



Essential Elements of Emergency Preparedness and Special Needs

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What is an emergency?

An unforeseen situation that threatens your employees, clients, or the public, disrupts or shuts down your operations, or causes physical or environmental damage.

Are you prepared?

Which of the following emergencies have you experienced?

- Fire
- Flood
- Tornado
- Earthquake
- Lightning Strike
- Chemical Spill
- Auto Accident
- Blizzard / Ice Storm
- Hurricane
- Power Outage
- Viral Infection
- Active Shooter

Emergency Preparedness and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Planning Assumptions

Federal civil rights laws require accessibility and prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities in all aspects of emergency mitigation, planning, response, and recovery. To comply with these laws, people responsible for notification protocols, evacuation and emergency operation plans, shelter identification and operations, emergency medical care facilities and operations, human services, and other emergency response and recovery programs must:

- 1 have sound working knowledge of the accessibility and nondiscrimination requirements applicable under Federal disability rights laws;
- 2 be familiar with the demographics of the population of people with disabilities who live in their community;
- 3 involve people with different types of disabilities in identifying the communication and transportation needs,

accommodations, support systems, equipment, services, and supplies that residents and visitors with disabilities will need during an emergency; and

- 4 identify existing and develop new resources within the community that meet the needs of residents and visitors with disabilities during emergencies.

Non-discrimination Principles of the Law

Federal civil laws rights in Section VI of this Guide require equal access for, and prohibit discrimination against, people with disabilities in all aspects of emergency planning, response, and recovery. To comply with Federal law, those involved in emergency management should understand the concepts of accessibility and nondiscrimination and how they apply in emergencies. Following are key nondiscrimination concepts applicable under those Federal laws and examples of how these concepts apply to all phases of emergency management.

- 1 **Self-Determination** – People with disabilities are the most knowledgeable about their own needs.
 - Whenever choices are available, people with disabilities have the right to choose their shelter location, what type of services they require, and who will provide them.
- 2 **No “One Size Fits All”** – People with disabilities do not all require the same assistance and do not all have the same needs.
 - Many different types of disabilities affect people in different ways. Preparations should be made for individuals with a variety of functional needs, including individuals who use mobility aids, require medication or portable medical equipment, use service animals, need information in alternate formats, or rely on a care giver.
- 3 **Equal Opportunity** – People with disabilities must have the same opportunities to benefit from emergency programs, services, and activities as people without disabilities.
 - Emergency recovery services and programs should be designed to provide equivalent choices for people with disabilities as they do for individuals without disabilities. This

includes choices relating to short-term housing or other short- and long-term disaster support services.

- 4 **Inclusion** – People with disabilities have the right to participate in and receive the benefits of emergency programs, services, and activities provided by governments, private businesses, and nonprofit organizations.
 - Inclusion of people with various types of disabilities in planning, training, and evaluation of programs and services will ensure that this population is given appropriate consideration during emergencies.
- 5 **Integration** – Emergency programs, services, and activities typically must be provided in an integrated setting.
 - The provision of services such as sheltering, information intake for disaster services, and short- term housing in integrated settings keeps individuals connected to their support system and caregivers and avoids the need for disparate service facilities.
- 6 **Physical Access** – Emergency programs, services, and activities must be provided at locations that all people can access, including people with disabilities.
 - People with disabilities should be able to enter and use emergency facilities and access the programs, services, and activities that are provided. Facilities typically required to be accessible include: parking, drop-off areas, entrances and exits, security screening areas, toilet rooms, bathing facilities, sleeping areas, dining facilities, areas where medical care or human services are provided, and paths of travel to and between these areas.
- 7 **Equal Access** – People with disabilities must be able to access and benefit from emergency programs, services, and activities equal to the general population.
 - Equal access applies to emergency preparedness, notification of emergencies, evacuation, transportation, communication, shelter, distribution of supplies, food, first aid, medical care, housing, and application for and distribution of benefits.
- 8 **Effective Communication** –People with disabilities must be given information comparable in content and detail to that given to the general public, as well as accessible, understandable, and timely.
 - Auxiliary aids and services may be needed to ensure effective communication. These may include pen and

paper or sign language interpreters through on-site or video interpreting for individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing or have speech impairments. Individuals who are blind, deaf-blind, have low vision, or have cognitive disabilities may need large print information or people to assist with reading and filling out forms.

- 9 **Program Modifications** – People with disabilities must have equal access to emergency programs and services, which may entail modifications to rules, policies, practices, and procedures.
 - Service staff may need to change the way questions are asked, provide reader assistance to complete forms, or provide assistance in a more accessible location.
- 10 **No Charge** – People with disabilities may not be charged to cover the costs of measures necessary to ensure equal access and nondiscriminatory treatment.
 - Examples of accommodations provided without charge to the individual may include ramps, cots modified to address disability-related needs, a visual alarm, grab bars, additional storage space for medical equipment, lowered counters or shelves, Braille and raised letter signage, a sign language interpreter, a message board, assistance in completing forms, or documents in Braille, large print, or audio recording.

