



ARE YOU READY?

A Guide to Disaster Planning for Clients and Staff



Written by Katherine Roberts, 9-1-2006

ARE YOU READY?

Emergencies and disasters can strike quickly and without warning and can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. What would you do if basic services were cut off? Where will you, your family, your friends or personal care attendants meet if emergency or disaster strikes?

This guide was developed to help clients and staff alike prepare for natural disasters and unexpected emergencies. In addition to information to help you prepare for an emergency two *Personal Emergency Information* sheets are included in this guide. They can be easily removed. A copy can be placed in a clients chart; the other is given to the client for placement in a family emergency file, or hung in a convenient place (i.e. on a refrigerator) for quick access.

Persons with special needs need to take extra care in preparing for an emergency. You need to make sure you have adequate medication, medical supplies and equipment and know what special resources you may require to make it safely through a disaster. This applies to many of employees and their families as well as the clients we serve.

Although the information included in this guide will help you to create a comprehensive plan, each section has been developed so that it can stand alone.

You are in the best position to plan for your own safety. You know what your functional abilities are and the possible needs you may have during and after an emergency or disaster situation.

You can cope more successfully with disaster by preparing in advance. Knowing what to do is your best protection and your responsibility.

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PERSONAL EMERGENCY INFORMATION (Chart or File Copy)

Date Completed: _____

Date Revised: _____

Name: _____
Home Phone: _____
Next of Kin _____
Relationship: _____

Address: _____
Cell Phone: _____
Address: _____
Home Phone: _____

Needed Accommodations: ASL Interpreter Service Animal Medical equipment
Medical Needs Shelter

MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION

My Diagnosis Is: Schizophrenia Major Depression Bipolar Disorder
Anxiety Disorder(s) Schizoaffective Disorder Dually Diagnosed (Substance use & mental illness)
 Other: _____

Doctor's Name (Psychiatrist) _____
Case Manager's Name _____
Mental Health Center _____

OTHER MEDICAL INFORMATION THAT MAY REQUIRE EMERGENCY TREATMENT

Diagnosis:
 Heart Disease High Blood Pressure Asthma Diabetes Seizures
Cancer (type) _____ Other: _____
Doctor's Name _____ **Phone:** _____

Medication Name	Reason	Dosage
Allergies – Medication Name	Reaction (if known)	

Things that help me cope under stress: (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> time out in a quiet space | <input type="checkbox"/> getting a hug | <input type="checkbox"/> exercising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sitting with someone | <input type="checkbox"/> talking with a peer | <input type="checkbox"/> deep breathing exercises |
| <input type="checkbox"/> talking with someone | <input type="checkbox"/> having my hand held | <input type="checkbox"/> being silent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> going for a walk | <input type="checkbox"/> punching a pillow | <input type="checkbox"/> singing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> writing in a journal | <input type="checkbox"/> lying down | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> listening to music | <input type="checkbox"/> reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> watching TV | <input type="checkbox"/> pacing the halls | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> talking with friend | <input type="checkbox"/> praying | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

PERSONAL EMERGENCY INFORMATION (Personal Copy)

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| <input type="checkbox"/> talking with friend | <input type="checkbox"/> praying | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

EVACUATION KITS

In the event of an emergency you may want to or be required to leave your home for an emergency shelter. In some cases you may have advanced warning that evacuation may be necessary. In other cases, you may have little or no warning and have to evacuate immediately. It is a good idea to have a "bag" ready to go if you have to go to a shelter. Items can be placed in backpacks, duffle bags or laundry bags. Each person in your home should have their own bag with their name clearly written on it. **Your supplies should last for a minimum of three days.** Don't over pack your kit - you should be able to carry it easily. Remember, that you won't have a lot of room or privacy in a shelter so take only what you need. Here are some items that you need to consider putting in your evacuation bag.

1. Sleeping:

- Lightweight blanket
- Small car pillow
- Inflatable air mattress (optional)

2. Toiletries:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bar of soap | <input type="checkbox"/> Several packages of pocket Kleenex tissues | <input type="checkbox"/> One light bath towel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush | <input type="checkbox"/> One roll of toilet paper | <input type="checkbox"/> One change of underwear socks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toothpaste | <input type="checkbox"/> Pocket First Aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Diapers, etc., for babies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comb | <input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Several disposable razors (optional) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tweezers | <input type="checkbox"/> One face cloth | |

3. Eating:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canteen (3 quarts) of water | <input type="checkbox"/> Several granola bars or snacks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stainless Steel cup or Sierra cup | <input type="checkbox"/> Special diet items, or baby food as necessary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fork, knife, spoon | <input type="checkbox"/> Camping "mess kit" (optional) |

4. General:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight w/batteries | <input type="checkbox"/> Playing cards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pocket radio w/batteries | <input type="checkbox"/> Lanyard for keeping keys secure around neck, or on belt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Matches and/or lighter | <input type="checkbox"/> Identification (laminated or in zip-loc bags) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency whistle | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone Numbers (laminated or in zip-loc bags) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cash (paper and coins) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waist "fanny pack" to hold small items | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cell Phone or two-way pager | |

5. Medication:

- Any required prescription and/or "over the counter" medications - **Remember to Pack the Original Medication Container(s)**
- Necessary medical devices (i.e. glucose meter)
- Health plan, insurance cards/doctor's name/phone number.

