



Comprehensive Guide: Hurricane Preparedness for Individuals with Disabilities

When a hurricane strikes, being prepared is crucial for everyone, including individuals with disabilities. To ensure the safety and well-being of individuals with diverse needs, it's important to take specific steps and access the right resources. In this comprehensive guide, we will outline essential steps for hurricane preparedness and provide valuable links to resources to assist individuals with disabilities.

Steps to Prepare for a Hurricane:

1. Stay Informed:

- Monitor local weather updates and stay tuned to official emergency communications.
- Follow guidance from local authorities and emergency management agencies.

2. Create an Emergency Kit:

- Prepare an emergency kit that includes essential supplies such as non-perishable food, water, medications, medical supplies, flashlights, batteries, a first aid kit, and personal hygiene items.
- Customize your kit to meet your individual needs and consider specific items required for your disability.

3. Develop a Communication Plan:

- Create a support network of trusted individuals who can assist you during an emergency.
- Maintain regular contact with them and share your emergency plans and the location of your emergency supplies.
- Consider providing a key to a trusted member of your support network for access to your residence if needed.

4. Plan for Evacuation:

- Identify accessible transportation options for evacuation or accessing medical clinics.
- Coordinate with local services, public transportation, or paratransit to ensure accessible transportation arrangements.



5. Know Dialysis Facility Locations:

- If you require dialysis or other life-sustaining treatments, identify multiple facilities in case your primary center is inaccessible.
- Stay informed about alternative options and make necessary arrangements in advance.

6. Prepare for Power Outages:

- Develop a plan for using medical equipment during power outages.
- Consult with your healthcare provider to explore options such as battery backups or priority power restoration lists. Ex- Contact your power company, gas company (for generators), and generator company.

7. Wear Medical Alert Identification:

- Wear medical alert tags or bracelets that provide essential information about your condition or medical needs.
- This helps emergency responders quickly understand your specific requirements.

8. Communication Strategies:

- Determine the best way for others to communicate with you during an emergency.
- Carry printed communication cards or store information on your devices to facilitate effective communication.

9. Plan for Assistive Devices:

- Develop a plan to evacuate with assistive devices or make arrangements for their replacement if necessary.
- Keep model information secure and note the source of the devices (e.g., Medicaid, Medicare, private insurance).

10. Medicine/ Medical

- Several days' supply of prescription medicines
- A list of all medications, dosage and any allergies
- Extra eyeglasses, contacts, hearing aids and batteries
- A backup supply of oxygen

11. Considerations for Service Animals:

- Ensure you have sufficient food, water, identification tags, and supplies for your service animal in your emergency kit.
- Verify whether designated shelters allow pets or service animals.

Specific Tips for Individuals with Sensory Disabilities:

1. Deaf or Hard of Hearing:

- Obtain a weather radio with text display and a flashing alert, along with extra batteries.
- Carry extra hearing-aid batteries and a TTY device.
- Keep pen and paper for communication with non-sign language users.

2. Blind or Low Vision:

- Label emergency supplies with Braille or large print.
- Keep a list of emergency supplies on a portable flash drive or in an audio file.
- Include Braille or Deaf-Blind communication devices in your emergency supply kit.

Specific Tips for Individuals with Mobility Disabilities:

- Arrange accessible transportation options for evacuation or transportation during and after a disaster. Have a back-up transportation plan.
- Keep a lightweight manual wheelchair as a backup if you use a power wheelchair.
- Know the size, weight, and collapsibility of your wheelchair for transportation purposes.

- Carry an extra mobility device like a cane or walker, if needed.

Plan for Children and Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities:

- Maintain handheld electronic devices charged and loaded with videos and activities.
- Purchase spare chargers for electronic devices and keep them charged.
- Consider comfort snacks, noise-canceling headphones, and items to decrease visual stimulation or provide privacy.

Additional Considerations:

- Create a support network and keep a contact list of individuals who can assist you during emergencies.
- Inform your support network about the location of your emergency supplies and provide a spare key if necessary.
- Identify multiple facilities for dialysis or life-sustaining treatments and know their availability.
- Learn how to operate medical equipment during a power outage.
- Consider electronic payment options for federal benefits to ensure continued access during disruptions in mail service.

