Emergency Preparedness

For people with mobility impairments
“people with mobility impairments represent a segment of the population with one of the highest risks of dying in a fire.”

-Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

“According to incident reports filed by local fire departments, physical disability was a factor in an average of 380, or 14%, of home fire deaths per year between 2004 and 2008.”

-National Fire Protection Association Fire Analysis and Research Division
FACTS

“One of the things learned from the response to Hurricane Katrina was that people with disabilities were disproportionately affected by the storm and its aftermath.”

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

In 2005 the National Council on Disability reported that:

“Only 47% of people with disabilities had developed plans to evacuate their homes in the event of a disaster and only 54% knew whom to contact about emergency plans in their community”
The Purpose

To help you and your caregivers start thinking about how to be prepared for emergencies when you return home.

We will be covering:
- Fire safety at home/work/school
- Natural disasters
The keys to successful responses for most emergencies are similar:

1. Knowing there is an emergency quickly
2. Having a thorough, well practiced plan to respond to the emergency
3. Having the resources needed to respond on hand ahead of time
Fire Safety

Everything you learned in elementary school, plus a bit more!
How will you know there’s a fire?

Smoke Alarms:
- The sooner you know, the more time you have to react
- Where?
  - Every bedroom, outside sleeping areas, and on every level
- Alarms should be interconnected
- Detailed information about smoke alarms can be found at:
  - www.usfa.fema.gov
  - www.nfpa.org
Smoke Alarms:

- Test your alarm monthly
- Replace them every 10 years:
  - Technology upgrades
- Replace the batteries at least once a year
- Your local fire department will:
  - Be happy to come to your home and help you install smoke detectors correctly
  - Change out the batteries for you if you ask them!
How will you get help?

• Keep an accessible phone handy

• Consider a monitored home fire alarm system

• Make your address easily visible from the street
How will you get out?

• Plan detailed escape plans for home and for work/school and practice them!

• Practice your evacuation plans with all the people who agree to assist you – make sure everyone feels comfortable with their training!

• Make sure to give copies of your evacuation plans to the security personnel at your work or school

• [www.nfpa.org/disabilities](http://www.nfpa.org/disabilities)
Sample questions from Personal Emergency Evacuation Planning Checklist found at www.nfpa.org/disabilities:

**TYPE OF ASSISTANCE NEEDED:**

- Can the person evacuate himself or herself with a device or aid?
- What is the specific device or aid?
- Where is the device or aid located?
- Does the person need assistance to evacuate?
- What does the assistant(s) need to do?
- Does the assistant(s) need any training?
- Has the training been completed?
- Where will the assistant(s) meet the person requiring assistance?
- When will the person requiring assistance contact the assistant(s)?
In Your Home

- Be sure you have at least two accessible exits
  - Consider ability to open door
- Keep your wheelchair within reach when you’re in bed or on the couch/recliner
- Consider sleeping in the most accessible room
- Have a fire extinguisher available
- Sprinkler systems and compartmentation walls are an option
Fire Extinguishers:

- Five main types of fire extinguishers
- Important to know so you have the desired one in areas of your home
- Purchase fire extinguishers with an ABC rating (multipurpose) for home use
- Should be replaced every 10-12 years

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<td>Flammable Liquids</td>
<td>Grease, Oil, Paint, Solvents</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Live Electrical Equipment</td>
<td>Electrical Panel, Motor, Wiring, Etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Combustible Metal</td>
<td>Magnesium, Aluminum, Etc.</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Commercial Cooking Equipment</td>
<td>Cooking Oils, Animal Fats, Vegetable Oils</td>
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In Your Home:

• Keep at least a few days worth of your medications together so you (or a first responder) can grab them quickly when you evacuate.

• If you use a power chair, be able to verbalize how to put your chair into manual mode
  • You may want to put brightly colored tape on the “brakes” to make it easier to explain
Oxygen and ventilators
Oxygen

• Flammable vs accelerator
• Risks
  • Smoking, flames from matches, candles, or furnaces
  • Hot elements in space heaters or hair dryers
  • Electric arc produced when plugging in the television
  • Oxygen tanks used improperly

Steps to reduce risks
• No smoking
• Utilize the 5-foot rule (always 5 feet away)
• Don’t use products that can easily burn (i.e., cosmetics, waxes, greases, etc.)
• Store oxygen containers properly (upright)
• Keep a fire extinguisher nearby
Vents

• ALWAYS have your ambu bag
  • Limited internal ventilator battery life

• Contact your local utility companies and first responders to let them know you have sensitive medical equipment in use at your home.

