

Notes from the Navigator

A Monthly Newsletter about Serving Customers with Disabilities in the One-Stop System



JUNE THROUGH NOVEMBER IS HURRICANE SEASON—ARE YOU PREPARED IF DISASTER STRIKES?

The best time to prepare for an emergency is before it happens. Planning ahead is particularly critical for people with disabilities and/or special needs. Get ready now by planning for yourself and your family should a disaster strike our area. The likelihood that you and your family will recover from an emergency tomorrow often depends on the planning and preparation done today. By evaluating your own personal needs and making an emergency plan that fits those needs, you and your loved ones will be better able to cope with whatever disastrous situation may arise. Following are some measures individuals with disabilities and/or special needs and their caregivers can take to start preparing for emergencies before they happen.

Emergency Kit. Think about the basic necessities for survival and start making an Emergency Kit that includes:

- * Water; one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- * Food; a three-day supply of non-perishable food and a can opener for canned goods
- * Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- * Flashlight and extra batteries
- * Cash, coins and travelers checks
- * First aid kit
- * Whistle to signal for help
- * Matches in waterproof container
- * Dust mask to help filter contaminated air; plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- * Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- * Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- * Local maps
- * Pet food, extra water and supplies for your pet or service animal

Consider two kits. In one kit put everything needed to stay where you are and make it on your own for at least a week. The other should be a light-weight, smaller kit you can take with you if you have to leave your home.

Medications. If you take medicine or a medical treatment on a daily basis, be sure you have what you need to make it on your own for a minimum of seven days. You should also keep a copy of your prescriptions and dosage or treatment information. If it is not possible to have a week-long supply of medicines and treatment supplies, keep as much as possible on hand and talk to your pharmacist or doctor about what else you should do to prepare.

Pets and Service Animals. If you must evacuate your home, **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS BEHIND!** Pets most likely cannot survive on their

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own and, if by some remote chance they do, you may not be able to find them when you return. Be sure to include food, water, a collar with ID tag, medical records and other emergency pet supplies for your service animal or pet. Be aware that pets (other than service animals) are not permitted in emergency public shelters. Prepare a list of family, friends, boarding facilities, veterinarians and "pet-friendly" hotels able to shelter your pets in an emergency.

Important Documents. Have copies of your medical insurance and Medicare/Medicaid cards readily available. Also have copies of important documents such as: family records, medical records, wills, deeds, social security number, charge and bank accounts information and tax records. Create an Emergency Information List with any information related to operating equipment or life-saving devices that you rely on, together with the names and numbers of your medical providers and everyone in your personal support network (it's best to keep these documents in a waterproof container). Be sure that a trusted friend or family member has copies of these documents. If you have a communication disability, make sure your Emergency Information List explains the best way for others to communicate with you.

Miscellaneous. If you use eyeglasses, hearing aids and hearing aid batteries, wheelchair batteries and oxygen, be sure you always have extras in your home. Select a place to meet in the event you become separated from family members or caregivers. Choose an out-of-town friend or relative to be the contact person for you and your family so everyone can "check-in" and be accounted for (it is often easier to make a long distance call than a local one from a disaster area). Find out how local authorities will warn you of a pending disaster and how they will provide information to you while it is on-going. If your disability is one that means you are electric-dependent, be sure to register with your local utility company. (Excerpted information courtesy of Department of Homeland Security, American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.)

Informational Websites:

- www.ready.gov Department of Homeland Security
- www.prepare.org American Red Cross
- www.fema.gov Federal Emergency Management Agency
- www.disabilityinfo.gov Federal government's disability resource website
- www.disabilitypreparedness.org Center for Disability and Special Needs
- www.nws.noaa.gov National Weather Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- www.nassaucountyny.gov Nassau County

Quote of the Month:

"Never let the fear of striking out get in your way."
~ George Herman ("Babe") Ruth