

Critical Issues Concerning People Unable to Self Evacuate (UTSE) and Others With Access or Functional Needs: Emergency Planning/Evacuation/Mitigation



A FORCE FIGHTING FOR
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

General

For ease of reference throughout this publication, “people UTSE” refers to people unable to remove themselves from harm’s way and all other citizens who will need help during emergency situations. Remember variations of ability (disabilities) are normal conditions and not “special” conditions.

This information has been specially prepared for County Homeland Security Managers by the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND) with coordination by the Wyoming Office of Homeland Security and the Wyoming Department of Health.

Planning

1. Involve people UTSE (see last page) who reside within your area of responsibility, in every phase of emergency planning and encourage them to take the lead.
2. Use Connect Wyoming (put in web address) and WIND (put in WIND Community Inclusion web address) as a resource for identifying resources and ideas for people with disabilities and other people UTSE
3. Consider building disaster welfare checks into your plan for Day 2 activities. Designate “FAN” (functional and access needs) or “FAST” (functional assessment service teams) Teams to respond to situations found through disaster welfare checks. FAST or FAN Teams could be designated to perform checks and/or assessments. Consider the “Mom” test, e.g., “Would Mom care who shows up to help?”
4. Consider schools as short term Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) (already ADA accessible, grounds generally support helicopter needs, grounds are generally fenced allowing easy establishment of Entry Control Point/s (ECPs)...))
5. People with infusion needs (dialysis, cardiac, etc.) will require ALS support for movement and may require an apparatus other than ambulance for movement
6. ASL (American Sign Language) interpreters should be on-site when any live media telecast is planned. ASL interpreters should be included with contracts in place for standby services. One interpreter is insufficient.

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7. Real-time captions should be required from all visual forms of televised broadcasting
8. People UTSE are being evacuated from an environment where they thrive and maintain to a hostile, unfriendly environment. Ensure temporary environment reflects as many accommodations as possible.
9. Leverage existing service systems such as in-home services, home health care providers, meals-on-wheels, transportation systems (commercial, private and institutional) and Wyoming Independent Living Center (WILR) and Wyoming Services for Independent Living (WSIL).

Evacuation

1. Use volunteers with disabilities as force multipliers
2. Preprinted note cards for LE and EMS, e.g., “EVACUATE NOW”
3. Voluntary registries are ok, but...
 - a. Ensure it is voluntary and give wide publicity about it being voluntary
 - b. Ensure safeguards for confidentiality controls. Consider city codes as provided at Appendix X
 - c. Develop a process to regularly update the registry
 - d. Consider asking a volunteer (formal) with a disability to develop and execute update efforts
 - e. Publicize existence of the registry and volunteer nature
4. Develop a plan for accessible transportation needs for people who use wheelchairs, scooters or other mobility aids as well as people who are blind or have low vision and other people with functional assistance needs. Consider lift-equipped school buses and disability service organizations with accessible transportation resources.

Mitigation

1. Avoid hospitalization of people UTSE by:
 - a. Ensuring accessible stockpiles of both manual and powered wheel chairs
 - b. Supporting training of emergency responders with encouragement to ensure removal of assistive devices for people who use them—especially wheelchairs
2. Ensure security for people UTSE as many people in this category comprise a vulnerable population. Consider designated “UTSE guides” in shelters and ensure NCIC and other registry checks.
3. Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) should have one seat per county as a resource person for the EOC and Incident Command (IC) functions regarding people UTSE
4. Shelter accessibility requires pre-planning. Entrances, toilets and other shelter areas must be fully accessible to people in wheelchairs, scooters and other mobility aids or needs.
5. Closely examine designated shelters for access by people with disabilities. Use volunteers with differing impairments to help assess accessibility and usability.
6. Accessibility includes locations for off-loading accessible transportation types, parking, curb cuts from parking lots to shelter facility, pathways to shelter facility, hallways inside shelter facilities, sleeping areas—including cots, as well as toilets, showers, dining areas, etc.

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7. Invite representatives of group homes and other people with disabilities to meet with you as part of routine shelter planning. Discuss accessibility/ease of use of shelters and develop site specific instructions for shelter managers and other volunteers who will staff the shelter.
8. Height of cots, positioning next to walls, and adjustability of cot height to match wheelchairs makes it possible for people to self-transfer from wheelchairs to cots. Failure to make these kinds of simple plans will result in increased staff needs and unfair/undue treatment of people with disabilities.
9. Service animal blurp
10. Storage of medications blurp
11. In-shelter commo blurp
12. Temporary housing need blurp
13. Contracting for emergency supports and services blurp

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.

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- ▶ New Mexico Department of Health, Award U90/CCU616999 Cooperative Agreement for Public Health Preparedness and Response for Bioterrorism, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
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- ▶ Center for Development and Disability, University of New Mexico
- ▶ American Association on Health and Disability
- ▶ Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND) at the University of Wyoming
- ▶ National Fire Protection Agency