• If you need to get out quickly, hyperventilate (3-5 breaths) then continue to bag once you are outside.
  • EMS will have means to ventilate once they arrive.
If you can’t get out and must wait for first responders:

- In public buildings, get yourself into the closest stairwell
  - Withstand a fire longer than other areas of the building
  - Path the fire fighters are taking to access the building
- Worst-case scenario:
  - If all other options are out, consider trying to throw yourself to the floor from your bed or wheelchair
RESCUE Program

RESCUE is a comprehensive program designed to provide education to individuals with disabilities about emergency preparedness, to provide education to emergency responders about disability, and to facilitate pre-emergency communication between community members and emergency responders.
Will the sticker increase crime?

There is currently no research to support an increase in crime with use of the sticker!

**Stickers known to decrease home invasions:**
- Alarm signs and decals
- Dog signs
- Neighborhood alert signs

**Stickers/circumstances known to increase home invasions:**
- Weapons on property signs
- Known drug dealer
- Value of car in driveway
Rescue Packet

GIVE THIS LETTER TO YOUR LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT

Dear Emergency Responder:

The enclosed RESCUE sticker, developed by Shepherd Center in Atlanta, is to be placed in a front window of a home to alert first responders that someone within that residence needs special assistance in the event of an emergency. Shepherd Center is a private, not-for-profit hospital specializing in medical treatment, research and rehabilitation for people with spinal cord injury or brain injury.

With input from DeKalb County Fire Department (Ga.), the RESCUE sticker originated from an emergency preparedness program at Shepherd Center, which educates patients and their families on fire safety for individuals with new cognitive and/or physical limitations. Program participants are provided with the RESCUE sticker and encouraged to inform their local fire department of their specific disability.

The enclosed RESCUE sticker and educational material are also available at shepherd.org/rescue, and through participating fire stations and EMS personnel in Atlanta.

We hope you find the RESCUE initiative helpful in your endeavors to keep your community safe!

For further information, additional stickers or to implement the program in your community, please email us at rescue@shepherd.org.

Thank you very much for your time and attention.
RESCUE Sticker Placement

- Place the RESCUE sticker in a visible front window of your home. This is the standardized placement recommended by emergency responders.
- Ensure that your address is easily visible from the street so that first responders can find you quickly.
- Take the enclosed letter and form to your local fire department and have them enter your information into their database with health conditions that require special notation. Include the location of your RESCUE sticker.

Be Prepared

- Make sure you can hear and recognize the sound of all smoke or emergency alarms. Test alarms once a month and replace batteries twice a year.
- Keep an accessible phone with you at all times, even at night. Options are a cell phone tucked under your pillow, a sip-and-puff phone next to the bed, or a picture phone.
- Have your medications organized at all times so that you can have someone grab them quickly if necessary.

Plan Your Escape

- Draw a floor plan of your home with two accessible exits if possible. Discuss with everyone in your home. If you have multiple caregivers, post your plan on your refrigerator.
- Apply same evacuation tips to your office or place of work.
- Practice your plan at least twice a year.

CONTINUED ON BACK
When to visit the fire department? Why?

• Recommend that you visit your local fire department 3 days in a row
• Explain your physical capabilities and limitations
• Give them a copy of your escape plan and ask if they have any suggestions
• Make sure they know which room you sleep in in your home
• Teach them about your chair and educate them on anything else they need to know about you
• Ask them if they have any questions for you!
Carries and Evacuations

• *Always*
  • Keep open communication between yourself and your helpers
  • Make sure your helpers are using proper body mechanics
Proper Body Mechanics

- Keep your hips under your shoulders
- Use your gluts and quads to lift, not your back or arms (bend with your legs, not with your back)
- Keep the object close to your center of mass (COM)
  - COM is close to your belly button
- Don’t twist, keep your feet & hips turned in direction that you are moving, or shift weight from one leg to another
- Adjust the height of the bed or put one knee on the bed to allow you to get closer to the patient and keep your hips under your shoulders.
Two Person Hold/Carry
Two Person Lift/Carry

• Performed by two people
• Strongest helper lifts the trunk
• Other helper scoops the legs from the side
• Best if head/neck control is present
• The person being lifted bears down with shoulders
Sheet over Toes Carry