Remember to take cash or travelers checks with you, without power ATM's and Pay at the Pump (credit cards) won't be working,

Recheck your evacuation kit every six months, remove and replace any expired items

NOTE: In the event that you need to go to a special needs shelter for medical reasons contact: your local **County Emergency Office** to locate the special needs shelter nearest you (numbers are at the back of this guide). Only the person with the medical need and their primary care taker will be allowed in the special needs shelter – other family members will be housed at standard evacuation shelters.

EVACUATION GUIDE

During an evacuation or other declared emergency, the SC Department of Transportation (SC DOT) will activate a toll free number for traffic and road conditions. Call 1-888-877-9151. Evacuation route maps and updates can be found by visiting:

<http://www.dot.state.sc.us/getting/evacuation.shtml>

<http://www.sctraffic.org/>

Preparing for Evacuation for Storms - It is critical to the safety of you and your family that you begin preparing for an evacuation as soon as you become aware that a large storm may be coming in your direction. If you wait for an evacuation order to be issued before beginning your preparation, it may be too late. Individuals living in low lying areas of South Carolina's coastal counties, as well as anyone living in a mobile home in any of these counties, are required to evacuate for all hurricanes, regardless of category. Other areas will be required to evacuate when category 4 or 5 storms threaten their areas. It is possible that other areas will not be required to evacuate at all. The decision on which areas should evacuate will be made by the Governor's office at the time a hurricane threatens the coast.

Before You Evacuate:

- Make sure there is gas in the car so that you can be ready to evacuate immediately.
- Make sure your automobile's emergency kit is fully stocked and ready.
- Tune in the radio or television for weather updates and evacuation updates.
- Take action when you think severe weather may be moving into your area, even if no official warning is given.
- Determine your evacuation destination and write out route.
- Store home and lawn care chemicals above areas that could be flooded.
- Shut off the water to the house.
- Let people know when you are leaving and where you are going. If possible, leave contact information.
- Lock the windows and doors.
- Close blinds and drapes.
- Put plastic bags over TVs, stereos, lamps, computers, etc.
- Fill the sinks and bathtubs with water to use for bathing, washing clothes, flushing, when you return.
- Pack some clothes in plastic bags and store on high shelves
- Adjust the refrigerator and freezer to the coolest possible setting.
- Follow the instructions provided by local utility companies or emergency preparedness officials regarding the turning off of electric and gas utilities.
- Find a secure place for boats or second cars. Place under cover if possible.
- Trim trees and shrubs of weak limbs.
- Cover windows and doors with shutters or plywood if possible. If that is not possible, place large strips of masking tape across the windows to reduce the possibility of flying glass.
- Bring inside or otherwise secure items outdoors such as lawn furniture, bird feeders, bicycles, grills, propane tanks and planters.
- Check on your neighbors, especially the elderly to make sure they do not need assistance in evacuating.
- Put your survival supplies in the car. If officials order an evacuation, leave as soon as possible, preferably during daylight.

Once You Are Ordered to Evacuate:

Once an evacuation is order, you should leave as soon as possible. Authorities will be most likely to instruct you to leave if you are in a low-lying area, within the greatest potential path of the storm or exposed to other dangers like

toxic chemicals. If your home is located in one of these areas, you should make plans to evacuate even before an order is given.

- Take only essential items with you.
- Follow the instructions provided by local utility companies or emergency preparedness officials regarding the turning off of electric and gas utilities.
- Disconnect appliances to reduce the likelihood of electrical shock when power is restored.
- Make sure your automobile's emergency kit is with you.
- Follow the designated evacuation routes—others may be blocked—and expect heavy traffic.
- Avoid flooded roads and watch for washed-out bridges. Traffic tends to move slowly as evacuation routes become crowded.
- Know that evacuation will probably take longer than expected, so give yourself plenty of time and more importantly, be patient.

Special Precautions for Mobile Homes

- Mobile homes are particularly vulnerable to hurricane-force winds. Anchor the mobile home with over-the-top or frame ties. When a hurricane threatens, do what you can to secure your home, and then take refuge with friends, relatives or at a public shelter.
- Before you leave, take the following precautions:
 - Pack breakables in boxes and put them on the floor.
 - Remove mirrors and tape them. Wrap mirrors and lamps in blankets and place them in the bathtub or shower.
 - Install shutters or pre-cut plywood on all windows.
 - Shut off propane tanks and leave them outside after anchoring them securely.
 - If time allows, make sure your mobile home is properly connected to anchors.
 - Store awnings, folding furniture, trashcans and other such loose outdoor objects.

