

# TEN THINGS PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF SHOULD KNOW AND DO TO BE SAFE IN A DISASTER



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## 1. PLAN



Deaf folks should make plans to constantly share information with each other using:

- Facebook
- Texting
- Video Chat

Make sure everybody knows what's going on.

**Make plans for what you should do for each type of emergency.**

Think about:

- Where in your house is safe if a **tornado** is coming?
- What should you do when there is a **flood** warning?
- How will you get out of your bedroom if you have a house **fire**?
- What supplies would you need if there were a three day **ice storm**?
- How will you find out about **bad weather** and **emergencies**?
- What **legal papers** do you need to take with you if you have to leave your home during an emergency?

Review your plans regularly and make changes if needed.

- Get to a safe place as soon as you can.
- Take what you need with you.
- If emergency officials announce that leaving home may be necessary, do it quickly. It's best to leave quickly and get to a safer place while you have choices. If you wait too long to leave, roads may be closed or the weather may be too dangerous for you to be driving.
- The Red Cross shelters are not designed for people with disabilities. They will probably not have anyone available to assist you in any way. *However, staying at a shelter during some types of emergencies is much safer than staying at home.*

*Many people with disabilities in New Orleans and Biloxi waited too long for a family member or care provider to come and rescue them after the hurricane. It is better for two people to come to help rather than no one. So make arrangements and communicate with more than one person who can help you.*

## 2. CASH \$\$\$



**Have some extra cash available.**

When a large disaster happens, no one can use credit cards or get money from the bank. A little cash can help you get to safety.

- If you just put aside \$5-\$10 a month in a secret place, within a year you will have enough to help buy gas and eat a few meals out.

### 3. EXTRA MEDICATION



**Keep some extra medication in case you can't get a prescription filled during an emergency.**

With health insurance and Medicaid/Medicare rules, you can probably only save one or two pills from each prescription per month. After three or four months of saving pills, you would have enough for most emergencies.

- Remember: don't keep pills longer than one year.
- Keep your emergency pills in their own bottles that have the prescription name and pharmacy number on them.

### 4. EMERGENCY ITEMS



**Pet Owners:** Keep all service animal and pet vaccinations up to date and make sure that the animal has a current Bordetella vaccination. Most animal friendly shelters will require this, along with an up-to-date rabies vaccination.

**Keep emergency items together in a convenient place.**

#### **Emergency Items:**

- Flashlight & extra batteries
- Whistle (to make noise for help)
- First aid supplies (bandages, antibiotic cream, gauze pads, alcohol)
- Extra medications and a list of all your medicines with their dosages.
- Radio that runs on batteries
- Written instructions on how to communicate with you.
- Bottled water and food such as cereal bars, peanut butter, crackers, cans of fruit, a can opener, etc.
- Other things specifically important for your particular disability (*a person who uses a hearing aid should keep extra batteries, etc.*)

#### **Important Documents:**

- Insurance Policies (life, health, dental, homeowners, etc.)
- Deeds
- Wills
- Powers of Attorney
- Birth Certificates
- Social Security Cards

*You can keep all of these documents in a small fireproof lock box at home. Keep them in one place so you can easily find the documents to take with you in case of emergency.*

### 5. WEATHER RADIO



**Buy a weather radio to alert you of dangerous weather or other emergencies.**

Alerts you about: tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, ice/snow storms and other severe weather, Amber alerts, hazardous explosions, fires, chemical spills, etc.

Alerts with a loud tone, LED light, and LCD display message. Can also use daily as an alarm clock. Has AC power with adapter and battery backup.

- Krown Weather Alert Radio with Transmitter - \$139.95 (1-866-889-4872)
- Midland Alert Weather Radio with Strobe - \$139.43 (TTY 1-800-281-3555)

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## 6. YOUR COUNTY



### **Know what is going on in your county.**

*Make an appointment to meet with your County Emergency Manager to make sure he or she understands what deaf people need. If there is an Emergency Committee in your county, make sure there is a deaf person on that committee.*

Know about the emergency plans such as where people can get transportation to a safer place, how you will be alerted in case of a severe storm, etc. Your County Commissioners make the decision about evacuations.

Many people watch weather channels in other cities. Stay aware of what is happening in your own county. Use your weather radio. Stay tuned to the TV station nearest you.

Since people with disabilities need to get out early, it is very important that you know what is happening in your own community.

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## 7. YOUR NEIGHBORS



### **Get to know your neighbors.**

Even though you may live with family members, they may be away from home when an emergency occurs.

Visit with your neighbors if possible so that they understand your specific needs and could assist you if necessary. Also, get to know your neighbor's schedules so that you know when they are home and could assist you.

Of course this is not the only reason to get to know your neighbors. Think about ways that you can help your neighbors too. Give and take relationships are always the best kind.

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## 8. SAFE PLACE



### **Find a person and/or place you can go to in case of an emergency that requires evacuation.**

If you can make friends with a person who has the same disability as you in a nearby city, you could go to their home if necessary. Finding another person with a disability like yours means that they know the service providers you might need and perhaps have equipment or an environment that would benefit you. Make sure this person is far enough away to be in a safe place. Staying with supportive friends or families is much better than staying in a hotel. Of course you need to make these arrangements way before the emergency happens. Make sure you have a good map and can safely get to the safe home.

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## 9. CONTACT PERSON

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**Select someone you know outside of the state where you live who you and your family can contact in case you get separated.**

Make sure everyone in your family knows this person's name and phone number. Tell your friends and family that this is the person you will contact, and that they should also contact this person to know where you are and that you are safe. You will also have a way of finding out how other friends and family members are doing who were also required to evacuate.

*After hurricane Katrina, family members were separated and had no idea if their loved ones were safe.*

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## 10. DISABILITY GROUP

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**Become an active member in some disability group in your community.**

Being part of a group of other people with disabilities helps you get to know others with the same concerns and interests that you have. You can feel more confident since you are working together with others on problems that affect you.

These advocacy groups can form committees to inform members about various important issues such as emergencies. Advocacy groups can work within a local community to make sure officials are doing everything possible to help you stay safe.

If there is no advocacy group in your community, contact the Disability Resource Group, and we can help you start a group.

**For more information:**

Ready.Georgia --- [www.ready.ga.gov](http://www.ready.ga.gov)

Disability.Gov --- [www.disability.gov](http://www.disability.gov)

Office of Disability Integration and Coordination (ODIC) --- [www.fema.gov/about](http://www.fema.gov/about)

Disability Resource Group --- [www.disabilityresourcegroup.org](http://www.disabilityresourcegroup.org)