

Ready To Go!!



A FORCE FIGHTING FOR
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

A Personal Emergency Readiness Guide for People Unable to Self Evacuate (UTSE) and Others with Access or Functional Needs

General steps for personal emergency readiness are:

- ▶ Make a plan
- ▶ Discuss your plan with your helpers
- ▶ Make an emergency readiness kit
- ▶ Keep your kit ready and in one place
- ▶ Check your kit every six months
- ▶ Keep your kit handy and make sure other people know where it is
- ▶ Make a back-up plan for every plan you have

General information: Make a plan

Every person should make plans for emergencies. Many people can't run away from the path of floods, tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes or from terrorist attacks. Some people have vision disabilities, some have mobility disabilities and some have intellectual disabilities. Some people are children and some are elderly adults.

If you fit any of these categories, then this information is for YOU to be Ready To Go!!

A key for you is to stay ready to go so you don't have to get ready to go...in a hurry. You may have to evacuate at a moment's notice and take only medicine and other life-critical things with you. You may not have the time to shop or to search for your supplies. So, you need to make a personal emergency readiness kit and always know where your kit is.

Personal readiness is as personal as your name or your thumbprint. Some people will want to buy a storage tub and fill it with comfort items and necessities for many days. Other people will fill a backpack. Some people will include first aid and other supplies and other people will include only a few band aids and some aspirin. You may need to survive on your own after a disaster. This means having your own food, water and other supplies to last for at least three days. Local officials will not be able to get to everyone at the same time. You may also have to stay at the home of family or friends or even an emergency shelter for several days.

Roads and sidewalks might be blocked or damaged, cars may not start or run or be able to go down roads. You might not be able to get to school or your doctor's office or call anyone on the phone. You must plan to live out of your kit for a number of days.

Basic service like electricity, gas, water and telephones—including cell phones—may be cut off for days, weeks or even longer. Keeping a personal emergency readiness kit is just as important as putting one together. Every six

months is a good time for you and your family or housemates to inspect your kit for old stuff like food, medicine or batteries, and also, to inspect your kit for damage. You should also inspect your kit any time your medical needs or medications change. Storing items in an easy to carry container will help keep them safe.

Each person must be responsible for themselves to the greatest extent possible. Some people will need the assistance of other people in order to make personal emergency readiness plans.

Don't get too focused on each of the different types of emergencies. Take the approach of just being prepared to evacuate, no matter what the reason is.

No matter where you live in Wyoming or what month it is, you want to make sure you have warm clothing in your personal emergency readiness container and clothing to keep you dry—whether for rain or snow. Don't plan on having time to find warm clothes or waterproof clothes in an emergency. Keep spare clothes in your container and include warm blankets.

Getting started: Discuss your plan with your helpers

Meet with someone who is your helper or family member and discuss why you need to be prepared for emergencies and disasters. Discuss the types of disasters we could have in Wyoming. Also discuss the types of disasters in other places you might visit or other places where you have family or friends. If you visit someone in Florida, you would want to know when hurricane season is and discuss where you would go for safety and what you might need to have with you in the event of a hurricane warning. You should also identify an “out-of-state” family contact or close friend. This would be a person who would not be effected by an emergency in Wyoming, but someone you could call if you could not contact anyone inside Wyoming. This outside the state person might even be able to tell you where family or friends are inside Wyoming because long distance phone contact may work when local phone service does not work.

You also need to discuss where to meet if you have to leave where you live—and there is no way to use telephones. For example, in a fire, you might want to meet on a certain corner, at a nearby store or parking lot. If you decide to meet at a business place, everyone should have the phone number and address of that business place.

Think about what you are able to do. How can you make sure you can do the things you plan to do? Will you be able to do all the things in your plan without help? Here are some examples for you to think about:

1. If you have a physical impairment(s) and your home is damaged, how will you move around inside and will you safely get out? If the power is out or goes out, how long will your wheelchair batteries last...how long will your ventilator function...dialysis machine...?
2. If you can not transport yourself and you have to go to a shelter or some other location, how will you get there? If you use a cane, do you have an extra one stored with your personal emergency readiness kit? What about an extra dog leash and/or harness...bowl...dog food...?
3. What about your service animal? Can you take your animal to your local shelter? Rules for animals in shelters vary from state to state and even from county to county. What is your plan if your service animal is injured or is unable to serve you? Has your local emergency manager made plans to get service animal replacements if necessary?
4. If you are hearing impaired, what are your plans for getting information? Do you have TTY numbers for local disaster officials? If there is no power, there will be no telephones, limited computer service and no power for television service. How will you communicate with rescuers? Will there be interpreters in local shelters? Some of these questions also apply to people with vision disabilities.