NOTE: If you are leaving the coastal area of the state during a mandatory hurricane evacuation you will find “*Comfort Stations*” located at designated points along I-26 which will be supplied with portable toilets and bottled water or your convenience. These stations are designed to augment the existing facilities at rest areas during a mandatory evacuation.

SHELTER INFORMATION

Red Cross Shelters - If you go to a Red Cross approved shelter, you will need to be considerate of the other people there. The Red Cross has issued guidelines that will help you get through this stressful time:

- NO WEAPONS
- NO ALCOHOL
- NO SMOKING IN THE BUILDING
- NO DRUGS
- NO PETS

There are other things that the Red Cross will ask of you:

- Respect quiet hours
- Watch your children
- Keep your area clean
- Register when you arrive
- Smoke in designated areas only
- Help keep the shelter clean
- Be careful with your valuables as they are your responsibility
- Sign in and out when entering or leaving
- Keep food and beverages in designated areas

Remember that these shelters are provided as a free community service by the Red Cross in conjunction with their partners. Your assistance in keeping the shelters clean and orderly will help to make sure that the service continues in the future.

FINDING AN EMERGENCY SHELTER IN SOUTH CAROLINA

<http://scangis.dhec.sc.gov/dhecshelters/public/>

SPECIAL MEDICAL NEEDS

In some areas, Special Needs Shelter will be established that can provide supervised shelter to a limited number of people whose physical or mental condition is such that it exceeds the capabilities of the Red Cross shelters, but is not severe enough to require hospitalization. It is intended only to provide a safe environment for those requiring limited special assistance or surveillance due to pre-existing health problems.

If your evacuation plans will include seeking refuge at a Special Needs Shelter you will need to keep the following in mind:

- Bring your physician's orders. If you have a nurse through a Home Health Agency, you will also need to bring those orders or arrange to have them faxed or delivered to the shelter.
- Bring your medications and medical supplies, enough for seven (7) days.
- Keep a list of items that will be needed. This includes oxygen tanks or canisters. If you or someone you are concerned about is oxygen dependent, arrangements must be made for a durable medical equipment company to provide a large tank to refill.
- Bring medical equipment such as wheelchairs, canes, walkers. In making your evacuation plans, consult with your physician now on what you're best options are. It may be that someone with health care needs should be temporarily admitted to a hospital or they may be able to evacuate if they take certain equipment or medications.

One person, or caregiver, must accompany any patient who will take advantage of the Special Needs Shelter. That is the only person who will be permitted to come to the shelter with the patient.

All shelters, including *Special Needs Shelters*, should be considered as a last resort only. Explore all other alternatives, including evacuation or hospitalization. Carefully review the chart on the next page to see if your medical needs meet the criteria to be admitted to the shelter before deciding that this is the option that will

work best for you. If a medical condition exceeds the care available in the Special Needs Category below, hospitalization and or evacuation is recommended.

Diagnosis, Conditions or Needs	Can Go To Regular Red Cross Shelter	Can Go To Special Needs Shelter
Prior Heart Attack, Angina, Congestive Heart Failure	Stable, without symptoms, no recent hospitalizations.	No chest pain in past 24 hours. Bring medications.
Infectious Diseases: TB, Hepatitis A, HIV	No	Bring medications and notify staff immediately on entering the shelter.
Asthma, Emphysema, Ventilator Dependent	Stable & well-controlled with medications and without symptoms. Hand-held inhalers are OK.	Require oxygen at a rate not exceeding 1-3 liters per minute. Bring oxygen tanks/canisters & medications. MUST arrange with a durable medical equipment company to deliver large tank for refills.
Apnea Monitor	No	Bring supplies.
Tracheotomies	No	Do not require suctioning.
Diabetes	Stable & well controlled with medication & glucometer.	Bring medications, blood sugar machine and strips.
Require Dialysis	No	Depending on when treatment due. Dialysis cannot be performed at the shelter.
Foley Catheter	No	Bring supplies.
Suprapubic Catheter, Urostomy	No	No
Incontinent Bladder &/or Bowel	No	Bring supplies - diapers, linen savers.
Stroke, Head Injury, Moderate to Severe Mental Retardation, Limited Mobility Paralysis	Independent in self-care or needs minimal assistance.	Needs assistance. Bring equipment, supplies and care-giver.
Epilepsy, Seizures,	No	Current history of recent seizures.
Intravenous (IV) Therapy	No	Bring all supplies provided by IV company. MUST have physician or Home Health Agency orders. This service cannot be done without those orders.
Comatose	No	No
Post-Op Surgery, Stasis Ulcers and Decubitus Wounds	No	Bring supplies. MUST have physician and/or Home Health Agency orders. This service cannot be done without those orders.
Tube Feeding, Nasogastric and Gastric	No	Bolus & gravity feedings only. Bring supplies.

