

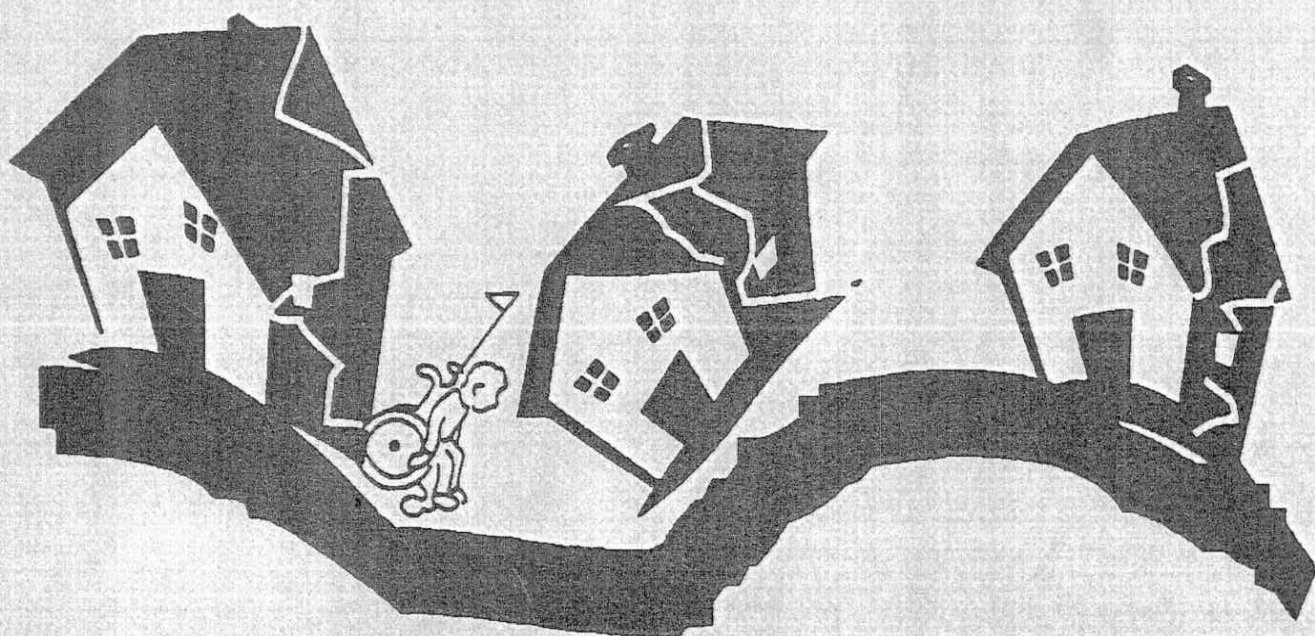
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Governor's Office of
Emergency Services

Earthquake Program

Living and Lasting on Shaky Ground: Earthquake Preparedness for People with Disabilities



Independent Living Resource Center • San Francisco

Living and Lasting on Shaky Ground:
Earthquake Preparedness for
People with Disabilities

Developed by

Independent Living Resource Center San Francisco

Revised & Reprinted May, 1997

by

**Earthquake Program
California Office of Emergency Services**

Disclaimer

This publication was printed by the Earthquake Program, California Office of Emergency Services, with partial funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to assist individuals and organizations in planning and preparing for earthquakes. Because the science of earthquake engineering is not sufficiently developed to enable precise prediction of an earthquake's consequences, there can be no guarantee that application of the information in this publication will safeguard people and property in an earthquake. The information in this publication has been carefully reviewed, but neither the State of California, FEMA, nor the Independent Living Resource Center San Francisco assumes liability for any injury, death, or property damage that results from an earthquake, or in the application of recommendations contained in this publication.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Principal Consultant: June Isaacson Kailes, Disability Policy Consultant.

For their generous giving of time, information, attention to details, contributions, and reviews of various drafts of this guide, the Independent Living Resource Center San Francisco (ILRC) and the Consultant/Author gratefully acknowledge and thank the following people:

Anita Baldwin, Executive Director, Rose Resnick Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, San Francisco, California.