If you are a disability service provider, especially in a residential or day care setting, all these questions need to be applied to each individual client. If you serve people with cognitive, intellectual or behavioral disabilities, then you have a high level of responsibility for each of your clients—for their personal emergency readiness.

Critical issues: Make an emergency readiness kit

Decisions...decisions...You're going to have to carefully think ahead of time in order to make your best plan. Think about if you have to leave your home, where will you go? Think about what would make you have to leave? Remember...you might have to be gone between several days and more than a week.

- ▶ Will you stay in your home? If so, what would you need if you had no power or electricity, no heat, no refrigeration, no TV, no radio, no telephone and no water?
- ▶ Will you stay with a family member or friend who does not live in the disaster area?
- ▶ Will you stay at a hotel or other location outside the disaster area?
- ▶ Will you stay at a public shelter?

When it comes time to make a decision about where to go, you need to ask yourself if emergency management has given an evacuation order; whether you are directly in the path of danger and whether local roads are open or might soon close.

If you think you want to stay in your home, please see our handout about staying where you are in the case of emergencies. The very most important point in all your plans is to have at least one back-up plan for everything. Remember if you decide to remain in your home, it may be many days before anyone comes to check on you.

You should not remain at home if an evacuation order is given. The order is given to save lives. If you ignore the order, you place your life at risk.

If you have personal supports and services for care, you need a backup plan in case your first plan doesn't work to make sure those support and service needs are met in emergency situations. Do you require special foods or diet? Do you have food allergies? Does food you eat require special preparation? Does certain food need refrigeration? Do you require adaptive utensils, plates, bowls, cups, etc.? Does someone assist you to eat or drink? Do you need accessible transportation or do you need someone to help move you around? What positioning or other equipment do you use, e.g., adaptive seating, stander, bed, toilet, bath chair, hoist, Hoyer lift, etc.? What equipment items are battery operated? What adaptive tools do you use to help you pick things up or use equipment?

Critical issues: Keep your kit ready and in one place

If you are a care provider and any of your clients have needs outlined above, you must ensure primary and backup plans exist for every need.

If you are a person who has any of these—or other—needs, you must talk with local officials to best determine how your needs will be met inside a shelter. This includes making provisions for personal assistants, service animals and any type of assisted care.

Many counties have what are referred to as “special needs registries.” These are voluntary registries, maintained by fire and/or emergency managers, which identify where you live and what kind of assistance you might need in the event of emergency evacuation. This registry not only assists emergency managers during emergencies, but also helps them plan for sheltering and providing other needs. Emergency planners can not plan for services and

supports they are not aware of—so how will you help make them aware? We encourage you to contact your local emergency managers and discuss your needs with them.

Most people have friends and family who are called a personal support network. You should have three or four people identified as your emergency personal support network who will each know your personal emergency readiness plan and specifically what they will need to do for you during an emergency. Here are some of the things you'll need to talk about with them:

- ▶ Check on you and ensure you are ok. Agree on a visible signal that communicates you are safe and have left your home, e.g., hang a sheet or towel outside your window.
- ▶ Help get supplies to you if you remain in your home.
- ▶ Transport you to another location.
- ▶ Keep a copy of your personal emergency readiness plan.
- ▶ Review your personal emergency readiness plan and coordinate needs with local emergency management officials.
- ▶ Help contact other family members, friends and service providers during a disaster.
- ▶ **Check your kit every six months.**
- ▶ **Keep your kit handy and make sure other people know where it is.**

Identify exactly what help each person in your network will provide and where and how they will provide help and put it in your personal emergency readiness plan. Be sure both you and each person in your network know when you will need help. Will it be only during public emergencies or disasters...only if family members are away...for the entire duration of any event or just until alternative arrangements are made?

Now that many of the major considerations have been covered, let's consider a few more specifics.

