

## Preparedness Guide For People with Disabilities and Access & Functional Needs (AFN) ECA's AFN Committee

### Think about What May Happen During a Disaster:

Consider how you go about your daily life; think about how a disaster will impact your life. Take into consideration what you do independently and where you may need assistance in your daily life. Keep in mind your regular sources of assistance may not be available after a disaster. Plan now for how you will meet your needs in a disaster.

- What if power, gas, phone lines are not working?
- What if roads and sidewalks are impassible or your means of transportation is unavailable?
- How will you maintain supplies of water, food, medications, and other critical needs?

#### **TO DO:**

- Make a list of equipment and medication that you may need if you had to leave your home. Store a copy in your disaster supplies kit [http://www.scec.org/education/public/espfocus/Apr\\_06.pdf](http://www.scec.org/education/public/espfocus/Apr_06.pdf)

### Create Safe Places:

When you enter a room, look for safe places to Drop, Cover, and Hold On.

- Safe spaces are places where heavy or falling objects and breaking glass won't injure you, such as under tables or desks, along inside walls, etc.
- The more limitations you have, the more important it is to create safe spaces for yourself - especially if you cannot Drop, Cover, and Hold On under a desk, table, etc.
- Create safe spaces by bolting heavy furniture to wall studs, move heavy items to low shelves, secure hanging art to wall, or take other measures found here



- [http://www.daretoprepare.org/secure\\_your\\_stuff.html](http://www.daretoprepare.org/secure_your_stuff.html)
- When you are out in public places, be aware of your surroundings and identify your safe spaces.
- Is your essential equipment such as oxygen or other life support secured so it won't fall or get damaged? [http://www.daretoprepare.org/secure\\_your\\_stuff.html](http://www.daretoprepare.org/secure_your_stuff.html)

### Build an Emergency Kit:

Create a kit specific to your needs and think about things you may want or need to include, such as:

- Food
- Water
- Extra medications (including over the counter and medications taken as needed), and medical supplies
- Medical information and medication list
- Emergency contact information

- Communication supplies
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Extra supplies for your specific needs
  - Hearing aid batteries, walking stick, oxygen or nebulizer supplies, blood glucose tester, special equipment or hygiene and catheter supplies, feeding equipment, VNS magnet, etc.
- A radio with extra batteries (consider also getting a NOAA weather radio)
- Extra cash
- An extra pair of clothes
- A pair of heavy gloves
- Hygiene Supplies
- First Aid Kit
- Face mask to protect from dust & debris
- A copy of a recent color photo or I.D. card and utility bill
  - For identification & proof of address (which may be needed if you must go to a shelter or to re-enter an evacuation area)
- Include supplies for service animals and family pets
- Attach a “GO BAG” to your bedpost or bed frame with flashlight, batteries, sturdy close-toed shoes, heavy gloves, a whistle or noise maker, and your emergency information list [http://www.scec.org/education/public/espfocus/Apr\\_06.pdf](http://www.scec.org/education/public/espfocus/Apr_06.pdf)
- Add medications, eye glasses, communication and hearing aids including batteries where appropriate



## Create a Plan:

Create a Family Disaster Plan – include your family and personal support team when creating, reviewing and practicing your plans.

- Develop your Personal Support Team (PST) at home, work, and every place where you spend a lot of time.
- A PST is made up of at least 3 people who are within walking distance and can assist you immediately, such as neighbors and co-workers.
- Team members will need to know how to enter your home to check on you in case you are injured or cannot answer the door.
- You will need to familiarize your team with your schedule, how best to assist you, how to operate any necessary equipment, etc. Also, inform our Personal Support Team if you go out of town.
- Label all your adaptive equipment with your current contact information.



Identify an Out of Area Contact. An Out of Area contact is a single person – preferably one who lives out of state or at least 100 miles or more away– who can be called to let them know whether or not you are OK. Make sure your PST has your contact’s information.

- Have an Evacuation Plan – identify a meeting place just outside your home where you can make sure everyone has gotten out safely. Identify a second meeting place just outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home. (link this to any appropriate info on main website)
- Make sure every family member and your Personal Support Team know the location of both meeting places.
- If you have pets make a care plan for them, as they will not be allowed in shelters. Only service animals are allowed in shelters.



### Practice What to do in a Drill:

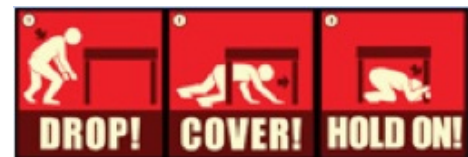
- Participate in a The Great ShakeOut earthquake drill in your region ([www.shakeout.org/regions](http://www.shakeout.org/regions)) – and encourage others to participate with you!
- Put your plan into action during your drills. Include family members, personal support team members, caregivers, etc.
- If during your drill you identify a problem, revise your plan to better accommodate your needs.

### What to do During an Earthquake:

Protect yourself in the safest place possible without having to move far - no matter what your limitations are, you need to protect yourself as best as possible. The more limitations you have the more important it is to create safe spaces for yourself.

Do NOT try to get out of the building during an earthquake! Most injuries occur when people try to exit buildings during the shaking and are injured by other people or falling debris.

Drop under a piece of desk, furniture or against an inside wall. Cover your head and neck. Hold on to a desk or furniture leg to keep it from shifting or uncovering you until the shaking completely stops. [www.DropCoverHoldOn.org](http://www.DropCoverHoldOn.org)



### If it is difficult for you to Drop, Cover, and Hold On then here are some suggestions:

- If you are in a wheelchair, recliner or bed, do not try to transfer to or from your chair during the shaking. Wait until the shaking stops to transfer.
- Stay put. Cover your head and neck with your arms or a pillow until the shaking stops.



