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# News Release

## **Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities** *Hurricane Season Begins June 1*

**ORLANDO, Fla.** – The keys to effective disaster preparedness—be informed, make a plan and take action—apply to all of us, but people with access and functional needs or disabilities, should approach preparedness planning with additional considerations.

Additional considerations could include:

- Creating a support network. Check with those who can assist you, if needed. Keep a contact list in a watertight container in your emergency kit. Learn more at [ready.gov/kit](http://ready.gov/kit).
- Planning ahead for accessible transportation for evacuation or getting to a medical clinic. Work with local services, public transportation or paratransit to identify local or private accessible transportation options.
- Informing a support network where your emergency supplies are; you may want to give one member a key to your house or apartment.
- Knowing location and availability of more than one facility for dialysis if dialysis is part of a health maintenance plan or routine or other life-sustaining treatment.
- Preparing to use medical equipment if a power outage occurs.
- Wearing medical alert tags or bracelets.
- Making note of the best way to communicate with you in an emergency if you have a communications disability.
- Planning how to evacuate with assistive devices or how to replace equipment if lost or destroyed. Keep model information and note where the equipment came from such as Medicaid, Medicare or private insurance.

## **Build a Kit**

In addition to having basic survival supplies, an emergency kit should contain items to meet individual needs in various emergencies. Consider items used daily and those needed to add to a kit.

### **Tips for People who are deaf or hard of hearing**

Include:

- A weather radio with text display and a flashing alert
- Extra hearing-aid batteries
- A TTY
- Pen and paper in case you have to communicate with someone who does not know sign language

### **Tips for People who are blind or have low vision**

Include:

- Mark emergency supplies with Braille labels or large print. Keep a list of your emergency supplies on a portable flash drive, or make an audio file that is kept in a safe place where you can access it.
- Keep a Braille, or Deaf-Blind communications device in an emergency supply kit.

### **Tips for People with a mobility disability:**

Include:

- If you use a power wheelchair, have a lightweight manual chair available as a backup. Show others how to operate your wheelchair.
- Know the size and weight of your wheelchair, and if it is collapsible for transportation.
- Keep an extra mobility device such as a cane or walker, if you use one.
- If you use a seat cushion to protect your skin or maintain your balance, and you must evacuate without your wheelchair, take your cushion with you.

The Florida Division of Emergency Management, in coordination with each local emergency management agency in the state, developed a registry to allow residents with special needs to register with their local emergency management agency to receive assistance during a disaster. The statewide registry provides first responders with valuable information to prepare for disasters or other emergencies. To register, please visit [www.snr.floridadisaster.org](http://www.snr.floridadisaster.org)

For more on the tips above and disaster planning for those with access and functional needs or disabilities, or for children, visit [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov). The range of needs runs wide and effective planning runs deep. Be ready for hurricanes—and for any other disaster ... and help those who may need neighborly assistance.

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*FEMA's Mission: Helping people before, during, and after disasters.*

*Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.*

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