NOTE: Persons with mental illnesses, Schizophrenia, Depression, Bi-polar Disorder, Alzheimer's and Dementia should evacuate to a regular Red Cross shelter. If a person with a mental illness is combative, violent, screams or cannot tolerate crowded conditions without becoming highly symptomatic they will not be accepted at a Red Cross shelter and they will need to be evaluated for or admitted to a hospital.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION WHEN SHELETERING AT HOME

Not everyone has to, can, or will evacuate in the event of an emergency. If a mandatory evacuation order has been issued for your area then you should leave. If not, you may remain in your home but still you need to be prepared. In many cases resources, food, gas, water, will not be available during an emergency (i.e. during a storm) and maybe in short supply following the emergency (i.e. after the storm passes). If you can or decide to stay

If you deciding to stay here the are six basics you should consider stocking for your home: (**Source: American Red Cross – Disaster Supply Kit**)

- water
- food
- first aid supplies
- clothing and bedding
- tools and emergency supplies
- special items for medical conditions

Water - Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers, and ill people will need more. Store one gallon of water per person per day. Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for each person in your household for food preparation/sanitation).

Food - Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of sterno. Select food items that are compact and lightweight. Include a selection of the following foods in your ***Disaster Supply Kit***:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables
- Canned juices
- Staples (salt, sugar, pepper, spices, etc.)
- High energy foods
- Vitamins
- Food for infants
- Comfort/stress foods

First Aid Kit - Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car.

- (20) adhesive bandages, various sizes
- 5" x 9" sterile dressing
- conforming roller gauze bandage
- triangular bandages
- 3 x 3 sterile gauze pads
- 4 x 4 sterile gauze pads
- roll 3" cohesive bandage
- germicidal hand wipes or waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- (6) antiseptic wipes
- pair large medical grade non-latex gloves
- Adhesive tape, 2" width
- Anti-bacterial ointment
- Cold pack
- Scissors (small, personal)
- Tweezers
- CPR breathing barrier, such as a face shield

Non-Prescription Drugs

- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid (for stomach upset)
- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Laxative
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

Tools and Supplies

- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils
- Emergency preparedness manual
- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Cash or traveler's checks, change
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife
- Fire extinguisher: small canister ABC type
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water
- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of the area (for locating shelters)

Sanitation

- Toilet paper, towelettes
- Soap, liquid detergent
- Feminine supplies
- Personal hygiene items
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Household chlorine bleach

Clothing and Bedding - Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

Include:

- Sturdy shoes or work boots
- Rain gear
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Hat and gloves
- Thermal underwear
- Sunglasses

Special Items - Remember family members with special requirements, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons

For Baby

- Formula
- Diapers
- Bottles
- Powdered milk
- Medications

For Adults

- Heart and high blood pressure medication
- Insulin
- Prescription drugs
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eye glasses

Entertainment (based on the ages of family members)

- Games (cards) and books
- Portable music device

Important Family Documents

Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container:

- Will, insurance policies, contracts deeds, stocks and bonds
- Passports, social security cards, immunization records
- Bank account numbers
- Credit card account numbers and companies
- Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

Store your kit in a convenient place known to all family members. Keep a smaller version of the supplies kit in the trunk of your car. Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Change your stored water supply every six months so it stays fresh. Replace your stored food every six months. Re-think your kit and family needs at least once a year. Replace batteries, update clothes, etc. Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.

Food and Water in an Emergency

If an earthquake, hurricane, winter storm or other disaster strikes your community, you might not have access to food, water and electricity for days, or even weeks. By taking some time now to store emergency food and water supplies, you can provide for your entire family. Having an ample supply of clean water is a top priority in an emergency. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers and ill people will need even more. You will also need water for food preparation and hygiene. Store a total of at least one gallon per person, per day. You should store at least a two-week supply of water for each member of your family. If supplies run low, never ration water. Drink the amount you need today, and try to find more for tomorrow. You can minimize the amount of water your body needs by reducing activity and staying cool.

How to Store Water - Store your water in thoroughly washed plastic, glass, fiberglass or enamel-lined metal containers. Never use a container that has held toxic substances. Plastic containers, such as soft drink bottles, are best. You can also purchase food-grade plastic buckets or drums. Seal water containers tightly, label them and store in a cool, dark place. Rotate water every six months.

Food Supplies - If activity is reduced, healthy people can survive on half their usual food intake for an extended period and without any food for many days. Food, unlike water, may be rationed safely, except for children and pregnant women. If your water supply is limited, try to avoid foods that are high in fat and protein, and don't stock salty foods, since they will make you thirsty. Try to eat salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals and canned foods with high liquid content. You don't need to go out and buy unfamiliar foods to prepare an emergency food supply. You can use the canned foods, dry mixes and other staples on your cupboard shelves. In fact, familiar foods are important. They can lift morale and give a feeling of security in time of stress. Also, canned foods won't require cooking, water or special preparation. As you stock food, take into account your family's unique needs and tastes. Try to include foods that they will enjoy and that are also high in calories and nutrition. **Remember foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking are best.**

Individuals with special diets and allergies will need particular attention, as will babies, toddlers and elderly people. Nursing mothers may need liquid formula, in case they are unable to nurse. Canned dietetic foods, juices and soups may be helpful for ill or elderly people.