- Bring knees to chest, fold sheet over toes and knees. Criss cross sheet and tuck ends behind knees
- At least two helpers
- Can provide good support to head and neck if necessary and person is not too tall.
Sheet Drag

- Least desirable due to risk of skin shearing
- Can be done with one helper
- If no sheet is available, it will be best to drag the person out by their legs instead of arms
Getting someone out of bed with one caregiver

- Be sure to lower the bedrails first and lower the bed as much as possible
- Could possibly turn the mattress sideways and have it act as a slide to lower the person to the floor
- Swing the legs off the side of the bed first and then lower torso and head to the floor
- Grab sheet (or use two-man hold) and lower to the floor
Getting someone out of bed with one caregiver
Getting someone out of a power chair with one caregiver

- Remove chest strap and seat belt
- Flip up foot plate
- Raise one of the armrests
- Lower person to the floor with the two-person hold
Natural disasters often occur quickly and without much warning. The key is to be prepared for them ahead of time!
Natural Disasters: Which are common in your area?

- Air Quality
- Droughts
- Earthquakes
- Floods
- Flus and outbreaks
- Hurricanes
- Lightning
- Rain and snow
- Security
- Tornadoes
- Tsunamis
- Wildfires

You can get information from your state and local Emergency Management Agency (EMA) or Homeland Security Office by visiting their Websites.
Keep yourself informed

- Wireless emergency alerts (WEA)
- Emergency Alert System (EAS)
- NOAA weather radio
- Real-time hazard maps
  - www.nesec.org - Northeast States Emergency Consortium
  - http://naturalhazardmapping.com/hazard_maps/interactive
During and following a natural disaster, your whole community may be affected:

- When you get home from Shepherd, register with the Emergency Management Agency (EMA) in your county.

- When there is a community disaster, the American Red Cross contacts the EMA in that county to find out who needs help evacuating their homes.

- The Red Cross then will provide transportation to local shelters for individuals registered with that county’s EMA.
Shelters

• Equipment people are allowed to take to a shelter is limited due to space limitations. If you are allowed only one piece of equipment at the shelter, your wheelchair cushion may be a good option.

• When you register with the EMA, make it clear that you are dependent for mobility without your wheelchair. This may increase your chances of getting to keep your wheelchair with you at the shelter.

• In the event of a community disaster requiring evacuation, accessible shelters can be found at www.redcross.org or on the Red Cross Shelter smart phone app.
Emergency Evacuation Considerations:

• If you are using your own transportation to go to a shelter or to get out of town:
  • Make sure you have enough gas in your vehicle
    • Gas stations along an evacuation route may run out of gas
    • Stations may be closed in an emergency
    • Power outages may affect ability to pump or buy gas
    • Always keep at least ½ of tank in your vehicle

• Map out a route and/or alternative routes
• Have cash available
• Notify family and friends of your plans
Things to consider during a natural disaster:

During and following a natural disaster, you may not have power, water, phone, or cable service. Over the course of a couple of days this could affect your:

- Bowel and bladder care
- Medical equipment needs
  - Ventilator
  - Oxygen
  - Power Wheelchair needs
- Communication with others
  - Cell phones
  - Home phones
  - Internet Access
- Medication refills and medical supplies
You can prepare by doing the following ahead of time:

- Make your local utilities companies are aware of your medical needs ahead of time – they will likely put you on a list to have your services restored more quickly

- Keep enough non-perishable food on hand for everyone in your home for about three days, as well as a manual can opener

- Consider purchasing a back-up generator for your medical equipment
You can prepare by doing the following ahead of time:

- Always have enough water available to meet the hydration and hygiene needs of everyone in your household for about three days (don’t forget to consider your bowel/bladder care needs!)

- Detailed recommendations for a basic disaster supplies kit can be found at: [https://www.ready.gov/kit](https://www.ready.gov/kit)
You can prepare by doing the following ahead of time:

- PWC user: Consider purchasing an extra battery
- Have a manual wheelchair as a back-up option (it will also be easier to transport in a regular vehicle)
- Show others how to operate, assemble, and disassemble the wheelchair
- Have a plan to get out of town if necessary, including:
  - Identify and communicate with people who expect you to come stay with them in the event of an emergency
  - Make sure you have written/printed directions to their homes
    - Google Maps may not be an option, and some roads may be closed!
You can prepare by doing the following ahead of time:

