

ARE YOU READY?



**Get
Ready**

www.aphagetready.org

Preparedness tips for people with mobility disabilities



When a disaster happens, getting to safety – whether it be to an evacuation shelter or to a safe room in your home – is critical. And if you're living with a mobility disability, there are some extra steps you should take to get ready to stay safe and healthy during an emergency.

Be in the know

It's always a good first step to learn about the kinds of emergencies and disasters that can and have happened in your community. Finding out this information will help you design a preparedness plan that addresses the emergencies you are likely to face.

For example: If your community is prone to tornadoes, which room in your home can you get to quickly that will offer the best protection against the winds of a tornado? Or if you live in a coastal community at risk for hurricanes, find out which nearby evacuation shelters can best meet your needs.

Next, do a personal assessment. Go through all the items you need to live on a daily basis and think about how an emergency will affect them. This is especially important for any assistive devices that depend on electricity.

What about daily medicines that you take? Do you have enough onhand in case you can't get to a doctor or pharmacist? How will you stay in contact with friends, family and those in your support network? These are important questions that will help you figure out what you can do in a disaster and what you'll need help with.

Talk with the people you depend on about your preparedness plans and how they might fit into it. Ask your home health agency if they have a plan for reaching you in an emergency.

It's important that you know how your regular activities and assistance will be impacted during an emergency. Consider giving house keys to a trusted neighbor, friend or family member who lives close by. Also, give them clear instructions on what kind of help you may need.

Consider contacting your local emergency response agency. Oftentimes, you can register with such an agency so you'll be on its radar. This can be especially important if your community is at risk for emergencies that may require evacuation. If you'll need help during an emergency, don't be shy about saying so.



Photo courtesy iStockphoto—Richard Foreman

Special stocks

An emergency plan should always include an emergency preparedness stockpile.

Some basics that every stockpile should have are:

- A three-day supply of water and nonperishable foods
- A battery-operated radio
- Extra batteries
- A manual can opener
- A first-aid kit
- Pet supplies
- A flashlight

Talk to your doctor about getting a seven-day supply of medicine for your stockpile.

Also, put together a portable kit that you can quickly take with you. Don't forget to include copies of your medical records and contact information for your doctors. Put your portable kit in a bag that you can easily attach to your mobility device or that you can put safely on your body.

Some special items you should include in your emergency stockpile are:

- A tire patch kit and can of seal-in-air product if you use a wheelchair; or an extra battery if you use a motorized wheelchair or scooter.
- An extra cane or other mobility device. In fact, it's a good idea to keep extra canes in different areas of your home.
- Rubber gloves, in case you have to wheel over dangerous rubble.

Remember: An emergency may knock out your electricity for several days. This means that you might not be able to charge the battery on a motorized wheelchair. If it's feasible and you're able, practice moving around with alternative devices such as a cane or manual wheelchair.



Photo courtesy iStockphoto—Alex Rathis

Clear the way

Take a closer look at your home. Will you be able to get to your emergency stockpiles quickly and unencumbered? Will you be able to get to the safest room in your home easily? The safest room is usually one with no windows.

If you work or live in a building with elevators, they may be unusable in an emergency. If you can, practice using the stairs as an alternative. If stairs are not an option, talk to someone you trust about helping you navigate stairs in an emergency. It's also a good idea to ask whether your building's evacuation plan addresses your mobility needs.

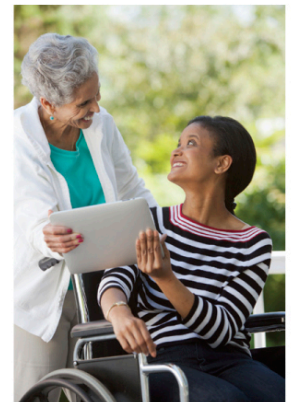


Photo courtesy iStockphoto—Ebstock



800 I Street, NW · Washington, DC · 20001-3710
202-777-APHA · www.aphagetready.org · getready@apha.org



**NEW MEXICO GOVERNOR'S
COMMISSION ON DISABILITY**

www.gcd.state.nm.us

877-696-1470