Functional Needs

You may have to take additional steps for friends, neighbors, or family members with access and functional needs.

If you have a disability or access and functional need, you may have to take additional steps to protect yourself and your household in an emergency. If you know of friends or neighbors with access and functional needs, help them with these extra precautions.

- People who have vision and/or hearing loss may need to make special arrangements to receive a warning. *Make notes here.*

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- People with communication disabilities may not be able to communicate with emergency personnel or get important information quickly in a disaster. *How will you communicate with others and receive emergency information?*

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- People with cognitive or developmental disabilities may have difficulty communicating information that a rescuer or someone in a shelter might need to know. *Be prepared to say it briefly or keep a written copy with you.*

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- Those who are mobility impaired may need assistance in getting to a shelter. *Make notes here.*

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- Households with a single working parent may need help from others both in planning for disasters and during an emergency. *Who can help?*

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- Non-English speaking people may need assistance planning for and responding to emergencies. *Make notes here.*

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- Community and cultural groups may be able to help keep people informed. *Make notes here.*

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- People without vehicles may need to make arrangements for transportation. *Make notes here.*

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- People with special dietary needs should have an adequate emergency food supply. *Make notes here.*

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## Steps You Should Take

- Find out about assistance that may be available in your community.
- Create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends, and co-workers to aid you in an emergency. Discuss your needs and make sure they know how to operate necessary equipment.
- Discuss your needs with your employer.
- If you are mobility impaired and live or work in a high-rise building, have an escape chair.
- If you live in an apartment building, ask the management to mark accessible exits clearly and to make arrangements to help you evacuate the building.
- Keep extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, food for service animals, and other items you might need. Keep a list of the type and serial numbers of medical devices you need.
- If you are a caregiver for a person with a disability or access and functional need, make sure you have a plan to communicate if an emergency occurs.
- People with cognitive and developmental disabilities and their caregivers can prepare written statements to carry with them. Examples are:
  - "I communicate using an augmentative communication device. I can point to simple pictures or key words which you will find in my wallet, purse or backpack."
  - "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."
- If you use a cane, keep extras in strategic, consistent, and secured locations at work, home, school, volunteer, or other sites to help you maneuver if your primary cane is lost or broken.
- Service animals may become confused, panicked, frightened, or disoriented in or after a disaster. Keep them confined or securely leashed or harnessed to manage a nervous or upset animal. Be prepared to use alternative methods to negotiate your environment.
- Individuals with visual disabilities should plan on losing the auditory clues normally relied upon following a disaster.
- Plan ahead for multiple methods of communication and notification.
- Do not get rid of your TTY or Alternate Format TTY, even if you rarely use it. You may need the TTY and your home phone to make calls. A full-charged TTY can run for several hours without power.
- Make arrangements to take public transportation ahead of time as another option for evacuation. Make sure you have enough money to use public transportation.