

Emergencies can occur at any time and your best defense is to be prepared. The Regional pamphlet series on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities/special needs includes:

- Hearing
- High-rise Safety
- Mobility
- Non-Visible Disabilities*
- Seniors With Special Needs
- Travel Considerations
- Vision

* This can include communication, cognitive, sensory, mental health, learning or intellectual disabilities.



Personal Support Network

A personal support network is a group of at least three people you know and trust and who would help you during an emergency.

How do you create a support network?

- Ask people you trust if they are willing to help you in case of an emergency. Identify contacts for important locations such as home, work or school. Neighbors are often the closest and most available contacts in an emergency.
- Tell these support people where your emergency kit is stored. Give one member a key to your home.
- Include a support network contact who is far enough away that they are unlikely to be affected by the same emergency.
- Work with your support network to develop a plan that meets your needs.
- Practice your emergency plan with your network. If applicable, show them how your special needs equipment works.

This Information is drawn from the Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs from Public Safety Canada. This brochure has been prepared by the Regional Director of Emergency Management from the Town/County of St. Paul; Town of Elk Point and the Summer Village of Horseshoe Bay.

Emergency Preparedness for Individuals with Hearing Disabilities



A person can be deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. The distinction between these terms is based on the individual's language and means of communicating rather than the degree of hearing loss. In an emergency, the method in which emergency warnings are issued becomes critical to how a person with hearing loss is able to respond and follow instructions to safety.

Your Emergency Plan

- if your *network is unavailable during an emergency, seek the assistance of others to whom you can communicate your hearing loss by spoken language, moving your lips without sound, pointing to your ear or hearing aid
- keep a pencil and paper handy
- obtain a pager that is connected to an emergency paging system at your workplace and/or the building that you live in
- install a smoke detection system that includes smoke alarms and accessory flashing strobe lights or vibrators to gain your attention if the alarms sound test smoke alarms on a monthly basis by pushing the test button
- replace batteries in smoke alarms every six months and whenever there is an indication that the battery is low



- keep a laminated card on your person and in your survival kit that identifies you as deaf or hard of hearing and explains how to communicate with you
- * Your 'network' is a list of the people that can be called upon to provide assistance.

Dos - Assisting People with Disabilities

- get the person's attention via a visual cue or a gentle touch on their arm before speaking to them
- face the person and make eye contact when speaking to them as they may rely on speech reading
- communicate in close proximity
- speak clearly and naturally
- use gestures to help explain what you are trying to communicate
- write a message if there is time and keep a pencil and paper handy

Don'ts - Assisting People with Disabilities

- avoid approaching the person from behind
- refrain from shouting or speaking unnaturally slowly
- do not make loud noises as hearing aids amplify sounds and can create a physical shock to the user

Additional Items for Your Emergency Survival Kit

- extra writing pads and pencils
- flashlight, whistle or noisemaker
- pre-printed key phrases you would use during an emergency
- assistive devices unique to your needs (e.g. hearing aid, pager, personal amplifier etc.)
- portable visual notification devices that allow you to know if a person is at the door or calling on the telephone
- extra batteries for assistive devices
- a CommuniCard (produced by The Canadian Hearing Society) that explains your hearing loss and also helps identify how rescuers or assistants can communicate with you during an emergency
- any other contingency supplies unique to your special needs

Note: typically people who are deafened or hard of hearing will need information presented in a text format.

Remember: individuals are best at knowing their own needs and these should be respected.



IS YOUR FAMILY
PREPARED?