

Emergencies can occur at any time and your best defense is to be prepared. The Regional pamphlet series on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities/special needs includes:

- Hearing
- High-rise Safety
- Mobility
- Non-Visible Disabilities\*
- Seniors With Special Needs
- Travel Considerations
- Vision

\* This can include communication, cognitive, sensory, mental health, learning or intellectual disabilities.



### Personal Support Network

A personal support network is a group of at least three people you know and trust and who would help you during an emergency.

#### How do you create a support network?

- Ask people you trust if they are willing to help you in case of an emergency. Identify contacts for important locations such as home, work or school. Neighbors are often the closest and most available contacts in an emergency.
- Tell these support people where your emergency kit is stored. Give one member a key to your home.
- Include a support network contact who is far enough away that they are unlikely to be affected by the same emergency.
- Work with your support network to develop a plan that meets your needs.
- Practice your emergency plan with your network. If applicable, show them how your special needs equipment works.

*This Information is drawn from the Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs from Public Safety Canada. This brochure has been prepared by the Regional Director of Emergency Management from the Town/County of St. Paul; Town of Elk Point and the Summer Village of Horseshoe Bay.*

## Individuals with Mobility Limitations



Mobility limitations may make it difficult for a person to use stairs or to move quickly over long distances. These can include reliance on mobility devices such as a wheelchair, scooter, walker, crutches or a walking cane. In addition, people with a heart condition or various respiratory difficulties can experience certain levels of mobility limitations.

### Your Emergency Plan

- ask your network\* to practice moving your special needs equipment
- Consider wearing a MedicAlert® bracelet or identification to help notify emergency responders about your special needs.
- Request that a panic push-button be installed in your work and living areas so that in an emergency you can notify others of your location and that you need special assistance.
- if you use a wheelchair or scooter, request that an emergency evacuation chair be stored near a stairwell on the same floor on which you work or live so that your network can readily use it to help you safely evacuate the building
- in your instruction list for your network, identify areas of your body that have reduced sensation so these areas can be checked for injuries after an emergency, if you cannot check them yourself

Remember: individuals are best at knowing their own needs and these should be respected

### Dos - Assisting People with Disabilities

- use latex-free gloves whenever possible when providing personal care; people with spinal cord injuries have a greater risk of infectious disease and gloves help control secondary medical conditions that can easily arise if personal care is disrupted during an emergency
- Allow the person to describe the help they need.
- Find effective ways to communicate, such as drawn or written instructions, using landmarks instead of general terms like "go left" or "turn right".
- Maintain eye contact when speaking to the person.
- Repeat instructions (if needed).
- If a person needs to take medication, ask if he/she needs help taking it. (Never offer medicine not prescribed by a physician.)
- ensure that the person's wheelchair goes with the person

### Don'ts - Assisting People with Disabilities

- do not push or pull a person's wheelchair without their permission



### Additional Items for Your Emergency Survival Kit

- tire patch kit
- can of seal-in-air product to repair flat tires on your wheelchair or scooter
- supply of inner tubes
- pair of heavy gloves to protect your hands while wheeling or making way over glass or other sharp debris
- latex-free gloves for those providing personal care to you
- spare deep-cycle battery for motorized wheelchair if feasible
- spare catheters if applicable
- a lightweight manual wheelchair for backup to a motorized one, if feasible.



TIP: expand your network by getting to know your neighbors.