

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & VULNERABLE POPULATIONS: PLANNING FOR THOSE MOST AT RISK

Everyone must remain safe in an emergency. But for some, it's more difficult. Children may be separated from families, those with chronic conditions can lose access to critical medicines, others may need assistance with evacuation and accessing emergency services.



## WHY IT MATTERS

Vulnerable populations almost certainly include someone you know: your child, your parent, your neighbor, your co-worker—even you. Because of their unique needs, standard emergency resources may not be available. We must take extra steps to reduce the likelihood that vulnerable populations will suffer injury, disease, or even death.

### LIVES AT STAKE

**71%**

Of people who died during Hurricane Katrina were older than 60

### IT COULD BE YOU

**80%**

The chance a person will experience a temporary or permanent disability in their lifetime

### HEALTHCARE NEEDS

**~12%**

Of the US population aged 16-64 have special healthcare needs due to disability

CS272950K

**PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE**  
READY FOR EMERGENCIES



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

## HOW CDC PROTECTS THE VULNERABLE

CDC's expertise and programs address a wide variety of vulnerable populations and hazards.

### PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

Providing effective support and care to vulnerable populations prior to, during, and following an emergency is a critical priority for local, state and federal emergency planners. The Public Health Emergency Preparedness program requires states to develop emergency plans covering children, pregnant women, and other vulnerable populations. CDC's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) makes sure children have plans if separated from parents, and patients, with medical devices needing electricity, get connected to care.

### RESEARCH

Following an emergency, CDC studies what makes certain people and groups vulnerable. Interventions are developed based on this evidence.

### EXPERTS

We provide guidance to emergency planners on how to identify and account for the unique needs of vulnerable populations. CDC's Vulnerable Populations Officer makes sure all populations are accounted for as part of the agency's emergency planning efforts.

## VULNERABLE POPULATIONS MAY INCLUDE ANYONE WHO:



Has difficulty communicating



Has difficulty accessing medical care



May need help maintaining independence



Requires constant supervision



May need help accessing transportation

## PREPAREDNESS IN ACTION



To understand the health effects of severe drought and identify best practices for emergency preparedness and response, the California Department of Public Health worked with CDC to conduct a community needs assessment. Recommendations included using diverse, language-appropriate outreach and messaging to inform residents about water assistance programs.