

Preparing for an Emergency

TIPS AND RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES



Why Do I Need to Prepare for an Emergency?

You may think you are never going to be in an emergency, so you don't need to prepare. However, almost all Americans live where they are at moderate or high risk of natural or human-made disasters. You need to plan before a disaster hits, and be sure your plan addresses all of your individual needs.

Seven Easy Steps to Preparation:

1. Make a Personal Plan

- Consider listing yourself in a community registry that identifies people who may need special help during an emergency. Check with local police and fire departments for further information.
- Have home equipment (for example, a weather radio) that will alert you to an emergency.
- Have enough food, water, batteries, and battery-operated equipment in your home to support yourself or your family for 2 weeks.
- Consider what special needs and equipment you need and keep extra supplies on hand.
- Make an evacuation plan (where to go and how to get there), in case you have to leave your home.

2. Gather Emergency Contact Information

- Collect information (names, phone numbers, mailing addresses, email addresses) for family members, friends, doctors, and equipment vendors.

- Identify at least one agreed-upon contact 100 miles outside the area, in case local phone lines are down.
- Make a list of critical information, including emergency contacts, medical history, special accommodations needed, instructions for safely moving self or equipment, medications, and allergies.
- Keep the list near your phone and in your wallet, and share with trusted friends or family.

3. Gather Important Information

(See reverse side for checklist: "Important Information")

4. Share Location of Critical Information With a Trusted Person

Critical information includes:

- Emergency contact list
- Important information
- Emergency supplies
- Emergency utility shutoffs
- Evacuation plans
- Ask trusted person to check on your well-being after an emergency.

5. Gather Disaster Supplies

(See reverse side for checklist: "Disaster Supplies")

6. Practice Telling Others Your Needs

If you need to leave your home and have items that must come with you, know in advance exactly what you must communicate to those there to help you. Example: "Please bring my medicines. They are in the bathroom on the bottom shelf in the closet."

7. Know How to Respond

- Know what to do in case of an emergency.
- Stay calm.
- Put your plan into action.
- Listen to radio for instructions.
- Watch for unusual hazards.
- Check in with your support system.
- Practice accident prevention.
- Decide to seek shelter in place or evacuate.

Please see reverse.



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Important Information

- Health insurance and copy of card
- Banks and account numbers
- Copy of prescription drug plan card
- Copy of social security card
- Copy of important papers such as marriage and death certificates, stocks, passports, and insurance policies
- Summary of medical history
- Special accommodations
- Instructions for communicating with you
- Instructions for safely moving you and your equipment
- List of medications
- Allergies and sensitivities

Disaster Supplies (Home) (Rotate food and water every 6 months)

- Enough bottled water for everyone in the household for 2 weeks
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Portable radio and extra batteries
- Cell phone and charger (optional)
- First aid kit
- Hand-operated can opener
- Enough non-perishable food for everyone in the household for 2 weeks
- Essential prescriptions and over-the-counter medications for everyone in the household for 2 weeks
- Durable medical equipment (bandages, catheter) for 2 weeks
- Backup equipment necessary for survival (generator, manual wheelchair)
- Extra cash
- Blanket
- Whistle on a string
- Toilet paper or wipes
- Soap
- Personal hygiene supplies
- Chlorine bleach (unscented)
- Small shovel (optional) or plastic garbage bags for disposing of waste
- Matches stored in a waterproof container
- Pet food and supplies (if applicable)
- Paper and pencil or pen
- Dust masks
- Rain coat or plastic tarp (optional)
- Extra supply of clothes and shoes

Who We Are and Who We Serve

The **Vanderbilt Kennedy Center (VKC)** works with and for people with disabilities and their family members, educators and service providers, researchers, students, and policy makers. Faculty and staff engage in interdisciplinary research, training, service, and information dissemination and work in collaboration with local, state and national networks and partners. (615) 322-8240, toll-free (866) 936-8852, vkc.vumc.org

Tennessee Disability Pathfinder

Provides free information, referral sources, and help with navigating services via phone, email, and website. Assistance is available to individuals of all ages, all types of disabilities, and all languages spoken. Its website includes a directory of more than 3,000 agencies searchable by Tennessee county, topic of interest, and other filters. Pathfinder is a project of the VKC and is partially funded by Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities and other state agencies. (615) 322-8529, toll-free (800) 640-4636, TNPathfinder.org

Other Resources

- **American Red Cross** - redcross.org
- **American Academy of Pediatrics** - aap.org
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
www.cdc.gov
- **Disability Rights Tennessee** - disabilityrightstn.org
- **Family Voices of Tennessee**
tndisability.org/familyvoices
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency**
www.fema.gov
- **Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities**
www.tn.gov/cdd.html
- **Tennessee Poison Center**
www.vumc.org/poison-control/home
- **Tennessee U.S. Department of Homeland Security**
www.dhs.gov
- **University of Tennessee Center on Developmental Disabilities** - www.uthsc.edu/cdd/index.php

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