Robert L. Kailes, Certified Public Accountant and Certified Financial Planner, Playa del Rey, California.

Libbey Lafferty of Lafferty & Associates, Inc. (Disaster/Preparedness Consulting Firm), La Canada, California, and author of "Earthquake Preparedness for Office, Home, Family & Community."

Sheila Conlon Mentkowski, J.D., California Assistive Technology Systems, Program Director, California Department of Rehabilitation, Sacramento, California.

Susan Molloy, Multiple Chemical Sensitivities Policy Analyst, Snowflake, Arizona.

Lynn Murphy, Coastal Region, Governor's Office of Emergency Services, State of California, Oakland, California.

Brenda Premo, Director, California Department of Rehabilitation, Sacramento, California.

The Staff and Peer Counselors of ILRC for reviewing the Tip Sheets and the training manual for disability appropriateness, completeness, and clarity of text.

Development of this material was supported by a grant from the Northern California Disaster Preparedness Network, American Red Cross.

I. INTRODUCTION

High Risks and High Rewards

As Californians, many of us have chosen to live in a high-reward, high-risk environment. Some of the many rewards include:

- Living on a beautiful but tumultuous and ever-changing earth.
- Enjoying miles of beautiful beaches, coastlines, wondrous deserts, and mountains.
- Avoiding long, steady, oppressive winters; avoiding the frost and ice zones; and avoiding hypothermia from simply retrieving the morning newspaper. To paraphrase Garrison Keillor, we avoid the punishment of the huge "white block" that gets dropped on people in the northeast from November to March.

However, the risks of our environment are many.

- Of all the states in the United States, the Golden State of California is the most prone to natural disasters, including storms, fires, floods, oil spills, seismic sea waves, landslides, and earthquakes.
- Earthquakes are a fact of life.
- Living in California is like living on a giant jigsaw puzzle which represents fault lines. Small quakelets occur almost constantly; the large ones are familiar to most of us. California averages almost 5,000 feeble but feelable quakes per year.
- You never know which of these quakelets will be strong enough to do some damage or be of such a magnitude that lives will be violently disrupted for a long period of time.
- Four out of five Californians live within the state's most active seismic areas.
- California is the highest earthquake risk area in the contiguous United States. Several large, well-known active faults run through the state, including the San Andreas, Hayward and Newport-Inglewood faults. In addition to these, there are others either not well-known or not yet discovered. These



faults have been the cause of destructive earthquakes in the past and will continue to be the source of destructive quakes in the future.

- Scientists estimate that in the San Francisco Bay Area, there is now at least a 67% probability of another 7 (on the Richter scale) or larger earthquake striking within the next 30 years; in Southern California, there is an 86% (recently revised upward from 60%) probability of a 7.5 to 8.0 earthquake striking within the next 30 years.
- California is not alone. Other states are also not immune from the threat of a damaging quake. According to the U.S. Geological Survey National Earthquake Information Center in Denver, the likelihood that a damaging quake will strike the central or eastern United States during the next three decades is between 40% and 60%. All states have natural disasters of one form or another and most states can potentially have an earthquake. Thirty-nine of the 50 states are earthquake prone.
- The earthquake risk is widespread in California's seismically active zones. It is not a matter of "if," it's only a matter of "when!"

Why An Earthquake Preparedness Guide For People With Disabilities?

Earthquake preparedness information is plentiful and can easily be found by opening your local phone book. The information in the first few pages provides pre-earthquake advice including lists of supplies to stock and procedures to follow, suggestions as to how to protect yourself during an earthquake, and detailed steps to follow in the aftermath of a quake.

Unfortunately, very little information exists which specifically discusses what people with disabilities, who may face some specific risks and situations which differ from the rest of the population, should do to prepare for earthquakes. This guide provides practical information for people with disabilities to consider in planning for safety before as well as surviving during and after this inevitable emergency.

