



Principles of
Emergency
Preparedness



Preparing for an
Environmental
Emergency



DDS SafetyNet

PROMOTING CHOICE AND OPTIONS IN THE COMMUNITY
FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



Principles of Emergency Preparedness

An environmental emergency can strike at any time and without warning. Make sure that you and the individual(s) you support are prepared. Being prepared means understanding a few principles of preparedness about the individual you support:

- To maintain the dignity and independence that lies at the heart of the disability movement, individuals with disabilities must take personal responsibility for their safety, to the degree allowed by their disability.
- Individuals with disabilities must be included in preparedness planning for all emergencies, and all plans must take people with disabilities into account.
- Individuals with cognitive impairments and developmental disabilities require assistance to cope with new surroundings and to minimize confusion factors. It is crucial that people with disabilities help develop accessible communications and reliable assistance technologies.*

Preparing for an Environmental Emergency

Being prepared for an environmental emergency also means creating and practicing plans. The Consumer Advisory Committee with the assistance of The Office of Human Rights and Advocacy Services has developed **Feeling Safe Being Safe**; resources to assist the Direct Support Professional in helping the individuals they support develop their own emergency preparedness plan. The resources available are written in plain, easy to understand language and include a training webcast, DVD, worksheet/disaster plan, personal assessment, supply lists, printable magnet and so much more. Click on the link below to register and get your **FREE** materials.

<http://www.dds.ca.gov/consumercorner/fsbs/signup.cfm>

1. **Identify possible local emergencies.** Find out what kinds of environmental emergencies can happen in your area from your local American Red Cross chapter or Disastersrus.org.
<http://www.disastersrus.org/>
2. **Use the Personal Assessment for Disaster Planning** tool to learn how to support the individual during an emergency.
3. **Assist the individual in meeting their neighbors.** An individual's neighbors are often able to respond most quickly to their needs during an emergency. A comfortable relationship between an individual and their neighbors can enhance the individual's safety.
4. **Create a Personal Disaster Plan** with each individual you support. It should include a family contact, evacuation plan, community emergency plan and a care plan for the individual's pet or service animal.
5. **Create Your Own Personal Disaster Plan.** You may not be able to leave the individual during an emergency. You can make a disaster plan for your family to follow if you cannot be with them.
6. **Register the individual** with the local fire department or emergency rescue services. Although these services cannot guarantee to rescue a consumer, priority contact during an emergency is given to registrants.
7. **Practice Disaster Plans.** Practice what to do for different types of emergencies.
8. **Build a General Emergency Supply Kit** for individuals who stay in their homes during the emergency. Keep enough supplies on hand for up to seven days.



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9. **Build a Portable Emergency Supply Kit** to use if the individual must evacuate. The kit should include enough supplies for three days.
10. **Learn CPR and First Aid.** Contact the American Red Cross to find out about training in your area.
11. **Eliminate hazards** in the individual's home and workplace. Secure furniture and appliances so they won't create a hazard in an earthquake.
12. **Contact your regional center.** Call the emergency representative for information and services offered.
13. **Get involved.** Donate blood, or join a local Community Emergency Response Team.

Personal Support Team

A Personal Support Team is a group of people that the individual can trust for support before, during, and after an emergency. For example, you can arrange for a team to check on the individual immediately after an emergency. The team can be made up of roommates, relatives, neighbors, friends, and co-workers.

As a supporter you can help the individual start a Personal Support Team for each location where they spend a lot of time. Give each member of every support team a copy of the individual's Personal Disaster Plan and Personal Assessment Sheet.

Emergency Shelters

It is impossible to know what areas or buildings might be damaged during an emergency. For this reason, many communities do not list the name or location of emergency shelters in advance.

However, there are still ways that you and the individual you support can get ready to go to a community shelter. For example, you can:

- Store a battery-powered radio in an easy to find area.
- Identify local emergency radio stations in advance.
- Tune into the radio and listen to instructions from authorities after the emergency strikes.

Contacting Family

A "family contact" is an important part of the individual's Personal Disaster Plan. Ask a friend or family member who lives out-of-state to be the individual's "family contact." Write down the contact information for this person in the individual's Personal Disaster Plan.

After an emergency, you can help the individual call the "family contact" to tell them where the individual is and how they are doing. Register the individual you support and yourself as "Safe and Well" with the American Red Cross at <https://safeandwell.communityos.org/cms/index.php>.

* From the National Organization on disabilities and a report by The Annenberg Washington Program

FYI Resource Links for Better Living

DDS SafetyNet

You can also find these emergency preparedness materials at the DDS SafetyNet website:

- Personal Assessment Tool
- Personal Disaster Plan
- Supply Checklists

<http://ddssafety.net/how-prepare-environmental-emergency-0>

Feeling Safe Being Safe materials can be found at:

<http://www.dds.ca.gov/consumercorner/fsbs/signup.cfm>

DDS YouTube Channel

On the DDS YouTube Channel you will find emergency preparedness information intended for consumers in video format:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/CaliforniaDDS>

If you or the individual you support are in immediate danger, call 9-1-1. Call 1-800-550-5234 for recorded safety information.

American Red Cross

The American Red Cross offers much useful information on disaster preparedness for individuals and their supporters:

<http://www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/Preparing/A4497.pdf>

Depending on your location, you may be able to take a disaster preparedness class or training through your local chapter. Visit their website for more information and courses offered in your area:

<http://www.redcross.org/en/takeaclass>