- Wheelchair user: lock your wheels; cover your head and neck, after the shaking stops. The force of the earthquake may knock you off your feet or throw you to the ground. If you have mobility or balance issues, the shaking may make it even harder for you to move around.



- If you have difficulty getting back up from dropping under a desk or able, consider using alternate methods of Drop, Cover, and Hold On to protect yourself. Be sure you have made arrangements to have someone check on you, in case you need assistance.



- If it helps – count out loud until the earthquake stops. It can help keep you calm, and if others in your home can hear you, they will know you are okay. If you have practiced counting out loud during your drills, it can serve as a reminder for others to keep calm and remember what to do.

## What to do After an Earthquake:

Once the shaking stops –

- Check yourself for injury and pay extra attention to any areas where you may have reduced sensations.
- Be prepared for aftershocks. Stay close to and aware of the safe spaces in your environment.
- Look around for hazards (broken glass, objects in your way, etc.)
- Furniture may have shifted and sound cues may not be available.
- Decide whether or not you need to move or evacuate for safety.
- Evacuate only if necessary, otherwise stay where you are and shelter in place.



- If the authorities contact you or otherwise advise an evacuation for people in your area, follow their directions immediately. Do not expect that they will be able to come back for you once they have notified the people in your area.
- If you are near a beach, large lake or in a tsunami evacuation zone, click here for more information  
[www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/geologic\\_hazards/Tsunami/Documents/TsunamiBrochure.pdf](http://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/geologic_hazards/Tsunami/Documents/TsunamiBrochure.pdf)
- Expect aftershocks
- Follow your disaster plan

### **What if you have refrigerated medications?**

- Keep your medications in the refrigerator until it begins to get warm, and then move it to the freezer until it is warm. Then transfer medication to as small an insulated container as possible. Use chemical cold packs to keep your medications cool.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist if your medications can be unrefrigerated, and if so, for how long.
- If you evacuate to a shelter, let shelter staff know that you have refrigerated medications.



### **Disability-Specific Tips:**

#### **For Developmental/Cognitive/Intellectual Disabilities:**

- Use simple, short and clear language for instructions.
- Have a written or visual reminder checklist with short, easy steps.
- Include communication tools in your kit that each person knows how to use. If you are nonverbal, include pictures, written phrases, or Kwik Points.
- If a portable communication device is used; include extra batteries.
- Practice Drop, Cover, and Hold On and all steps in your plan – regular practice will help you remember what to do and remain calmer when a disaster occurs.



#### **For Deaf or Hearing Impaired:**

- Have more than one method to receive warnings and evacuation information.
- If you use any hearing or communication devices, store extra batteries and supplies in your disaster kits.
- Keep pen and paper in your kits for receiving and communicating information.
- Ask a Personal Support Team member to keep you up to date on any emergency information.
- Advocate for yourself and develop your personal support team so you do not become information isolated or left behind.

### **For Blind or Visually Impaired:**

- Earthquakes can cause items to fall and furniture to shift making navigating the room more difficult.
- Sound clues may not be available.
- If you need to evacuate, move slowly and check for obstacles in the way. Consider shuffling your feet if there is a lot of debris on the ground.
- Store extra canes, batteries and supplies for your communication devices.
- Label Emergency Supplies using large print, fluorescent tape, Braille, or other methods that work for you.

### **For Service Animals:**

- Keep license and ID tags on service animals at all times.
- Keep copies of any Service Animal certification or documentation - immunization records, medications, and veterinarian's contact information in your disaster kit.
- Store extra animal food, water and feeding bowls.
- Keep an extra harness and/or leash with your disaster supplies.
- Your service animal may be frightened or injured and may not be able to work after the earthquake. Their paws might be injured by broken glass or debris on the ground.
- Be prepared to use alternate equipment if your animal cannot provide its normal services. As an example, if you are visually impaired, store extra canes.
- Arrange for your personal support team to check on you and your animal.
- Service animals are allowed in shelters, pets are not. Be prepared to explain what services your animal performs for you.



### **SUMMARY - Remember to:**

1. Create safe spaces for yourself.
2. Develop your Personal Support Team and include them in all phases of your planning.
3. Help members of your Personal Support Team develop their individual and family plans.
4. Make disaster supply kits for your home, car and office.
5. Practice Drop, Cover, and Hold On and your disaster plan!
6. Advocate for yourself! Make sure you are included in practice drills at home, work and in your community.
7. Volunteer with your local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

### **Additional Resources for People with Disabilities and Other Access & Functional Needs:**

[www.PrepareNow.org](http://www.PrepareNow.org)

This web site shares disaster-related information and materials designed for community organizations serving clients with access and functional needs.

[www.prepare.org/home/translated-documents.html](http://www.prepare.org/home/translated-documents.html)

Preparedness information in multiple languages

[www.oes.ca.gov/oafn](http://www.oes.ca.gov/oafn)

CA Emergency Management Agency, Office of Access & Functional Needs (OAFN)

[www.access2readiness.org](http://www.access2readiness.org)

California Foundation for Independent Living Centers – Access to Readiness Program

[www.JIK.com/disaster.html](http://www.JIK.com/disaster.html)

Disaster resources for people with disabilities and others with access & functional needs



[www.ready.gov/america/getakit/disabled.html](http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/disabled.html)

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

[www.nod.org/research\\_publications/emergency\\_preparedness\\_materials/](http://www.nod.org/research_publications/emergency_preparedness_materials/)

National Organization on Disabilities, emergency preparedness materials

[www.disabilitypreparedness.gov](http://www.disabilitypreparedness.gov)

Interagency Coordinating Council on Emergency Preparedness

[www.disaster.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.disaster.salvationarmyusa.org)

Preparing Together – Salvation Army

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

American Red Cross