The guide presents new information and the best practices gathered from an array of materials and from numerous informal discussions with people with disabilities who have experience living and surviving in quake country. Much of the information in this guide is also helpful in preparing for other types of emergencies and disasters such as power outages, fires, floods, hurricanes, nuclear power plant accidents, tornados, tsunamis, volcanoes, winter storms, and very cold or very hot weather.

Intended Users

This guide is intended to provide practical and disability-specific information that can be used:

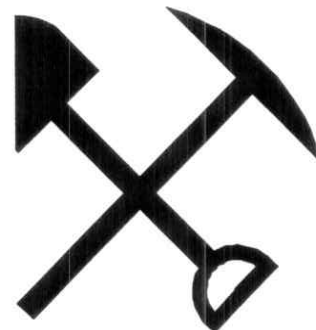
- As a preparation tool -- for individuals with disabilities, their friends, families, and service providers.
- As a training tool -- for disability-related organizations who offer workshops on earthquake preparedness for people with disabilities, either as groups or individuals.

This guide covers specific earthquake preparation materials for people with disabilities including:

- understanding why preparation is important
- creating practical plans
- identifying resources
- developing strategies
- putting plans into practice

Preparedness Tool Kit

This manual was developed as a preparedness tool kit to be used to train people with disabilities "to be prepared" to survive an earthquake and its aftermath. This manual gives trainers more in-depth information to answer questions and to feel comfortable in their role as trainer/facilitator. The manual is organized in the following sections:



Why Prepare for Earthquakes? (Section 2) - details common reasons why people do not prepare for earthquakes and why it is important to plan and prepare.

Earthquake Tip Sheets - these tips have a cross-disability focus and offer self-help tips for people with a variety of disabilities. They are meant to cultivate thinking about and motivate preparedness and planning.

Earthquake Tips for People with Disabilities (Section 3)

- Earthquake Tips for People with Disabilities - includes establishing a personal support network (items to discuss, give, and practice with this network); conducting an "Ability Self-Assessment"; collecting supplies to keep with you

at all times; collecting disability-related supplies for emergency kits, maintaining a seven-day supply of essential medications; keeping important equipment and assistive devices in consistent, convenient, and secured places; and practicing assertiveness skills.

- Earthquake Tips for Creating an Emergency Health Information Card - communicates to rescuers what they need to know if they find you unconscious or incoherent or if they need to help evacuate you quickly; details what the card should contain by giving examples and recommending where copies should be kept; includes an Emergency Health Information Card Work Sheet to be used to draft your card and a prototype card to use to complete your own card.
- Earthquake Tips for Collecting Emergency Documents - details important information typically needed after a disaster.

Specific Disabilities: (Section 4)

- People with Visual Disabilities
- People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- People with Communication and Speech-Related Disabilities
- People with Psychiatric Disabilities
- People with Developmental or Cognitive Disabilities
- People with Environmental Illness or Multiple Chemical Sensitivities
- People Who Use Life Support Systems
- People with Mobility Disabilities
- Owners of Pets or Service Animals

Hazard Reduction Checklist (Section 5) - use to track when you reduce or eliminate a hazard.

- Life Threatening Hazards - use this list to decide which hazards you should first concentrate on reducing or eliminating.
- Identifying and Reducing Hazards - use this list to help identify hazards as well as to review options for eliminating or reducing them.

Collecting Emergency Supplies (Section 6) - details where, how, and what supplies should be stored, information on replacement, rotation, and maintenance. Includes suggestions regarding phones, cash, water, first aid kits, food, and tools and five types of emergency kits listing items to keep with you at all times (bedside, home/evacuation, work and vehicle).

Earthquake Planning (Section 7) - details how to create an evacuation, family/household and work plan; how to practice plans through mental and physical

drills; and how to evaluate the results. Plans have to be tested. A plan is only as good as its test results.

Practice Assertiveness (Section 8) - discusses the importance of practicing assertiveness, self-advocacy, and problem-solving skills in earthquake situations in order to stay in control. Recommends practicing how to quickly explain how to move mobility aids and how to move disabled person safely and rapidly. Gives examples of disability-specific situations that people with disabilities may encounter after a earthquake.