Considerations for people with disabilities

Those with disabilities or other special needs often have unique needs that require more detailed planning in the event of a disaster. Consider the following actions as you prepare:

- 1 Learn what to do in case of power outages and personal injuries. Know how to connect and start a back-up power supply for essential medical equipment.
- 2 Consider the evacuation route and if it can be navigated by those with disabilities.
- 3 Include service animals in all planning of services.

- 4 Consider those with disabilities and if they would require staff assistance or service animals in an shelter in place or evacuation situation.
- 5 Consider getting a medical alert system that will allow you to call for help if you need assistance with someone who is immobilized in an emergency.
- 6 For those with an electric wheelchair or scooter, have a manual wheelchair for backup.
- 7 Teach those who may need to assist you in an emergency how to operate necessary equipment. Also, label equipment and attach laminated instructions for equipment use.
- 8 Store back-up equipment (mobility, medical, etc.) as needed.
- 9 For the vision impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, plan ahead for someone to convey essential emergency information.
- 10 Check to see if the agency has special provisions for emergencies (e.g., providing services at another location should an evacuation be ordered).
- 11 Identify and mark accessible exits and access to all areas designated for emergency shelter or safe rooms. Ask about plans for alerting and evacuating those with sensory disabilities.
- 12 Have a cell phone with an extra battery. If you are unable to get out of a building, you can let someone know where you are and guide them to you. Keep the numbers you may need to call with you if the 9-1-1 emergency number is overloaded.

Case management

Factors to address with case management:

- Bio-psycho-social-spiritual needs
 - Cumulative effects of co-existing disorders
 - Change of status and qualification of services
 - Difficulty accessing services
 - Difficulty with compliance
-
-
-

Types of Special Needs

Be aware when addressing special needs issues: a client is a person *with* special needs, not the diagnosis itself.

Sensory/Physical Impairment/Disability

Factors to consider:

physical access

access vs. function

secondary factors

body language

inaccurate translation

language preference

Mental Health and Addiction

Factors to consider:

abstinence	desire for recovery	co-existing conditions
“replacement”	progressiveness	triggers

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Factors to consider:

abuse history	HIV risk	inappropriate/uninformed care
depersonalization	discrimination	services availability

Language and Cultural

Factors to consider:

inaccurate translation

language preference

cultural discrimination

conflicting values

Stress Management for People with Special Needs

Positive vs. Negative Stress

There are 2 type of stress: negative (_____) and positive (_____).

No situation is inherently negatively or positively stressful.

The difference is _____ .

Defining Stress and Its Affects

Red Zone Stress

The term Red Zone is a well understood term that designates either a problem area or a heightened sense of alertness. You may be there sometimes without even knowing it.

You don't have to take the Stress Inventory every time you want to monitor your stress level. Consider these subtle clues that may point to your being in the stress Red Zone.

Mentally check the ones true of you.

1. You quickly walk by someone at the office to avoid a conversation simply because you don't have the energy to engage.
2. You no longer enjoy your job or your life.
3. When you come home your loved ones say, "You look terrible."
4. When you come home you could go to bed, right then.
5. You can't shake the free-floating anxiety that seems to cling to you.
6. Small things that once didn't bother you now set you off.
7. You often ruminate over and rehearse negative issues in your job and/or life.
8. You easily default to worst case scenario thinking.
9. You feel anger coursing deep within.
10. You're not sleeping very well.



What are the major stressors in your life that have begun in the last 24 months?



STRESS *relief* TIPS

Tips for Quick Stress Relief

1. Recognize when you're stressed
 - Recognize stress by listening to your body
 - Observe your muscles and insides.
 - Observe your breath.
2. Identify your stress response
 - Overexcited stress response
 - Under excited stress response
3. Bring your senses to the rescue
4. Find sensory inspiration
 - Memories
 - Watch others
 - Parents
 - The power of imagination
5. Make quick stress relief a habit
 - Start small
 - Identify and target
 - Test-drive sensory input
 - Have fun with the process.
 - Talk about it

Emergency Preparedness with ADA, Laws and Resources

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended

- Section 504 – Programs, Services, and Activities (if Federal financial assistance is received)

Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 - (if using certain Federal construction dollars)

Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and other Special Needs

https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1445-20490-6732/fema_476.pdf

Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and other Special Needs

https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/PDF_s/Preparedness_Disaster_Recovery/General_Preparedness_Recovery/Home/A4497.pdf