

Hurricane Preparedness for Individuals with Disabilities and Their Families

Hurricanes are a threat to our area and everyone must plan for a hurricane, particularly people with disabilities or mobility concerns. The time to start planning is NOW - if you wait until a hurricane threatens the area, it will be too late.

Take the time now to develop your own personal plan for surviving a hurricane. Plan for actions to take before, during and after a hurricane. Consult your service support agencies, home healthcare providers (if any), family, friends, neighbors and physician, if necessary. Ask them to assist you with your hurricane plan.

Before the Disaster

There are several important things that can be done in order to reduce the effects of a disaster:

1. Make sure you have a support system in place.
2. Complete your individual personal assessment and prepare your individual disaster plan.
3. Gather the supplies you will need before, during and after a disaster. Make sure the supplies are specific to your disability.
4. Make sure your residence is as safe as possible in the event of an emergency. Remember, preparedness must begin with you.

Support System

A support system, sometimes called the "buddy system," can help you prepare for a disaster as well as during and after a disaster. Members of your support system, or "buddies", can be roommates, relatives, neighbors, friends, and co-workers. They should be people you trust to determine if you need assistance. Your support system members should know

your capabilities and needs, and be able to help in a matter of minutes.

1. Have your "buddies" assist you in preparing a written personal assessment.
2. Give your support system copies of your emergency information list, medical information list, disability related supplies and special equipment list, evacuation plans, any emergency documents and your personal disaster plan.
3. Arrange for your support system to check on you immediately if local officials give an evacuation order or if a disaster occurs.



4. Agree on the methods of communication to be used during a disaster.
5. Give your "buddies" any keys they need for your place of residence or vehicle.
6. Make sure your support system knows how to operate and transport any equipment specific to your disability. Make sure it is labeled and laminated instruction cards are attached.
7. If you have a service animal, insure that the animal is familiar with your support system members and have written instructions on any care the animal may require.
8. Review and update your personal assessment and disaster plan with your support system on a regular basis. "Practice your plan".

Personal Assessment

The assistance you will need before, during, and after a disaster will be determined by the nature of the disaster itself, your individual capabilities, and your limita-

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Families Helping Families of Greater New Orleans is an initiative of the:



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tions. The answers to the following questions should be written or recorded and distributed to all of your support system:

Personal Care: Do you need assistance with activities of daily living, such as bathing and grooming? Do you use adaptive equipment to help you get dressed?

Water Service: What will you do if there is no water for several days? What will you do if you are unable to heat water?

Personal Care Equipment: Do you use a shower chair, tub-transfer bench, or other similar equipment?

Adaptive Feeding Devices: Do you use special utensils that help you prepare or eat food independently?

Electricity Dependent Equipment: What equipment do you have that runs on electricity and how will you operate it if electrical service is disrupted?

Transportation: Do you need a specially equipped vehicle or accessible transportation?

Necessities: Who will get groceries, medication, and medical supplies? How will this be accomplished if the roads are blocked because of the disaster?

Evacuating: Do you need assistance if you must evacuate?

Exits: Who will you call if you need help exiting your residence? What available alternate exits are in your residence?

Service animals and pets: Who will care for your animal(s) in case of an emergency?

Personal Disaster Preparation: Remember, preparedness must begin with you. Preparation, which includes practice is the key to success in dealing with a disaster. Preparation is an ongoing process. Keep in mind that the usual means of support and assistance may not be available during an evacuation and after the disaster. Prepare a personal disaster plan. Included in this guide is information for the plan and a disaster plan checklist for you to follow. Keep several copies at different accessible locations, and remember, share the plan with your support system.

Emergency Information List: An emergency information list is to let others know the people that should be called if you are found unconscious, unable to speak, or need assistance to evacuate. Include emergency out-of-town contacts as well as all names and numbers of your support system. Have a relative or friend who lives from 50-100 miles away from you as your "contact person". This is advisable because normally someone outside a disaster area is more able to be contacted. Ask your contact person to relay information to others; this will help reduce phone calls into and out of the affected area. Be sure your emergency information list states the best way to communicate with you.