During an Earthquake (Section 9) - True/False Quiz and Answers - a self-administered quiz that tests knowledge of what to do during a quake, including what to do if you are at home, shopping, in the car, on the freeway, in a high-rise building, or outside.

After the Shaking Stops (Section 10) - summarizes what to do immediately after a quake as well as several hours after the quake; evaluating your resources; and finding an emergency shelter.

Neighborhood Plan (Section 11) - a resource to use if you are interested in taking the lead or assisting your neighborhood in developing a disaster plan. Neighborhood plans are an excellent way of identifying members of a personal support network, pooling resources and skills and ensuring that a neighborhood can become a self-sufficient and protective unit that can care for itself after a major disaster.

References and Resources (Section 13) - includes additional references, booklets, videos and slide/tape programs, supply catalogues, American Red Cross publications, disaster relief facilities and organizations, and "how to ..." fact sheets.

II. WHY PREPARE FOR EARTHQUAKES?

Why People Do Not Prepare For Earthquakes

- Many people ignore the threat and try to avoid thinking about earthquakes because it creates a great deal of stress, fear, and apprehension. It is easier not to think about it. Sometimes as people think about preparing and becoming better informed, their fear and stress level actually increases, while for others these levels of stress and fear decrease.
- Not many people have experienced the rumbling roar and violent and destructive movement of a major quake, so it is tempting to ignore the threat by thinking that "A big earthquake won't happen in my lifetime" or "If a big quake comes, I couldn't do anything about it anyway." These are typical and understandable responses to the threat of earthquakes.
- Moderate earthquakes sometimes lull people into a false sense of security, shaken only periodically by a major quake. Several weeks to months after moderate and major quakes, people slip back into their old complacent ways. The California reflex reaction goes something like this: at first, after experiencing a major quake, everybody says "That's it, I've had it, I'm leaving, I'm out of here." But after a while, things begin to return to normal and most people realize they don't really want to leave or they can't afford to leave.
- For many people with disabilities, living independently involves continual risk-taking and some may feel that they already take many risks and that earthquake preparedness is not a priority. Others who are used to relying on personal assistance services are used to people assisting them and feel that this type of assistance will be available and will continue after a major quake. This belief constitutes a false sense of security.
- Those who regularly rely on others may find themselves without these human resources after the disaster occurs either because of transportation problems or the fact that emergencies increase the degree of functional challenge for everyone. (Tierney, Petak & Hahn, 1988). People may be overwhelmed by their own problems.

Disaster-prone areas like California and Florida are home to large numbers of people with disabilities; among those are an increasing number who are living independently. An independent lifestyle under regular circumstances does not necessarily mean that you are well prepared for emergency situations.

- Preparedness can be time consuming.

- There are costs for additional supplies and equipment.
- Do not fool yourself by thinking it will not happen and that it will not directly affect you because chances are very good that it will. Preparation and precautionary measures can increase your chances for safety, survival, and staying healthy.

Why They Should

- The last and most dangerous thing you want to do is to begin to learn how to react in an earthquake at the time it is occurring. You must be ready to act! In an emergency, you won't have time to start making lists of things you will need to survive. Unfortunately, unlike many other natural disasters which can be predicted with relative accuracy, no specific warnings are issued prior to an earthquake. In light of this fact, planning, self-reliance, and resourcefulness are the keys to your survival.
- NOW is the time to make your individual and household survival plans, make your lists, and collect your supplies. Preparation does take time and effort, but this kind of effort can help you and your family stay alive, stay safe, and be more comfortable. This effort also takes continual practice and updating.
- As you resist complacency and maintain a reasonable level of disaster preparation, your confidence will rise as you realize you have reduced your vulnerability, not only under catastrophic disasters, but also to the little disasters that occur frequently; i.e., sudden power outages, when the neighborhood pharmacist fails to keep an adequate supply of your prescription medications, and when your medical supply vendor loses your order. Your earthquake preparedness supplies will prevent you from being held hostage to inevitable levels of ineptitude or incompetence that we are all forced to deal with from time to time.
- It is critical to prepare because during a disaster survival can depend on how you cope with stress and shock. If you've thought out the possibilities prior to an emergency, you will be better able to manage your panic reactions, make the right decisions, and assist others.
- There's a universal human tendency to avoid thinking about possible dangers, but this avoidance has greater repercussions for people with disabilities than for people without disabilities. When disaster strikes, things don't function as well as they usually do, otherwise we'd call them something else besides disasters (inconveniences, maybe).

