

Special Needs Population

Storage:

- Store emergency supplies in a pack or backpack attached to a walker, wheelchair, scooter, etc.
- Store needed mobility aids (canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs) close to you in a consistent, convenient and secured location. Keep extra aids in several locations, if possible.

Emergency supply kit:

- Keep a pair of heavy gloves in your supply kit to use when wheeling or making your way over glass and debris.
- If you use a motorized scooter, consider having an extra battery available.
- Check with your vendor to see if you will be able to charge batteries by either connecting jumper cables to a vehicle battery or by connecting batteries to a specific type of converter that plugs into your vehicle's cigarette lighter in the event of electricity outages.
- If your chair does not have puncture proof tires, keep a patch kit, an extra supply of inner tubes or a can of "seal in air product" to repair flat tires.
- Store a lightweight manual wheelchair, if available.

Evacuation:

- Arrange and secure furniture and other items to provide paths of travel and barrier-free passages.
- If you spend time above the first floor of a building with an elevator, plan and practice using alternative evacuation methods. If needed, establish a personal support network.
- If you cannot use the stairs, discuss lifting and carrying techniques that will work for you. There will be instances when wheelchair users will have to leave their chairs behind in order to safely evacuate a structure.
- Transporting someone down stairs may not be practical without sufficient help available. Persons using a wheelchair should instruct any volunteers on the safest way to transport them and advise regarding areas of vulnerability. For example, the traditional "firefighter's carry" might be hazardous for some people with respiratory weakness.

Canes:

- If a person with a visual disability uses a cane, it is wise to keep extras in strategic, consistent and secured locations at work, at home or at school.
- Practice maneuvering around familiar and non-familiar obstacles and hazards at work, at home, or at school.
- Keep a spare cane in your home emergency kit.

Alternate Mobility Preparedness:

- Persons with low vision might place security lights in each room to light paths for travel. These lights plug into electric wall outlets and light up automatically if there is a loss of power. They will continue to operate automatically for one to six hours and can be turned off manually. They can also be used as a short-lasting flashlight.
- Store high-powered flashlights with wide beams and extra batteries.
- Plan and practice for loss of auditory clues that you might normally rely on to maneuver at work, home or at school.
- Service animals may become confused, panicked, frightened or disoriented during and after a disaster. Keep them confined or securely leashed or harnessed. A leash or harness is an important item for managing a nervous or upset animal. Be prepared to use alternate ways to negotiate your way to safety.

Label supplies:

- If helpful, mark emergency supplies with large print, fluorescent tape or Braille.

Secure Computers:

- Anchor special equipment and large pieces of furniture, such as computers, bookcases and shelves, in your office or at home. Create a computer backup system for important data and store it off site.

Advocacy issues:

- Advocate that TV and radio news post important telephone numbers as well as announce them slowly and repeat them frequently.

For more information, use this link to [FEMA](#).