Personal background information

Personal background information is especially important if you have serious medical considerations and can also help save time if you have speech or communication disabilities and American Sign Language is not an option with emergency or disaster people.

On the last page of this package is a checklist of important information for you to remove from the package, fill out and then keep together with your personal emergency readiness kit.

What should a personal emergency readiness kit contain?

Water

- ▶ One gallon per person or pet per day
- ▶ Store water in plastic containers such as milk cartons or soft drink bottles

Food

- ▶ Store food which requires no refrigeration, preparation or cooking—and little or no water for preparation, for example canned meats, fruits, vegetables and juices
- ▶ Baby food
- ▶ Pet food

Medications and special items

- ▶ Durable or disposable medical equipment
- ▶ Non-prescription drugs such as aspirin or non aspirin pain reliever
- ▶ Medications specific for individuals in your family such as insulin for diabetics

Sanitation

- ▶ Personal hygiene items like deodorant, shampoo, special soaps
- ▶ Toilet paper, towelettes
- ▶ Feminine supplies such as tampons, Kotex pads
- ▶ Disinfectant, vinegar, bleach, Lysol

Tools and Supplies

- ▶ Flash light, battery operated radio and extra batteries
- ▶ Mess kits or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- ▶ Cash or Traveler's Checks, change
- ▶ Fire extinguisher
- ▶ Tent
- ▶ Tool box including wrench for turning off gas and water
- ▶ Plastic sheeting
- ▶ Utility knife

Clothing and bedding

- ▶ Sturdy shoes or work boots
- ▶ Rain gear
- ▶ Blankets or sleeping bags
- ▶ Hat and gloves
- ▶ Thermal underwear

Important family documents

- ▶ ID cards, passports, social security cards
- ▶ Will, insurance policies, contracts, stocks
- ▶ Bank account information
- ▶ Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container
- ▶ If you have a personal computer, scan and save these items on a thumb drive or disc and send to a family member in case originals are destroyed

First aid kit

Sterile bandages

Tape

Antiseptic wipes

Gloves

Scissors

Face mask

READY TO GO!

For those who want more information check out these checklists on the following websites:

1. Department of Homeland Security (www.ready.gov/)
2. National Fire Protection Association (www.nfpa.org/categoryList.asp?categoryID=824&URL=Research%20&%20Reports/Fact%20sheets/People%20with%20disabilities)

There are plenty and many other resources and a few of our other favorites include:

www.redcross.org
www.fema.gov
www.disabilitypreparedness.gov/
www.katrinadisability.info/wyoming.html
www.ada.gov/emergencyprep.htm
www.nobodyleftbehind2.org/resources/index.shtml#em-planning
www.ready.gov/america/getakit/disabled.html

The very most important things to remember are:

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- ▶ Discuss your plan with your helpers
- ▶ Make an emergency readiness kit
- ▶ Keep your kit ready and in one place
- ▶ Check your kit every six months
- ▶ Keep your kit handy and make sure other people know where it is
- ▶ Make a back-up plan for every plan you have

If you would like more information about how to best assist persons with disabilities or how to prepare to assist persons with disabilities, please contact the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities at the University of Wyoming, Dave Schaad, (307) 766-2095 or dschaad@uwyo.edu.

With much gratitude, we acknowledge the ongoing support, efforts and partnership of the Laramie County Wyoming Emergency Manager.

This product was funded in part by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) DHHSCMS40254 and contract funds from the Wyoming Department of Health, awarded to the University of Wyoming, College of Health Sciences, Wyoming Institute for Disabilities. 4/09

PERSONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name: _____

Date of birth: _____ Social Security number: _____

Recent personal photo

Medications currently using, dosage, and frequency. Try and have medications for 90 days and make sure to have prescription information from your pharmacy. Include non-prescription medications:

Recent medical history (surgeries within the past year, pending surgeries, current treatments): _____

Name and telephone number of doctor: _____

What hospital you normally go to: _____

Guardian/parent contact/next-of-kin/personal assistant emergency contact information (local and non-local):

School/work contact information: _____

Community service provider(s) contact information: _____

Personal equipment provider contact information: _____

Critical benefits contact information (SSDI, Medicaid waiver): _____

Local/ongoing therapist contact information: _____

Service animal supplies (leash, food, meds, etc.): _____

Mobility extras (battery pack, charger, extra cane, etc.): _____