

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR PEOPLE WHO USE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

IN THE HOME

Plan for the possible need to evacuate your home and do an assessment of the assistive technology (AT) you use in your home. In addition, make sure you have what you need to shelter in place. Compile a list of the AT critical to support your physical well-being and ability to communicate during an emergency. Have an appropriate back-up power supply and know how long the power supply lasts. The following questions will assist you in developing a list of AT used in your daily life.

DO YOU USE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY:

- To assist you with mobility?
- To help with your personal care?
- To help you during meal time?
- For communication?
- For transfers?
- For transportation?

ACCESSIBLE ROUTES


- ▶ If you live in an apartment complex ask about evacuation plans and routes. Check the routes for accessibility and make sure that designated areas of shelter are clearly marked.
- ▶ Gather information about how first responders will be directed to residents with disability related needs.

IN THE WORKPLACE

- ▶ Evaluate your assistive technology (AT) needs in a workplace evacuation. Do you have personal AT that needs to be evacuated with you? Make sure you have what you need to shelter in place. Do you need AT to alert you to a disaster and the need to evacuate the building?
- ▶ Become familiar with the evacuation procedures of your workplace and consider how a disaster may impact your ability to leave the building safely.
- ▶ Elevators may not be available for evacuation. If the elevators are not working, learn the evacuation plan if you cannot use the stairs.
- ▶ If you have a mobility impairment, know what AT can assist with evacuation. If there is AT available, where is it located and is it easily accessible? Is someone trained to use it? If AT is not available, ask if your employer can purchase it.
- ▶ If you are asked to go to a designated place to wait for help, confirm how the first responders will be notified where you are located.
- ▶ If you have a hearing and/or visual impairment make sure there is a working alert system in place.
- ▶ Be responsible for your own safety. Develop your own evacuation plan. Do not depend on just one person to assist you. Create a support network to ensure assistance will be available.

GENERAL THINGS TO CONSIDER

- ▶ Let your local fire department and/or utility company know about your special needs.
- ▶ If you have a power wheelchair, consider having a manual chair as a backup. If you use a custom wheelchair for medical support (e.g. ventilator or oxygen), attach information to it for the first responders.
- ▶ Store backup equipment at another location.
- ▶ Teach others in your support system how to use your AT and attach laminated instructions.
- ▶ Keep critical AT charged and have backup batteries.
- ▶ Make plans for someone to notify you of an emergency if you are deaf, hard of hearing or have vision impairment.
- ▶ Have a corded land line phone that does not use electricity. A land line phone or cell phone can be used during a power outage.
- ▶ Plan for taking AT with you. Remember to take chargers and other components with you!
- ▶ Label or tag your AT with your contact information.
- ▶ Register your AT with the manufacturer.
- ▶ Take a photograph of yourself using your AT. This helps clearly identify the AT belongs to you!
- ▶ Keep photographs and a record of all AT serial numbers in a safe location (safe deposit box).
- ▶ Think about how you might go about obtaining a short-term (or long-term) replacement for your AT, if needed. Contact the Pass It On Center or your state Assistive Technology Act program to learn how to obtain AT.
- ▶ Since homeowner's/renter's insurance does not cover damage by ground water, flood insurance may be needed to replace AT lost or damaged in a disaster. Factor in the cost of home or vehicle modifications when determining the replacement value of your home or vehicle.



...PLAN
GATHER
ASK
INFORM
STORE
LIST
PREPARE...

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

Publications

- ▶ **PREPARING FOR DISASTER FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS**
www.fema.gov
- ▶ **GUIDE ON SPECIAL NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FOR EMERGENCY MANAGERS, PLANNERS AND RESPONDERS**
<http://nod.org/>

National

- ▶ **DISABILITY PREPAREDNESS RESOURCE GUIDE**
www.disabilitypreparedness.gov
- ▶ **FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**
www.fema.gov
- ▶ **INCLUSIVE PREPAREDNESS CENTER**
www.inclusivepreparedness.org
- ▶ **AMERICAN RED CROSS**
www.redcross.org
- ▶ **PASS IT ON CENTER**
www.passitoncenter.org

State Resources

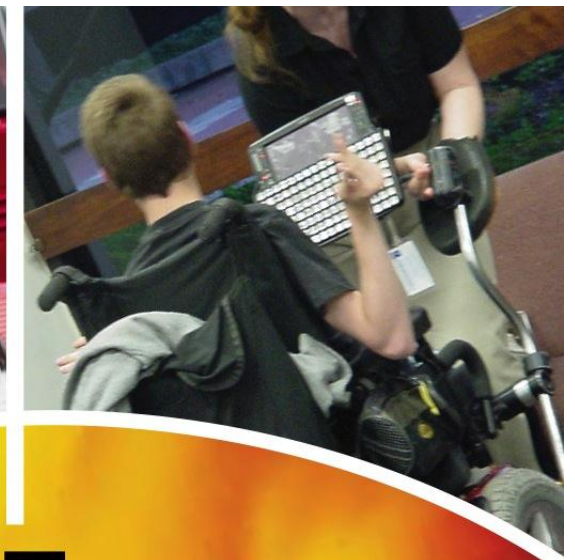
Disability Rights Vermont, 141 Main Street / Suite 7 Montpelier, VT 05602
Tel: (802) 229-1355 Fax: (802) 229-1359
info@disabilityrightsvt.org

VCIL 11 East State Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05602
802-229-0501 (voice / TTY) 800-639-1522 (toll-free voice / TTY)
info@vcil.org

Assistive Technology Reuse Project, Sharon Alderman,
sharon.alderman@state.vt.us, phone: 888-827-2714

VT Assistive Technology Program, 103 S. Main St., Waterbury, VT 05671-2305
dailatinfo@state.vt.us 1-800-750-6355

Source: Adapted from publications by the Disability Law and Advocacy Center of Tennessee and the Georgia Emergency Preparedness Coalition for Individuals with Disabilities and Older Adults. Developed by the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University.



PEMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

FOR PEOPLE WHO USE
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS
to address your unique needs