- For people with disabilities to expect specific or special assistance from emergency preparedness personnel is not realistic. A major quake overtaxes and overloads all available emergency services and requires all people to be self-sufficient for up to a week or longer.

It is common knowledge, among emergency response people, that emergency services (fire, rescue, ambulance) are going to be overwhelmed by the demand on their resources. There will be a large number of life-threatening situations. And there will be hundreds of search and rescue efforts going on simultaneously, as well as fire suppression. Therefore, you cannot count on the same type of emergency rescue service experienced in non-disaster periods. This is not to say that people with disabilities should expect nothing from relief organizations; however, you need to plan for the worst.

After a serious earthquake, emergency services such as medical treatment, fire suppression, and rescue will be minimal at best. Public safety officials estimate that these services will be unavailable for at least three days following an earthquake (and maybe as long as four to seven days). The first priority after a strong earthquake is fire suppression. Search and rescue may not be a priority for three to five days due to insufficient personnel and equipment, and blocked travel routes. Neither people with disabilities, nor any one else, can expect special assistance with evacuation, first aid, downed power lines, gas leaks, or any other problem. It is vital for everyone, especially people with disabilities, to assume responsibility for their own emergency planning, emergency power needs, and evacuation.

In a major emergency or disaster, hazards are often multiplied for people with disabilities. Planning is vital for survival. All people will be confronted with a wide range of disabling conditions and a variety of emergency situations.

- The bad news is that the difficult, barrier-ridden environments you are used to dealing with become a great deal more hostile after a major quake. For example, people with physical disabilities may have reduced ability to access their personal items and emergency medical supplies after a major quake. Deaf people and people with speech-related disabilities may encounter many more communication barriers.

The good news is that in some ways, people with disabilities who live independently are actually better at handling disasters than their counterparts without disabilities. Some researchers conclude that people with disabilities have a psychological advantage which makes them less likely to become injured or to panic during and after a quake, "since they negotiate within altered and sometimes difficult physical and environmental limitations on a daily basis." People with disabilities are used to negotiating a non-ideal, often barrier-full environment on a daily basis.

In summary, the inevitability of the "Big One" cannot be denied, nor can the ensuing chaos and hazards. Remember, you can greatly increase your chances of surviving a quake and staying healthy. Planning, resourcefulness, and self-reliance are the keys.

Preparation may seem like a lot of work. It is. Preparing does take time and effort. So it is recommended that you do a little at a time as your energy and budget permit. The important thing is to start preparing. The more you do, the more confident you will be that you can protect yourself, your family, and your belongings.

Earthquake Planning Questions

Planning should take place at your job, home, school, volunteer site, and neighborhood. Get involved in the process. To start, think about your answers to these five questions.

- 1) If you were isolated for several days (in your home, at school, or at work) what medications, dietary, and other emergency supplies would you need?
- 2) What would you do if you were without power and water?
- 3) What evacuation assistance might you need and where could you get it?
- 4) What assistance from others might be required in preparing your home for an earthquake and where can you get that assistance?
- 5) What emotional reactions do you anticipate regarding this situation?

Scenarios

When considering your answers to these questions, it will increase your level of readiness if you imagine and plan for three possible scenarios.

- After an earthquake, you remain at home because there has been little structural damage to the building.
- The structural damage to your home warrants evacuation, but you can remain in the immediate vicinity.
- Damage is so extensive that you will have to relocate a distance away from your home for an extended period of time.

