

Emergency Planning for Disabilities



Emergencies happen. Everyone should take steps to be ready when disaster strikes, but people with a disability or health concerns have special needs to plan for to stay safe.

Being ready takes 3 steps:

1. Make a plan.
2. Prepare an emergency kit.
3. Listen for information when an emergency happens.



Make a plan

You can prepare for emergencies by planning ahead with your family and/or caregiver.

As you plan, think about these things:

- Know what kinds of emergencies could happen in your area.
- Know the resources and assistance available.
- Find out how local authorities will warn you of a disaster.
- Include in your plan your needs for:
 - Evacuating your home or workplace, if needed
 - Supplies if you need to stay home for a while (shelter in place)
 - Supplies, equipment, and assistance you will need if you must go to a shelter
 - Transportation
 - Water and power
 - Caring for a service animal
- Assess your personal needs for supplies and assistance before, during, and after an emergency. Use the worksheets on the following pages to help you.

Identify Your Support Network

Include 3 or more people. Think of roommates, relatives, neighbors, friends, or co-workers. Make a list of their names and phone numbers. Make a note of how they can support you in an emergency.



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Assess Your Needs

Use the following questions to help you to identify what your needs may be in an emergency. Peoples needs vary, so not all sections may apply to you.

Personal Care

Do you need help with personal care, such as bathing and grooming?

- My abilities today:

- Help or things I may need in an emergency:

Do you use adaptive devices to help you get dressed? To prepare or eat food?

- Adaptive equipment I use today:

- Help or things I may need in an emergency:

What will you do if water service is cut off or if you are not able to heat water?

- My water needs now:

- Help or things I may need in an emergency:

Do you use a shower chair, tub transfer bench, or other bathing equipment?

- Equipment I use today:

- Help or things I may need in an emergency:

Do you need help to leave your home or workplace?

- How I am able to leave now:

- Help or things I may need in an emergency:

If you use an elevator, are there other exits you can use if it is not working?

- Options for exiting the building other than the elevator:

- Help or things I may need in an emergency:

If you use a ramp, what will you do if the building ramps are damaged?

- Options if the ramps cannot be used:

- Help or things I may need in an emergency:

Service Animals

Will you be able to care for your animal during and after an emergency?

- Care my service animal needs:
-

- Help or things I may need in an emergency:
-

Putting Your Plan Together

Use the answers to these questions to make a list of things you need to gather, buy, or arrange. Consider the following as you prepare:

- What supplies or equipment did you identify that you will need? Are there programs in your community that can provide it or help you cover the cost?
- Make a plan for someone to help during an emergency. This person will need to get into your home and know how to provide care.
- If there is a power outage, how will you use essential medical equipment?
- If you use a power wheelchair, consider having a manual wheelchair as a backup.
- Store back-up equipment at a neighbors/friends/family members or at school or work.
- Plan for someone to convey information if you are vision impaired, deaf, or hard of hearing.
- If you use a personal care attendant, see if their agency has special services for emergencies.
- Wear a medical alert tag or bracelet that lists your health care needs.
- For those who need dialysis or other life-sustaining treatment, know the location of more than 1 facility where you can get care.
- Consider getting a medical alert system to call for help if you cannot move.
- Let emergency responders know what your needs are ahead of time. Many Ohio cities and counties have a system to let you register your special needs with local emergency services.

Caring for Pets and Service Animals

- Make a supply kit for your pet or service animal. It may include food, water, medicine, a carrier, leash, litter (for cats), vet records, and any needed identification. Service dogs often have a special vest, harness, or collar.
- Be prepared to bring your pet with you or arrange ahead of time someone to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so. Service dogs should be allowed at any shelter with their owner, by law.
- Keep your pets' vaccines up to date and keep their tags on their collars.

Prepare an emergency kit

Keep emergency supplies in a container that you can take with you if you need to leave home, such as a large bag or plastic container. Check your supplies every few months for freshness.

- 3 day supply of non-perishable food
- Manual can opener
- 3 day supply of water: 1 gallon per person per day
- Portable, battery-powered radio or TV with extra batteries
- Extra battery backup for your cell phone
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Sanitation and hygiene items
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape
- Extra clothing and blankets
- Copies of important documents, your ID, and credit cards
- Cash and coins
- Special need items: medicine, medical devices, eye glasses, contact lens solution, hearing aid batteries, etc.
- Laminated numbers of who you may need to call for an emergency
- Any special supplies from your plan
- A list of equipment you need to take with you if you need to leave your home

Listen for information when an emergency happens

Local and state officials have plans to protect the public. Stay calm and listen for reports on the television, radio, or online. Have a radio with extra batteries in case there is no electricity. If your communication is limited, you may need to decide what is best for you and your family.

Learn more at [ready.gov/disability](https://www.ready.gov/disability)

Get tips on getting informed, making a plan, and building a kit for a variety of disabilities and health concerns.

Sources: Ohio Disability and Health Program; Ready Now, Oregon Health and Science University; Federal Emergency Management Agency; Ready.gov.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, go to wexnermedical.osu.edu/patiented or contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or health-info@osu.edu.