• Medications:
  • Keep up-to-date on your medication refills
  • Keep a list of your prescription medicines including information on dosage, frequency, medical supply needs and allergies.
  • Have a cooler and chemical ice packs for all refrigerated medication
  • Talk to MD and pharmacist about how to create an emergency supply of medications

• What about money?
  • If the power is out ATMs and credit card readers may not be working. Keep enough cash on hand to get you out of town!
Resources

www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/emergencypreparedness.html
  • Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
    ▪ Disability and health, emergency preparedness articles available here

www.CTIA.org
  • The Wireless Association
    ▪ Provides information about wireless emergency alerts for your smart phone

www.fcc.gov
  • Federal Communications Commission
    ▪ Provides information about the Emergency Alert System (EAS)

www.fema.gov
  • Federal Emergency Management Agency
Resources

www.gema.state.ga.us
  • Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security

www.nfpa.org/disabilities
  • National Fire Protection Association.
    ▪ A Personal Emergency Evacuation Planning Checklist can be found at this website

www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr
  • National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
    ▪ Provides information about weather radio stations and weather radios

www.ready.ga.gov
  • Ready Georgia
    ▪ A statewide campaign supported by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) aimed at motivating Georgians to take action to prepare for a disaster.
Resources

www.usfa.fema.gov
  • U.S. Fire Administration

www.ready.gov
  • Ready
    ▪ Detailed recommendations for a basic disaster supplies kit can be found at www.ready.gov/basic-disaster-supplies-kit

www.redcross.org
  • American Red Cross
    ▪ Provides information about local shelters in the event of a community emergency

www.shepherd.org/resources/rescue
  • Shepherd Center.
    ▪ Additional information about the RESCUE program (and the packet you received) can be found at this website.
There are smart phone apps for that!

American Red Cross

- First Aid by American Red Cross
  - step-by-step instructions to guide you through everyday first aid scenarios.
  - Integrated with 911 so you can call EMS from the app.
  - Available in English and Spanish languages

- Emergency! by American Red Cross
  - Audible siren for alerts related to tornados, hurricanes, floods, and many other weather-related emergency situations
  - Information on what to do before/during/after the event
  - Track the event
  - Enable critical alerts that can override the Do Not Disturb setting on your device
  - Let family and friends know your are okay with the “I’m Safe” alert for Facebook, Twitter, email and text
  - Find open Red Cross shelters in your area when you need help
  - Available in English and Spanish languages
A national public service advertising (PSA) campaign designed to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to emergencies including natural and man-made disasters.

- Create and edit your Ready Profile for customized emergency plans
- Local weather and public health alerts
- Checklist of emergency supplies/kit
- Information on what to do during different types of emergencies
- Hurricane evacuation routes
- Disaster history for your location
- Maps of nearby American Red Cross shelters

Ready Georgia: https://gema.georgia.gov/plan-prepare/ready-georgia
General apps available

Emergency contacts

- Keeps a list of emergency contacts, known allergies, medications you are on, any conditions you have, and your personal identification information on your smart phone.

Emergency GPS locators

- Built into your phone and can be used in emergency situations to report your GPS position to first responders or family/friends
- Can install GPS apps for more detailed tracking information
Smart911 is a free service that allows citizens across the U.S. to create a Safety Profile for their household that includes any information they want 9-1-1 to have in the event of an emergency.

Anyone in that household dials 9-1-1 from a phone associated with their Safety Profile, their profile is immediately displayed to the 9-1-1 call taker providing additional information that can be used to facilitate the proper response to the proper location.

www.smart911.com
Health App- IOS

• The Health app was created to help organize your important health information and make it easy to access in a central and secure place.

• There are new ways to share data with your loved ones and healthcare team.

• Create a medical ID to allow first responders to access your critical medical information from the Lock Screen and/or shared during an emergency call.
### Android

**Go to Settings-Safety and Emergency**

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<th>Settings</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Medical info • Wireless emergency alerts</td>
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**Add Medical Info and Emergency Contacts**

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<tr>
<td>Silence notifications while driving</td>
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To recap, when you get home from Shepherd please contact:

Fire Safety:
• Develop your escape plan
• Check smoke detectors
• Your local fire department
• Discuss escape plan and let first responders know what your needs are

Emergency Preparedness:
• Register with the Emergency Management Agency for your county
  • Allow the American Red Cross to be able to accommodate your evacuation needs if a community disaster occurs
• Contact your utility company