

## Preparing!

This guide outlines a common sense plan for individuals with disabilities, special needs and their caregivers to use in preparing for emergencies before they happen.

## Make a Plan!

To plan in advance, think through the details of your everyday life. Think about:

- transportation, tools or aids specific to your disability (manual wheelchair as backup to motorized wheelchair).
- life-sustaining equipment, accessories or treatments such as a breathing or dialysis machine; find one or more backup facilities.

Discuss your plan with your healthcare provider, caregiver, and pharmacist where appropriate.

## Create a Personal Support Network!

A strong personal support network in your building, neighborhood or family is essential for your safety. Think about someone who:



- can walk or drive to your home to assist you,
- you trust to have an extra key to your home,
- knows how to operate your life-saving equipment or dispense medicines,
- will help you evacuate or knows where you will go.

Make a list of persons who will be part of your plan: family, friends, caregivers and others. Keep your list handy and practice your plan. ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov))

## Deciding to Stay or Go:

Depending on your circumstance, nature of the emergency, and local authority's recommendation, the first decision is whether you stay or go. You should plan for both possibilities. Get the best local information from law, fire or Dept. of Emergency Management's instant text messaging; sign -up at [www.jeffcoec.org](http://www.jeffcoec.org). Tune to FM radio 91.9 or 91.1. If you need extra travel time or need assistance, make these arrangements in advance.

## Prescription Medicines and Medical Supplies!

Have a two week supply of all your medicines and medical supplies at all times. Store medicine in one location in the original bottles, have cold storage back-up for medicines that must remain cold. Prepare a list to include your medical condition, medicine(s) with dose and frequency. List your prescribing healthcare provider, insurance and pharmacy information. Here are ways to secure extra medicines before an emergency or disaster:

- Ask your doctor for free samples.
- Request a one-time-a-year "vacation refill" from your pharmacist at no extra cost.
- Request a 7-14 day "emergency supply" from your pharmacist. This is not usually covered by insurance so prepare to pay.
- Work the new medicines into your schedule so none of the medicines expire.



## How to Get Prescriptions if You Must Evacuate Out of the Area:

Learn if your pharmacy is part of a regional or national pharmacy chain so you can get prescriptions away from home:

- Don's Pharmacy in PT is a member of the national *Leader* pharmacy chain. Your prescription could be refilled at any *Leader* pharmacy.
- Grocers like Safeway and QFC have national or regional pharmacies.
- CVS, Walgreens, Costco and Walmart have national pharmacies.

## Oxygen and other life-sustaining equipment:

If you have a breathing emergency, call 9-1-1. If you need assistance with breathing equipment or supplies, contact your equipment supplier. Their contact information will be on the equipment. If you or anyone you know requires electricity for oxygen or other life-sustaining equipment, consider:

- registering your needs with your electricity provider.
- having a generator with sufficient fresh fuel and oil, plan for who will start and maintain it during a disaster.
- having non-electrical back-up like oxygen canisters and know your oxygen flow rate (liters/minutes).
- conserving your oxygen by limiting your activities (sitting or lying still) or having a caregiver do a needed task.

### Drinking Water Preparedness!

Individual water/hydration needs vary depending on age, health, physical condition, activity, diet and climate. Sick people need more water than well people. Log onto [www.jeffcoec.org/Library](http://www.jeffcoec.org/Library) for a detailed *Drinking Water* informational brochure.



**Food/Pantry Preparedness!** Create easy access to food supplies. Remember to use up what's in your fridge first, then the freezer and finally the pantry. Pay attention to special dietary needs like low sugar, sodium, cholesterol. Allow for variety and ease of preparation in a power outage.

### Staying Warm!

If your only home heat source is unavailable, have a plan for staying warm by:

- dressing in layers including a warm hat, socks and gloves.
- having extra warm blankets on hand.
- knowing where the nearest warming/refuge or community center is located.

### Visual Impairment Planning:

- After a major disaster, plan for losing the auditory clues you usually rely on.
- If you use a white cane, keep extras in multiple locations.
- Service animals may become confused or frightened during and after a disaster; be prepared to use alternative ways to get around.
- Mark emergency supplies with large print or Braille.

### Hard of Hearing Planning:

- Determine which broadcasting systems will provide continuous caption and/or American Sign Language news.
- Store paper and pens to communicate with emergency personnel. Carry a pre-printed copy of important messages with you, such as "I need an American Sign Language interpreter." Or "If you make announcements, I need to have them written or signed."
- Store hearing aid(s) and batteries where you can easily find them.
- Keep your pager, caption telephone or other communication device fully charged.

### Physical Disabilities Planning:

- Be prepared to give helpers brief instructions on the best way to move you.
- Store emergency supplies in a pack or backpack that can be easily attached to your mobility device.
- Keep a pair of gloves in your supply kit to use while wheeling your manual wheelchair over glass or debris.
- Have an extra battery available for your motorized wheelchair.
- If you spend time above the first floor of a building, practice alternative methods of evacuation with help from your support network.

**For more emergency information go to:**

[www.jeffcoec.org](http://www.jeffcoec.org)

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR THE MEDICALLY FRAGILE



“Enable Yourself to be Self-Reliant “

**Have an Emergency Plan and  
Support Network  
Before a Disaster Hits**