Planning for each of these possibilities requires a variety of approaches, but answering these questions with all three scenarios in mind can translate into your survival after the quake occurs.

III. EARTHQUAKE TIPS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

General Tips for People with Disabilities

This section offers earthquake tips for people with a variety of disabilities. They are meant to cultivate your thinking about your own preparedness planning and motivate you to act. Adapt these tips for your personal needs. Each tip sheet begins with a checklist which you can use as you complete the major activities described.

The tip sheets have a cross-disability focus. They are written for all people with disabilities including, but not limited to, those with visual, hearing, cognitive, developmental, mobility, psychiatric, multiple chemical sensitivities, speech, and respiratory disabilities.

In addition, the other tips sheets written for people with specific disabilities may be helpful to you. If you have multiple disabilities, or if you are an older person, please be sure and review the tip sheets related to all of your limitations. For example, if you do not see well, review Earthquake Tips for People with Visual Disabilities; if you do not hear well, review Earthquake Tips for People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing; if you have trouble walking or getting around, review Earthquake Tips for People with Mobility Disabilities.

Earthquake Tips Fact Sheets

This fact sheet is designed to provide a checklist of activities for People with Disabilities to improve emergency preparedness in an earthquake. It is designed to be used in conjunction with regular American Red Cross preparedness information and Independent Living Resource Center San Francisco's EARTHQUAKE TIPS FOR PEOPLE WITH A SPECIFIC DISABILITY (i.e., Mobility, Visual, Communication, Cognitive, Psychiatric, Hearing, etc.), TIPS FOR COLLECTING EMERGENCY DOCUMENTS, and TIPS FOR CREATING AN EMERGENCY HEALTH INFORMATION CARD. Without all four tip sheets, you do not have all the information you need to be prepared. Preparation may seem like a lot of work. It is. Preparing does take time and effort. So do a little at a time, as your energy and budget permit. The important thing is to start preparing. The more you do, the more confident you will be that you can protect yourself, your family, and your belongings.

Establish a Personal Support Network

A **personal support network** is made up of individuals who will check with you in an emergency to ensure that you are okay and to give assistance if needed. This network can consist of friends, roommates, family members, relatives, personal attendants, co-workers, and neighbors.

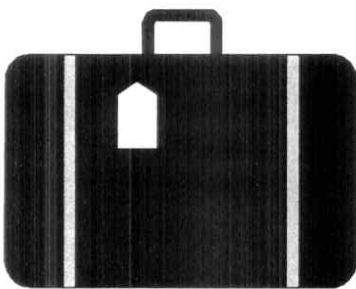
Some people rely on **personal assistance services (attendants)**. This type of assistance may not be available after a major quake. Therefore, it is vital that your personal support network consist of different people than those who are your personal attendants. If you employ a personal attendant or use the services of a home health agency or other type of in-home service, discuss a plan with these people for what you will do in case of an emergency. How will you get along in an emergency for as long as seven days? A critical element to consider in your emergency planning is the establishment of a personal support network.

Even if you do not use a personal attendant, it is important to consider having a personal support network to assist you in coping with an emergency. Do not depend on any one person. Work out support relationships with several individuals. Identify a minimum of three people at each location where you spend a significant part of your week: job, home, school, volunteer site, etc.

In spite of your best planning, sometimes a **personal support network** must be **created on the spot**. For example, you may find yourself in a shelter and needing to assemble help for immediate assistance. Think about what you will need, how you want it done, and what kind of person you would select.

Seven Important Items to Discuss, Give to, and Practice with **Your Personal Support Network:**

- Make arrangements, prior to an emergency, for your support network to immediately check you after a quake and, if needed, offer assistance.
- Exchange important keys.
- Show where you keep emergency supplies.
- Share copies of your relevant emergency documents, evacuation plans, and emergency health information card.
- Agree and practice a communications system regarding how to contact each other in an emergency. Do not count on the telephones working.
- You and your personal support network should always notify each other when you are going out of town and when you will return.
- The relationship should be mutual. Learn about each other's needs and how to help each other in an emergency. You could be responsible for food supplies and preparation, organizing neighborhood watch meetings, interpreting, etc.



