



Additional Information for Those with Developmental Disabilities

Depending on the type of disability someone has, he or she may be very involved in his or her emergency plans and need minimal support, or much of the planning may need to be done by his or her support network. Either way it is important that he or she is involved as possible because there may be times when he or she is alone or disrupted because of change.

Make a Plan

Evacuation

Discussion Questions

- Can he or she evacuate or get to the safe place alone?
 - Will he or she not be willing or able to get to the suggested safe place? (Such as under a table for an earthquake or in the basement for a tornado)
 - What furniture or other items in your home, office or school could move or fall during an emergency? Could those items be strapped down or supported against the wall to prevent or minimize movement?
- *If the person is unable to evacuate on his or her own, it is important that those who may be alone with him or her know how and where to go during an emergency. Know the emergency exits for each place you frequent before an emergency occurs. If necessary, have someone show you. If the person does not drive, it is important that you have a pre-established evacuation method through your PSN. This would include making sure that you have a designated driver at each location they frequent who has agreed to take them to their meeting place. It may be a good idea to line up a few back-up designated drivers, as well, perhaps through other people in their PSN. Learn alternate transportation routes, including pedestrian routes. Sometimes during disasters roads will be disrupted or congested and you'll have to take a different way.*
- *One reason why it is so important to drill the evacuation plan is that you may discover that the person is unwilling or unable to take the planned action for an emergency. (For instance, he or she may refuse to go to the basement in the case of a tornado warning.) If you know that this is the case you are able to make alternative plans for that person and a care giver. However, if there is a safer place, those who are willing and able should go to the best designated location. Practice, practice, practice these things at varying times of day and night.*

Communication

Discussion Questions

- Is the person nonverbal or not likely to talk to new people?
 - Would she or he be able to express what she needs without assistance?
 - Does he or she use some sort of adaptive equipment to communicate, such as a picture board, computer or other device?
- *It is important to consider how important information will be shared with emergency personnel or shelter workers, especially if the members of the personal support network are not available or if they are unable to share this information.*

- *Have the person's out-of-state contact and other important contacts listed somewhere noticeable in a way that BOTH they and others can understand it.*
- *What information do they need to know? You would want to identify the person and his or her contacts, as well as information medications, adaptive equipment and other pertinent information.*
- *How will this information best get to them? Does the person have a backpack or other bag that he or she keeps with him or her? Is there a place in his or her home where it could be easily accessed? You may want to consider putting a note in the window identifying where it is located.*
- *If adaptive equipment is used to communicate, try to take it with you if evacuation is necessary. For some types of equipment such as a picture board, consider having a backup in the emergency supplies kit that the person could use if the regular one is not available.*
- *One way to help decrease injuries during emergencies is to limit what could fall over or cause damage during an emergency such as an earthquake. For instance:*
 - *Avoid hanging heavy items such as mirrors or pictures over beds or places where people sit*
 - *Secure heavy items such as bookshelves or chests to the wall using straps*
 - *Put the heaviest, such as books, or dangerous items, such as household chemicals or glass, on lower shelves*

Get a Kit

Adaptive Equipment

Discussion Questions

- *What functions does the individual need help with? (For example: evacuating, eating, or transferring.) If someone who is in their support network is not available, would they be able to explain how to do this?*
- *Does the person have equipment that requires electricity to function?*
- *What adaptive equipment do they have?*
- *If the person has adaptive equipment and medications, they should bring it with them if evacuation is necessary. There may be some equipment available in a shelter, but it may differ from what is typically used.*
- *It is a good idea to make a list of what equipment needs to be taken in case of an evacuation along with instructions for how to use the items. Any assistive devices should be brought with the individual. Make sure to write down that the assistive devices are for medical use and not just "extra." It may be a good idea to include written instructions on how to use these devices that both you and others can understand.*
- *For equipment that requires electricity, if possible, there should be back up power/batteries or a manual option (for instance a non-powered wheelchair.) You may consider buying an external charger for cell phones and other assistive tools that may require electricity. If they have older assistive devices that are no longer used (even if it's not the most current technology) consider putting it in their kit.*
- *Make sure their copies of important documents, a list of medications and list of contacts are in BOTH an accessible format for the individual and a translated format that others can understand.*

Be Informed

Reaction

Discussion Questions

- *Will he or she be able to recognize an alarm and take the appropriate action?*
- *Have you practiced/drilled the evacuation plan?*
- *How do disruptions of routine affect him or her?*
- *There may be times that the person needs to be home alone. Because emergencies often strike quickly and without warning, it is important that he or she be able to take appropriate action to stay safe. A part of that is being able to identify what the alarm sounds like and then taking the correct action. It is important to drill this so the person knows what to expect. Make sure that you know how the person will be notified. For any type of notification, it is important to test the batteries or service monthly and to change the batteries in alarms or radios at least once a year.*

- *You should practice things such as evacuating or going to a safe place even if the person will not be able to get there on his or her own. It will help you (or the other members of the person's support network) know what to expect.*
- *Disasters can cause disruptions to routine. For those with cognitive disabilities this can cause additional problems, such as trouble sleeping or expressing oneself. By anticipating how someone may react, you may be able help ease him or her through the emergency by having comfort items or other means to help the person. However, you may not be able to predict how he or she will react and should be ready for that case.*

Additional Steps

- Talk to community planners, the media and other emergency planning agencies to let them know what the person's needs or the needs of people with similar disabilities might be. Be an advocate – don't go unnoticed before a disaster happens, and you have a better chance of being noticed during a disaster.
- Demand that the person's needs be accounted for and that emergency plans are available in accessible formats.
- Work towards ensuring the emergency alerts are spread through all channels, especially accessible ones. Encourage news outlets to broadcast material in ways that can be better understood by everyone.
- Work with neighbors to make a neighborhood plan – this will ensure that you are looking out for each other, especially if the person's PSM is unavailable. Inform others when you are going out of town or needing extra help because of sickness or medical procedures.
- Sign up for a functional needs registry.
 - St. Louis City <http://stlcityfunctionalneeds.org/WebPages/Register.aspx>
 - St. Louis County TBA – Spring 2013
- Download various alert systems and/or smart phone apps that will let you know if there is something you need to know.
 - Nixle <http://www.nixle.com/>
 - American Red Cross First Aid, Earthquake, Tornado Mobile Apps <http://www.redcross.org/prepare/mobile-apps>