Make sure you have a manual can opener and disposable utensils. And don't forget nonperishable foods for your pets.

Food Storage Tips

- Keep food in a dry, cool spot - a dark area if possible.
- Keep food covered at all times.
- Open food boxes or cans care-fully so that you can close them tightly after each use.
- Wrap cookies and crackers in plastic bags, and keep them in tight containers.
- Empty opened packages of sugar, dried fruits and nuts into screw-top jars or air-tight cans to protect them from pests.
- Inspect all food for signs of spoilage before use.

Use foods before they go bad, and replace them with fresh supplies, dated with ink or marker. Place new items at the back of the storage area and older ones in front.

Nutrition Tips - During and right after a disaster, it will be vital that you maintain your strength. So remember:

- Eat at least one well-balanced meal each day.
- Drink enough liquid to enable your body to function properly (two quarts a day).
- Take in enough calories to enable you to do any necessary work.
- Include vitamin, mineral and protein supplements in your stockpile to assure adequate nutrition.

Shelf-life of Foods for Storage - Here are some general guidelines for rotating common emergency foods.

Use within six months:

- Powdered milk (boxed)
- Dried fruit (in metal container)
- Dry, crisp crackers (in metal container)
- Potatoes

Use within one year:

- Canned condensed meat and vegetable soups
- Canned fruits, fruit juices and vegetables
- Ready-to-eat cereals and uncooked instant cereals (in metal containers)
- Peanut butter
- Jelly
- Hard candy and canned nuts
- Vitamin C
- Wheat
- Vegetable oils
- Dried corn
- Baking powder
- Soybeans
- Instant coffee, tea and cocoa
- Salt
- Noncarbonated soft drinks
- White rice
- Bouillon products
- Dry pasta
- Powdered milk (in nitrogen-packed cans)

If you live in a mobile home you should **always evacuate** if the emergency is weather related. If you live in a mobile home and don't want to go to a shelter, make arrangements to stay in a house with family or friends or a hotel. Since resources may be scarce it's a good idea to take your evacuation kit with you.

For Additional Information on Preparing for an Emergency:

http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0_91_,00.html

http://www.fema.gov/pdf/library/pfd_all.pdf

<http://www.scdhec.net/administration/ophp/hurricane/>

INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO PERSONS WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES

Disaster planning can be overwhelming for anyone. Stress caused by having to think about what you might do in an emergency much less actually having to cope with a disaster is a common experience. For people diagnosed with mental illnesses this additional stress can be very traumatic. You need to plan for how you cope if you have to go to an evacuation shelter. You also need to plan for how you cope if a disaster disrupts your routine but you remain at home; for example you usually attend a day program but can't go for several days because the center remains closed do to the emergency.

Emergency shelters are set up to provide a secure environment for a lot of people for a short period of time, typically 3 to 7 days. In order to reduce the risk of relapse, lessen symptom development it is a good idea to do a self assessment to prepare in case you need to evacuate to emergency shelter.

- Do loud noises, such as sirens, bother you?
- Are you uncomfortable in crowded rooms?
- Does having lights on all the time bother you?
- Do storms upset you?
- Does being away from your own bed upset you?
- How well do you cope around children?
- How well do you cope around strangers?
- What happens to you if you can't smoke when you want to?
- What happens if you can't go to bed at the time you are accustomed to?
- Does having your daily routine interrupted or altered increase your symptoms?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions you should work on a plan to minimize your stress if you have to evacuate to a shelter. For example: If you have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder does the chaos that accompanies emergencies increase flashbacks or your depression? What can you do to help lessen the impact?

Do you hear voices? What makes it worse? Are those things likely to happen in a shelter? What can you do to lessen the impact?

Does having to change your routine increase your symptoms of depression, mania or anxiety? What can you do to lessen the impact?

What happens to you at home if your normal routine is disrupted?

Try creating a "Staying Well during a Disaster Plan". Identify the things that trigger your symptoms, know what your early warning signs are and work on a plan to help you cope. You can use the "*Wellness Recovery Action Plan*" developed by Mary Ellen Copeland as a template to create your plan. If you already have one use it to help you plan for your needs in an emergency.

Other tips:

- Practice what you would say to someone to get your needs met: for example you may want to say to your buddy or someone at the shelter "I have anxiety or panic disorder. If I panic and can't get it for myself, I have emergency medicine in my evacuation kit, its called X.
- Know what your medications are and if you go to a shelter take them with you in the original bottle(s).
- Develop a support system of friends who can help you and whom you can help.
- Keep important papers like your Medicaid or Medicare card with you.
- Place items that are familiar and bring you comfort in a box to take with you to a shelter; if you created a "wellness tool box" as part of your WRAP plan bring that. Your wellness tool box or comfort box should contain items that are easy for you to transport and keep up with when in an evacuation shelter. For example, if being around a lot of people, strangers and talking bother you, it maybe a good idea to take a portable music player and headphones and ear plugs to block out noise.