Medical Information List: A medical information list

should contain information about your medical providers, the name, dosage and prescribing physician of medications, your medical condition and physician's phone number. List any adaptive equipment you use, your allergies and sensitivities, and communication or cognitive difficulties you may have. Attach copies of health insurance cards. Make arrangements to have additional medication, to last a recommended minimum of 14 days, in case of a disaster. Have additional copies of prescriptions.

General Preparation Information: Install adequate smoke detectors. If you are hearing impaired, install a system that utilizes strobe lights. Test your detectors monthly and replace the batteries at least once a year. Write down the location of the utility cutoff valves and how they are turned off, if directed by city officials. Have the proper tools available and provide this information to your support system members. Remember, if it is necessary to turn off the gas, it should only be turned back on by a professional. Have a floor plan of your residence. Note your primary and alternate escape routes. Practice using different ways out of your residence. Note the location of your disaster supply kit. Make arrangements for your pets in case of a disaster. Emergency shelters will only accept service animals.

Prepare an evacuation plan. Make arrangements for evacuation and transportation assistance if necessary. Make arrangements for a place to stay outside of your area in case of an evacuation. Keep your vehicle's fuel tank filled during hurricane season.



Disaster Plan Checklist

As you complete each section of your personal Disaster Plan, mark the date completed on the checklist below: Review and update your plan on a regular basis.

1. Make an Emergency Information List. Include the following:
 - ◆ Medical and emergency contact information
 - ◆ Emergency out-of-town contacts
 - ◆ Names and numbers of your support system
 - ◆ Name and number of a "contact" person who lives 50-100 miles from you
 - ◆ Means of communication if you have a communication disability
2. Make a Medical Information List. Include the following:
 - ◆ Medical providers
 - ◆ Medications you use
 - ◆ Adaptive equipment, body support equipment
 - ◆ Allergies and sensitivities
 - ◆ Communications or cognitive difficulties
 - ◆ Attach copies of health insurance cards.
3. Have an additional 14 day supply of medication available.
4. Have extra copies of prescriptions.

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Your Face



I may look at you, but sometimes do not “see”
I can find it hard to hear what you are telling me
I am stood across from you, knowing that’s my place
But find more fascination with the details on your face.

I see my reflection in the glasses that you wear
And look at the mole where out grows a hair
When I interrupt (not meaning to heckle)
I’m letting your know that I’ve spotted a freckle.

Your eyelashes look clumpy, black and thick
I know it’s that stuff you put on with a stick
Your cheeks are reddish, and slightly pinky
Is that also your make-up or could you be angry?

I know I should concentrate on what you say
I’m not being naughty or wanting to play
But if I told you I’ve noticed the hairs that are grey
I’m sure you would thank me and dye it that day.

You talk, I don’t hear, your mouth frantically moving
It opens, shuts & twitches - all sound is simply droning
I then noticed your nose and see nostrils that flare
I glance at your eyes and wonder if that’s a “steely glare”.

Now I see your finger pointing at me
Then I hear you ask you want an apology
You sit me in a chair for over half an hour long
It is then I notice you’ve not told me what I did wrong.

This poem was inspired by Susan Harvey’s 11 year old son, Joe, who has autism. Susan says she often has to make sure he is listening to what she says, rather than have fun with his reflection in her glasses. Although some aspects of the poem are funny (which they are intended to be) because children with autism have this honesty, the end message is that the child in the poem (at school) has not understood what they did wrong because the teacher did not make sure they were listening. A common fault amongst many adults. Just because a child is looking at you, does not mean to say they are “hearing what you say.”

This poem was reprinted from the Autism Today website, www.autismtoday.com.

Communication Tips for Parents

Communication with your children is one of the most important things you can do to ensure a strong and healthy development. Dr. Lawrence Kutner, Ph.D, has provided these tips on how to communicate with your child.

Make the Time. In today’s complex world, it’s even more important to make sure you set aside time to talk. That doesn’t mean you have to hold a formal meeting. Sometimes the best discussions take place while you’re driving the car or puttering around the kitchen.