Traveling

When staying in hotels/motels identify yourself to registration desk staff as a person who will need assistance in an emergency and state the type of assistance you may need.

Health Card

- An emergency health information card communicates to rescuers what they need to know about you if they find you unconscious or incoherent, or if they need to help evacuate you quickly.
- An emergency health information card should contain information about medications, equipment you use, allergies and sensitivities, communication difficulties you may have, preferred treatment, treatment-medical providers, and important contact people.
- Make multiple copies of this card to keep in emergency supply kits in your car, at work, in your wallet behind driver's license or primary identification card, in your wheelchair pack, etc.

Emergency Contact List

- Ask several relatives or friends who live outside your immediate area (approximately 100 miles away) to act as a clearing house for information about you and your family after a quake. It is often easier to place an out of state long distance call from a disaster area than to call within the area. All family members should know to call the contact person to report their location and condition. Once contact is made, have the contact person relay messages to your other friends and relatives outside the disaster area. This will help to reduce calling into and out of the affected area once the phones are working.
- Besides emergency out of town contacts, lists should include personal support networks, equipment vendors, doctors, utility companies, employers, schools, and day care centers for other family or household members.

Emergency Documents

(includes important information typically needed after a disaster)

- Store emergency documents in your home emergency supply kits. Copies of life saving information (i.e., specifications for adaptive equipment or medical devices should be in all of your emergency kits; medication lists should be on your health card) should be stored in all of your emergency kits. Other emergency documents should be kept together with your home emergency pack--family records, wills, deeds, social security number, charge and bank

accounts, etc.--for access in an emergency. These should be stored in sealed freezer bags with copies sent to out of state contacts.

Conduct an "Ability Self-Assessment"

Evaluate your capabilities, limitations and needs, as well as your surroundings to determine what type of help you will need in an emergency.

1. Will you be able to independently shut off the necessary utilities (gas, water, electricity)?
 - Do you know where shut-off valves are? Can you get to them?
 - Can you find and use the right wrench to turn those handles?
2. Can you operate a fire extinguisher?
 - Have you practiced?
 - Will extended handles make these items usable for you?
3. Will you be able to carry your evacuation kit?
 - What do you need to do in order to carry it; how much can you carry regularly; do you have duplicates at other locations?
4. Have you moved or secured large objects that might block your escape path?
5. Write instructions for the following (keep a copy with you and share a copy with your personal support network):
 - a. How to turn off utilities; color-code or label these for quick identification.
 - Main gas valve, located next to the meter - blue; electrical power circuit breaker box - red; and main water valve - green.

- If you have a reduced or limited sense of smell, alert your personal support network to check gas leaks.
- b. How to operate and safely move your essential equipment. Consider attaching simple to read and understand instructions to your equipment.
 - c. How to safely transport you if you need to be carried; include any areas of vulnerability.
 - d. How to provide personal assistance services.
 - Remind anyone who assists you to practice strict cleanliness and to keep fingers out of their mouth. With limited water and increased health hazards, the possibility of infection increases. Keep a supply of latex gloves in your emergency supply kit and ask people assisting you with personal hygiene to use them.
 - List all personal care assistance needs (dressing, bathing, etc.) with instructions on how best to assist you.
 - Make a map of where to find medications, aids, and supplies. Share with your personal support network.
 - e. How will you evacuate?
 - Be aware of barriers and possible hazards to a clear path of exit. Change what you are able to change (clear obstacles from aisles; secure large, heavy items such as bookcases that may fall to block your path). Plan alternate exit paths.

Communication: Practice Assertiveness Skills

Take charge and practice how to quickly explain to people how to move your mobility aids or how to move you safely and rapidly. Be prepared to give clear, specific, and concise instructions and directions to rescue personnel; i.e., "take my oxygen tank," "take my wheelchair," "take my gamma globulin from the freezer," "take my insulin from the refrigerator," "take my communication device from under the bed." Practice giving

these instructions with the least amount of words in the least amount of time. For example, the traditional "fire fighter's carry" may be hazardous for some people with some respiratory weakness. You need to be able to give brief instructions regarding how to move you.

