

PART THREE:
INFORMATION FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
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Information for pet owners

People with special needs include a wide variety of individuals who live, work and worship in our communities. This broad grouping can include persons with mental, physical and/or cognitive disabilities such as blindness, loss of hearing, intellectual impairment or mobility limitations. People with medically related needs such as persons with diabetes, individuals with seizure disorders and an ever-increasing group of senior citizens who experience Alzheimer's and other memory related disorders also have certain **special disaster-related needs**. Culturally-based uniqueness can also present certain challenges that can influence disaster readiness and response. Persons with English as a second language may also have "special needs" as well as persons who do not drive an automobile. Single mothers and persons with special dietary needs may also fall under this category of community members with special needs. The point is, **within every community there are persons with unique and special needs** that must be accommodated during an emergency. Every family and community needs to be aware of those members who, either through disability, limited mobility, cultural distinctions and/or other unique situations, may require special planning considerations. Here are some things to think about: (Excerpt from "Talking About Disaster: Guide For Standard Messages", National Disaster Education Coalition, Washington D.C.)

1. **Create a network of relatives, friends and co-workers to assist in an emergency.** This network should have knowledge of the "special needs" of the person(s) and have developed an action plan.
2. **Maintain a list of important items and store the list with the Disaster Supplies Kit.** Examples: hearing aid batteries, current prescription names, doses, and sources, doctor's name and number.
3. **Contact your local emergency management office and register.** In doing so, first responders will be better prepared to assist when the time come.
4. **Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to identify your special need.** These may save your life if you are in need of medical attention and unable to communicate.
5. **Know the location and availability of MORE THAN ONE facility if you are dependent on a dialysis machine or other life- sustaining equipment or treatment.** There may be other people requiring equipment or the facility may have been affected by the disaster.
6. **If you have a severe speech, language or hearing disability:**
 - a. When you dial 9-1-1 (or your local emergency number), tap the space bar to indicate a TDD call.

- b. Store a writing pad and pencils to communicate with others.
- c. Keep a flashlight handy to signal your whereabouts and for illumination to aid in communication.
- d. Remind friends and neighbors that you cannot completely hear warnings and ask them to be your source of emergency information.
- e. If you have a service animal i.e. hearing aid dog, store extra food, water and supplies, be aware that the dog may become confused or disoriented during a disaster.

7. **If you use a wheelchair:**

- a. Show friends how to operate your wheelchair or help you transfer out of your chair so they can move you quickly if necessary.
- b. If you use a power wheelchair, make sure friends know the size of your wheelchair, in case it has to be transported, and know where to get a battery, if necessary.
- c. Inquire about emergency equipment that would make it easier for others to help you get out if you live or work in a high-rise building and might have to evacuate via a stairwell.

8. **Listen to the advice of local officials.** It is important to respect the recommendations of the first responders i.e. firemen. They will put their lives at risk to save you! **Remember - “special needs” require special planning. Even if your special need is temporary i.e. a broken leg and using a wheelchair.**

INFORMATION FOR PET OWNERS

Know in advance how to care for your pets during a disaster.

1. Take your pets with you if you evacuate.
2. Plan in advance where you will go if you evacuate.
3. Contact hotels and motels outside your immediate area to check their policies on accepting pets.
4. Ask friends, relatives, or others outside your area if they could shelter your animals.
5. Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter your animals in an emergency.
6. Keep a list of “pet friendly” places, including their telephone numbers, with other disaster information and supplies.
7. Carry pets in a sturdy carrier.
8. Have identification, collar, leash and proof of vaccinations for all pets.
9. Assemble a portable pet disaster supplies kit.
10. Have a current photo of your pets in case they get lost.
11. Create a plan in case you are not at home during an emergency.
12. Contact your local EMA, humane society and animal control agency and ask about sheltering options and emergency animal shelters.
13. Learn pet first aid and keep your pet first aid kit up to date.