INFORMATION FOR PERSONS WITH OTHER DISABILITIES AND/OR SPECIAL NEEDS

Safety

People with disabilities who are self-sufficient under normal circumstances may have to rely on the help of others in a disaster.

- People with disabilities often need more time than others to make necessary preparations in an emergency.
- The needs of older people often are similar to those of persons with disabilities.
- Because disaster warnings are often given by audible means such as sirens and radio announcements, people who are deaf or hard of hearing may not receive early disaster warnings and emergency instructions. Be their source of emergency information as it comes over the radio or television. Some people who are blind or visually-impaired, especially older people, may be extremely reluctant to leave familiar surroundings when the request for evacuation comes from a stranger.
- A guide dog could become confused or disoriented in a disaster. People who are blind or partially sighted may have to depend on others to lead them, as well as their dog, to safety during a disaster.
- In most states, guide dogs will be allowed to stay in emergency shelters with owners. Check with your local emergency management officials for more information.
- People with impaired mobility are often concerned about being dropped when being lifted or carried. Find out the proper way to transfer or move someone in a wheelchair and what exit routes from buildings are best.
- Some people with mental retardation may be unable to understand the emergency and could become disoriented or confused about the proper way to react.
- Many respiratory illnesses can be aggravated by stress. In an emergency, oxygen and respiratory equipment may not be readily available.
- People with epilepsy, parkinson's disease and other conditions often have very individualized medication regime's that cannot be interrupted without serious consequences. Some may be unable to communicate this information in an emergency.

Be ready to offer assistance if disaster strikes:

1. If a disaster warning is issued, check with neighbors or coworkers who are disabled. Offer assistance whenever possible.
2. Prepare an emergency plan. Work with neighbors who are disabled to prepare an emergency response plan. Identify how you will contact each other and what action will be taken.

Evacuation

1. Be able to assist if an evacuation order is issued. Provide physical assistance in leaving the home/office and transferring to a vehicle.
2. Provide transportation to a shelter. This may require a specialized vehicle designed to carry a wheelchair or other mobility equipment.
3. Create a Self-Help Network - Self-help networks are arrangements of people who agree to assist an individual with a disability in an emergency. Discuss with the relative, friend or co-worker who has a disability what assistance he or she may need. Urge the person to keep a disaster supplies kit and suggest that you keep an extra copy of the list of special items such as medicines or special equipment that the person has prepared. Talk with the person about how to inform him or her of an oncoming disaster and see about getting a key to the person's house so you can provide assistance without delay.

Source: FEMA, updated: May 18, 1998

Equipment & Supplies

If you use a wheelchair or scooter--

- Keep a patch kit and can of seal-in-air product in your portable disaster supplies kit to repair flat tires, unless these are puncture-proof. Also, keep an extra supply of inner tubes.
- Keep a pair of heavy gloves in your portable disaster supplies kit to use while wheeling or making your way over glass and debris.
- In areas prone to earthquakes, keep the wheelchair wheels locked and the wheelchair close to your bed at night to be sure it does not move or fall over.

If you use a motorized wheelchair or scooter--

- Have an extra battery. A car battery also can be used with a wheelchair but will not last as long as a wheelchair's deep-cycle battery.
- Check with your vendor to know if you can charge your battery by either connecting jumper cables to a vehicle battery or connecting batteries to a converter that plugs into a vehicle's cigarette lighter. Caution: Charge only one battery at a time.
- If available, store a lightweight manual wheelchair for backup.

If you are Blind or have a visual disability--

- Store a talking or Braille clock or large-print timepiece with extra batteries.
- Have at least one extra white cane.
- Mark your disaster supplies items with fluorescent tape, large print, or Braille.
- Mark your gas, water, and electric shutoff valves with fluorescent tape, large print, or Braille.
- Store extra magnifiers.
- Have an extra pair of glasses if you wear them.
- Make photocopies of your information lists from this booklet.

If you are Deaf or have a hearing loss--

- Consider getting a small portable battery-operated television set. Emergency broadcasts may give information in American Sign Language (ASL) or open captioning.
- Keep pads and pencils in your home disaster supplies kit and with your car disaster supplies. Keep them with you at all times for communication.
- Keep a flashlight, whistle or other noisemaker, and pad and pencil by your bed.
- Keep a card in the disaster supplies kits (in your home and car), and with you at all times that indicates that you are Deaf. Include any other appropriate communication information such as, "I do (or do not) know American Sign Language (ASL)," or, "My service animal may legally remain with me."

