

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 Non-Visible Disabilities



Non visible disabilities can include communication, cognitive, sensory, mental health, learning or intellectual disabilities in which an individual's ability to respond to an emergency is restricted and/or they may have difficulty in performing some tasks. Disabilities can include allergies, epilepsy, hemophilia, diabetes, thyroid condition, multiple sclerosis, pulmonary or heart disease and/or dependency on dialysis, sanitary or urinary supplies.

Your Emergency Plan

- prepare an easy-to-understand list of instructions or information that you think you may need in an emergency
- keep an emergency list on your person of key people aware of your special needs
- inform your designated support network* of where you store your medication
- keep a pencil and paper or portable electronic recording device handy for any new instructions provided to you during an emergency
- consider wearing a MedicAlert bracelet or identification to help notify emergency responders about your non-visible disabilities
- request a panic push button be installed in the building you work and/or live in, so that in the event of an emergency you can notify others of your whereabouts and that you need special assistance
- people with multiple sclerosis: symptoms are often made worse by heat and humidity; be prepared to keep cool/dry
- people with diabetes: keep frozen water or ice packs in your freezer; have an insulated bag or cooled thermos ready to store your insulin should there be a power outage or you need to evacuate

Dos - Assisting People with Disabilities

- allow the people to describe what help they need from you
- find effective means of communication (e.g. provide drawn or written instructions and use landmarks to describe directions)
- be patient, flexible and maintain eye contact when speaking to the person
- repeat instructions if needed
- ask the person about their medication and if they need help taking it; never offer medicines not prescribed by their physician
- keep people with multiple sclerosis cool and dry to avoid making their symptoms worse

Don'ts - Assisting People with Disabilities

- avoid shouting or speaking quickly but do not speak so slowly so as to offend the person
- do not restrain a person having a convulsion; instead, roll them on their side to keep the airway clear; place something soft under their head to protect from injury; when convulsion passes and person is conscious, help them into a resting position

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

Additional Items for Your Emergency Survival Kit

- supply of food items appropriate to your disability or dietary restrictions
- list of instructions that you can easily follow in an emergency
- personal list and minimum three days supply of all needed medications, medical supplies and special equipment (e.g. ventilator for asthma, nitrolingual spray for heart condition, Epinephrine pen against allergic reaction/anaphylactic shock, etc.)
- detailed list of all prescription medications
- MedicAlert identification
- any other contingency supplies unique to your special needs



**IS YOUR FAMILY
PREPARED?**

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