Be prepared to request an accommodation from disaster personnel. For example, if you are unable to wait in long lines for extended periods of time for such items as water, food, and disaster relief applications, practice clearly and concisely explaining why you cannot wait in the line.

Carry-On/Carry-With-You Supplies Supplies to Keep with You at All Times

Packing/Container suggestions: a fanny pack, backpack or drawstring bag which can be hung from a wheelchair, scooter or other assistive device.

1. Emergency Health Information Card.
2. Instructions on personal assistance needs and how best to provide them.
3. Copy of Emergency Documents.
4. Essential medications/copies of prescriptions (at least a week's supply).
5. Flashlight on key ring.
6. Signaling device (whistle, beeper, bell, screecher).
7. Small battery-operated radio and extra batteries.

Disability-Related Supplies to Add to Regular Emergency Kits

Store emergency supplies in areas that will be accessible to you after a quake. Others may be able to share traditional emergency supplies, but you need to store yours on top in a separate **labeled** bag.

Have on hand enough disability-related supplies for up to two weeks (medication syringes, colostomy, respiratory, catheter, padding, distilled water, etc.). If you have a respiratory, cardiac or multiple chemical sensitivities condition, store towels, masks, industrial respirators, or other supplies you can use to filter your air supply. Do not expect shelters or first aid stations to meet your supply needs. In an emergency, supplies will be limited.

If you are unable to afford extra supplies consider contacting one of the many disability-specific organizations such as the Multiple Sclerosis Society, Arthritis Foundation, United Cerebral Palsy Association, etc. These organizations may be able to assist you in gathering extra low cost or no cost emergency supplies or medications.



Medication

It is best if you are able to maintain **at least a 7 to 14 day supply** of essential medications (heart, blood pressure, birth control, diabetic, psychiatric orphan drugs, etc.) and keep this supply with you at all times. **If this is not possible, even maintaining a three day supply would be extremely helpful.**

Work with your doctor(s) to obtain an extra supply of medications, as well as extra copies of prescriptions. Ask if it would be safe to go without one dosage periodically, until an adequate supply has been accumulated. Make several copies of your prescriptions and put one copy in each of your survival kits (car kit, wallet, with your Emergency Documents and your evacuation plan).

Ask your provider or pharmacist about the shelf life and storage temperature sensitivities of your medication. Ask how often you should rotate stored medication to ensure that the effectiveness of the medication does not weaken due to excess storage time. If you are on medications which are administered to you by a clinic or hospital (such as methadone, or chemo or radiation therapy), ask your provider how you should plan for a 3 to 14 day disruption.

If you are a smoker, be aware that smoking will not be allowed in shelters. If getting to an outside smoking area may be difficult for you, consider stocking your evacuation kit with nicotine gum or patches available by prescriptions.

Life in cramped, unheated shelters can increase the chances of pneumonia, influenza, and colds. Therefore, equip your kits with any vitamins or medications necessary to guard against getting sick and to cope with being sick.

Equipment and Assistive Devices

Keep important equipment and assistive devices in a consistent, convenient, and secured place so you can quickly and easily locate them after the shaking. Make sure these items, such as teeth, hearing aids, prothesis, mobility aid, cane, crutches, walker, respirator, service animal harness, augmentative communication device or electronic communicator, artificial larynx, wheelchair, sanitary aids, batteries, eye glasses, contacts including cleaning solutions, etc., are secured. For example, keep hearing aid, eye glasses, etc., in a container by the bedside attached to the nightstand or bedpost using string or Velcro; attach oxygen tank to the wall; keep wheelchair locked and close to the bed. This helps prevent them from falling, flying, or rolling away during a quake.



If you use a laptop computer as a means of communication, consider purchasing a power converter. A power converter allows most laptops (12 volts or less) to run from a cigarette lighter on the dashboard of a vehicle.