If you have a speech-related or communication disability--

- Consider buying a power converter if you use a laptop computer to communicate. A power converter allows most laptops (12 volts or less) to be operated from the cigarette lighter on the dashboard of a vehicle.
- Be sure to have pencil and paper with you as a backup communication resource.
- If you use an augmentative communication device (such as an electronic communicator or artificial larynx) that allows you to communicate by voice, be sure to keep it close to you at night in a safe place.
- Store copies of a word or letter board and preprinted key phrases you would use in case of an emergency in all of your disaster supplies kits, your wallet, purse, etc.
- If you use self-administered medical treatments--
- Keep in mind that traffic delays and/or severe weather hazards can happen when you do not expect them. Be sure to carry the equipment and fluids (temperature controlled) you will need when traveling.

If you have a cognitive disability--

- Keep a copy of any instructions or information you think you will need. Also, keep a copy of this information in the disaster supplies kits you keep both at home and in your car. Prepare this information in a way that is easy for you to understand. You may want to break down the information into a step-by-step outline. This format will help you remember what to do during the confusion of a disaster.
- Have a pencil and paper ready to keep track of any new instructions or information you may receive.

Storing Supplies

You store emergency documents in sealed plastic freezer bags in your basic disaster supplies kit. Copies of lifesaving information (i. e., specifications for adaptive equipment or medical devices) should be stored in your basic disaster supplies kits and with your disability-related supplies, portable supplies kit, car supplies, and supplies you keep at work.

Keep other emergency documents in your disaster supplies kit for home so you can get to them in an emergency. If you get benefits from Social Security (SSI or SSD), put a copy of your most recent award letter with these documents as well. (Note: financial assistance from the American Red Cross and other disaster recovery resources will not cause a reduction in your monthly grant.) Be sure to send copies of these documents to your out-of-town contact person (seal and mark them "open in an emergency for [name] only").

Store your disaster supplies kit in a safe, dry place that is easy for you to get to. This place should also be easy for your network, or anyone who comes to assist you, to identify. If you are going to put the kit on a shelf, be sure to secure it so that it does not fall and become inaccessible when you need it.

Replace your supply of food and water every six months. Also, check the expiration dates of stored prescription medications. Replace items in your supplies kit that are old or outdated. Remember to do this by putting new purchases in the kit and using the old kit items you purchased earlier. However, do not borrow items from the kit with the intention of replacing them later. You may forget to do so.

Summary Checklist for Disaster Supplies Date Completed: _____

- Put together a basic disaster supplies kit for your home. It should have food, water, and other essential items you would need for at least three, but preferably seven days.
- Obtain a first aid kit and put it with your basic disaster supplies kit for home.
- Collect items for a disaster supplies kit containing items you need that are related to your disability.
- Put together a portable disaster supplies kit in a drawstring bag or pouch to carry with you at all times.
- Assemble a disaster supplies kit for your car or van.
- Assemble disaster supplies for your service animal and pet(s).
- Obtain a UL-listed generator if you have equipment that runs on electricity and needs backup power.
- Ask your utility company if a priority reconnection service is available in your area.
- Get a patch kit and canned air for wheelchair tires.
- Put heavy gloves in your portable disaster supplies kit if you use a wheelchair. Wear these gloves when wheeling over debris.
- Keep an extra battery available for a motorized wheelchair - *Source: Red Cross, Disaster Preparedness for People With Disabilities*

CARING FOR YOUR PETS

In planning for emergencies do not forget your pets. If an evacuation is necessary, the Humane Society of the United States urges pet owners to make arrangements to evacuate their animals as well. Official shelters do not allow pets. In the event of evacuation, make alternative arrangements for pets, such as with family friends, veterinarians, or kennels in safe locations.

The following are suggested preparedness procedures for pets, prior to an evacuation:

- Be prepared to take your pets with you. Companion animals depend on us for their survival, much as children do. It could be days or possibly weeks before you are able to return home possibly causing the death of your pet by starvation or dehydration.
- Identify your pet. Securely fasten a current identification tag to your pet's collar. If you face evacuation, it is a good idea to attach to the collar the phone number of a friend or family member who is well out of disaster range. That way, anyone who finds your pet will be able to reach a person who knows how to contact you.
- Be sure your pet's rabies and other vaccinations are current. Boarding kennels will require proof of these vaccinations before accepting your pet.
- Photograph your pet. Carry a photo of your pet for identification purposes.
- Transport your pet safely. Use secure pet carriers and keep your pet on a leash or in a harness.
- Find a pet-friendly hotel. Because most emergency shelters do not admit pets, call hotels in a safe location and ask if you can bring your pet. If the hotel has a no-pets policy, ask the manager if the hotel can waive the policy during the disaster.
- Foster your pet. If you and your pet cannot stay together, call friends, family members, veterinarians, or boarding kennels in a safe area to arrange safe foster care.
- Have supplies on hand. Be sure to pack a week's worth of food, water, medication, cat litter, or any other supplies your pet needs on a regular basis.
- Plan your evacuation and leave in plenty of time. Do not wait until the last minute to evacuate. When rescue officials come to your door, they may not allow you to take your pets with you.
- Remember emergency responders are trained and required to save human lives, not animals. They may be taking physical and legal risks if they stop to help your animals.
- Carry a list of emergency telephone numbers with you. This should include your veterinarian, local animal control, local animal shelters, the Red Cross, and any other individual or group you might need to contact during the disaster.

