Action Checklist for Disabled Individuals

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 getting a medical alert system that will allow you to call for help if you are immobilized in an emergency. Most alert systems require a working phone line, so have a back-up plan, such as a cell phone or pager, if the regular landlines are disrupted.

3. If you use an electric wheelchair or scooter, have a manual wheelchair for backup.

4. 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.

5. Store back-up equipment (mobility, medical, etc.) at your neighbor's home, school, or your workplace.

6. Arrange for more than one person from your personal support network to check on you in an emergency, so there is at least one back-up if the primary person you rely on cannot.

7. If you are vision impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, plan ahead for someone to convey essential emergency information to you if you are unable to use the TV or radio.

8. If you use a personal care attendant obtained from an agency, check to see if the agency has special provisions for emergencies (e.g., providing services at another location should an evacuation be ordered).

9. If you live in an apartment, ask the management to 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.

10. 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.