- Customize your emergency kit to include items specific to your disability, such as communication devices, Braille labels, or hearing-aid batteries.
- In emergencies, electronic payment systems may be unavailable, and ATMs may run out of cash or be inoperable. Having cash on hand ensures you can purchase essential supplies and services.
- Keep a reserve of cash in small denominations, such as \$1, \$5, and \$10 bills, to make it easier to manage transactions when exact change is needed.
- Consider obtaining traveler's checks as an alternative form of payment during emergencies.

Resources:

Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness: www.getagameplan.org

1. This website provides comprehensive information and resources for emergency preparedness in Louisiana, including specific guidance for individuals with disabilities and special needs.

2. Emergency Preparedness Hotlines: www.ocdd.la.gov/emergency-preparedness-hotlines

This resource provides emergency hotlines for individuals receiving services from the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) and offers assistance and information regarding emergency preparations.

3. Louisiana 211: www.louisiana211.org

Louisiana 211 is a helpline that connects individuals with essential community resources and services, including information about shelters and other emergency-related assistance.

4. Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development: www.511la.org

The website provides travel-related information, including road closures and updates, which can be crucial during emergencies such as hurricanes.

5. American Red Cross - Disability Safety: www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/people-with-disabilities.html

The American Red Cross offers guidance on emergency preparedness for individuals with disabilities, including tips on creating a personal support network, developing an emergency kit, and creating a personalized evacuation plan.

6. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) - Emergency Preparedness for Individuals with Disabilities: www.fema.gov/emergency-preparedness-individuals-disabilities

FEMA provides valuable resources and information to help individuals with disabilities prepare for emergencies, including guidelines for creating emergency plans, building emergency kits, and accessing necessary support and services.

7. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities: www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/emergencypreparedness.html

The CDC offers resources and recommendations for emergency preparedness specific to people with disabilities, covering topics such as communication strategies, medical considerations, and disaster planning.

8. Louisiana Department of Health - Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities: www.ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/340

The Louisiana Department of Health provides information and guidance on emergency preparedness for individuals with disabilities, including tips on medication management, medical equipment, and accessing healthcare during emergencies.

9. Ready.gov - Individuals with Disabilities and Access & Functional Needs: www.ready.gov/individuals-access-functional-needs

Ready.gov, an official website of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, offers resources and guidance on emergency preparedness for individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs. It provides information on creating emergency plans, assembling emergency supply kits, and accessing support services.

10. National Organization on Disability (NOD) - Emergency Preparedness Initiative: www.nod.org/what-we-do/emergency-preparedness/

NOD's Emergency Preparedness Initiative focuses on raising awareness and providing resources to enhance emergency preparedness for individuals with disabilities. The website offers valuable guidance, tools, and best practices.

11. American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) - Emergency Preparedness:

www.aapd.com/advocacy/emergency-preparedness/

AAPD's emergency preparedness resources aim to empower individuals with disabilities and their families to effectively plan for emergencies. The website provides information on creating emergency plans, building emergency kits, and staying informed during emergencies.

12. Ability360 - Emergency Preparedness Resources: www.ability360.org/programs/emergency-preparedness/

Ability360 provides comprehensive emergency preparedness resources for individuals with disabilities. The website offers guidance on creating emergency plans, assembling emergency supply kits, and accessing support services.

13. Disability Rights Louisiana: <https://disabilityrightsla.org/>

Disability Rights Louisiana is an organization that promotes and protects the rights of individuals with disabilities. Their website offers information and resources related to disability rights, including emergency preparedness.

14. Louisiana Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs - Disaster Preparedness: <https://goea.louisiana.gov/about-us/disaster-preparedness/>

The Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs in Louisiana provides resources and information to help older adults prepare for disasters, including hurricanes. The website offers guidance on emergency planning, communication, and accessing support services.

15. Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council - Disaster Resources: <https://laddc.org/resources/disaster-resources/>

The Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council offers disaster resources for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The website provides information on emergency planning, evacuation, and accessing necessary support during emergencies.

Feel free to explore these links for more detailed information and assistance in emergency preparedness for individuals with disabilities.