For additional information on this topic, to find a listing of pet-friendly motels and hotels, or to find facilities offering emergency pet sheltering, visit the following sites:

- <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/petprotect.asp>
- <http://www.pets911.com/index.php>
- <http://www.clemson.edu/ep/animal.htm>
- <http://www.petswelcome.com/>
- <http://www.travelpets.com/>
- <http://www.dogfriendly.com/>
- <http://www.pettravel.com/>

County Offices of Emergency Management

Abbeville

Phone: (864) 366-2400

FAX: (864) 366-4608

Aiken

Phone: (803) 642-1623

FAX: (803) 642-2556

Allendale

Phone: (803) 584-4081

FAX: (803) 584-3807

Anderson

Phone: (864) 260-4022

FAX: (864) 260-1055

Bamberg

Phone: (803) 245-4313

FAX: (803) 245-3109

Barnwell

Phone: (803) 259-7013

FAX: (803) 259-1759

Beaufort

Phone: (843) 470-3100

FAX (843) 470-3054

Berkeley

Phone: (843) 719-4166

FAX: (843) 719-4187

Calhoun

Phone: (803) 874-3042

FAX: (803) 874-4357

Charleston

Phone: (843) 202-7400

FAX: (843) 202-7408

Cherokee

Phone: (864) 487-2590

FAX: (864) 487-2719

Chester

Phone: (803) 377-4632

FAX: (803) 385-5135

Chesterfield

Phone: (843) 623-6837

FAX: (843) 623-6015

Clarendon

Phone: (803) 435-9310

FAX: (803) 435-8053

Colleton

Phone: (843) 549-5632

FAX: (843) 549-2529

Darlington

Phone: (843) 398-4450/4452/4453

FAX: (843) 398-4447

Dillon

Phone: (843) 774-1414

FAX: (843) 774-1442

Dorchester

Phone: (843) 832-0341

Fax: (843) 832-0343

Edgefield

Phone: (803) 637-4000

FAX: (803) 637-4130

Fairfield

Phone: (803) 635-4444/5505/5057

FAX: (803) 635-4299

Florence

Phone: (843) 665-7255

FAX: (843) 662-9939

Georgetown

Phone: (843) 545-3273

FAX: (843) 546-4945

Greenville

Phone: (864) 467-2680

FAX: (864) 467-2684

Greenwood

Phone: (864) 942-8553

FAX: (843) 942-8669

Hampton

Phone: (803) 943-7524

FAX: (803) 943-7524

Horry

Phone: (843) 915-5150

FAX: (843) 915-6150

Jasper

Phone: (843) 726-7607

FAX: (843) 726-9158

Kershaw

Phone: (803) 425-1522

FAX: (803) 424-4018

Lancaster

Phone: (803) 285-7333

FAX: (803) 289-2933

Laurens

Phone: (864) 984-4731

FAX: (864) 984-3771/ 0900

Lee

Phone: (803) 484-5274

FAX: (803) 484-5043

Lexington

Phone: (803) 785-8342

FAX: (803) 785-8589

McCormick

Phone: (864) 852-3435

Fax: (864) 465-3435

Marion Phone: (843) 423-

8270/8271

FAX: (843) 423-8297

Marlboro

Phone: (843) 479-5642

FAX: (843) 479-9944

Newberry

Phone: (803) 321-2135

FAX: (803) 321-2147

Oconee

Phone: (864) 638-4200

FAX: (864) 638-7046

Orangeburg

Phone: (803)533-6265

FAX: (803) 533-5899

Pickens

Phone: (864) 898-5945

FAX: (864) 898-5797

Richland

Phone: (803) 576-3400

FAX: (803) 748-5055

Saluda

Phone; (864) 445-2529

FAX: (864) 445-3913

Spartanburg

Phone: (864) 595-5366

FAX: (864) 595-5374

Sumter

Phone: (803) 436-2158

FAX: (803) 436-2157

Union

Phone: (864) 429-1620

FAX: (864) 429-1622

Williamsburg

Phone: (843) 354-9330/7016/6891

FAX: (843) 354-3534

York

Phone: (803) 329-7270

FAX: (803) 324-7420

WEB RESOURCES

SC Emergency Management Division <http://www.scemd.org/>

SC Dept. of Natural Resources <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/>

SC Dept. of Public Safety <http://www.scdps.org/>

SC Law Enforcement Division <http://www.sled.sc.gov/ealth>

SC Dept of Insurance <https://www.doi.sc.gov/>

SC Dept. of Mental Health <http://www.state.sc.us/dmh/>

SC Dept. of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) <http://www.scdhec.net/>

SC School for the Deaf and Blind <http://www.scsdb.k12.sc.us/>

SC Commission for the Blind <http://www.sccb.state.sc.us/>

American Red Cross <http://www.redcross.org/index.html>

Federal Emergency Management Division (FEMA) <http://www.fema.gov/>