Listen to the Little Stuff. Kids will talk to you if they know you’re going to listen — whether they discuss heavy issues such as sex and drugs, or everyday things like schoolwork. If your kids know you’re listening, they are more likely to trust you enough to talk about everything in their life.



Listen Between the Lines. Because a lot of kids find it hard to talk to their parents about things that really matter, parents have to pay special attention to what their kids may be trying to say. It helps to pay particular attention to emotions — not just the emotion itself, but its intensity, too.

Ask their Opinion. Few things please children (or anybody else) more than being asked their opinion. You don’t have to ask about important issues all the time, either.

Don’t Interrupt. In the Philips “Let’s Connect” national survey, more than half the children said that when they talked, their parents often or sometimes didn’t give them a chance to explain themselves. It’s a good idea to give your children some extra time to explain their opinion or desires, even if you think you know what they’re going to say.

Homework Supply Kit

Before you know it school will be starting again. You can help your child considerably in cutting down on wasted time spent searching the house for necessary homework supplies and materials. Not only is it a frustrating waste of precious minutes, but it also causes a major break in productivity, pulling your child unnecessarily off-task.

The homework supply kit can be stored in anything portable, preferably a lightweight container with a lid. Some children work at their desks, or on the kitchen or dining room tables; others prefer to spread out on their beds or the floor. With this system, where your child chooses to study doesn't matter. The necessary supplies can accompany her anywhere.

Recommended Supplies (depending on age of child)

- ◆ Plenty of paper
- ◆ Sharpened pencils with erasers
- ◆ Pencil sharpener
- ◆ Ruler
- ◆ Crayons
- ◆ Markers
- ◆ Paper hole re-enforcers
- ◆ Glue stick
- ◆ Colored pens and pencils
- ◆ Stapler with box of staples
- ◆ Paper clips
- ◆ Single-hole punch
- ◆ Three-hole punch
- ◆ Dictionary
- ◆ Thesaurus
- ◆ Electronic spell checker
- ◆ Self-stick notepads
- ◆ Highlighters
- ◆ Index cards
- ◆ Calculator
- ◆ Graph Paper
- ◆ Poster boards
- ◆ Current Newspapers



If rarely used items don't fit in kit, just locate a closet or storage spot to store it in. There is nothing worse than finding out after the store is closed that a project is due tomorrow. Start preparing now for a smooth transition from summer time to school time.

Leadership Academy

The Louisiana State Improvement Grant (LaSIG) has provided funding to Families Helping Families of GNO to do 2 Leadership Academies in the Fall of 2005. Each academy is a total of 5 days and they will be held in Plaquemines and Jefferson parishes, respectively. Pyramid Parenting will continue to host the Leadership Academy for Orleans Parish.

All sessions will be held on Saturdays, from 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. with a continental breakfast and lunch provided.

Parents from LaSIG schools are encouraged to attend. Also, parents that want to learn quality leadership skills may apply. Parents are requested to commit to attending all 5 days of each academy.

The topics for Leadership Academy will be No Child Left Behind, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Teaming, and Effective Communication Skills. Each participant will also be requested to complete a small project to be presented at the last session.

All participants will receive a certificate of completion and will be provided a \$50.00 stipend to help offset any expenses they have to attend each day of the academy.

If you would like to receive an application to attend, please call Mary Jacob at 888-9111 or 1-800-766-7736. You may also request an application via email: Mjacob@fhfgno.org.

Parental Involvement is Essential for Academic Success

"Strong Families, Strong Schools", a report released by the U. S. Department of Education highlights 30 years of research indicating that family involvement is a critical link to higher grades, test scores, positive attitude and behavior. Parents can take a more active role in their child's education by:

- ◆ Discussing regularly with children their classroom activities, and listening carefully explanations of what has been learned.
- ◆ Providing time and a place to do homework.
- ◆ Encouraging their children to persist when the work becomes difficult.
- ◆ Participate in parent-teacher conferences.
- ◆ Take advantage of opportunities to visit classes.
- ◆ Engage with their children in appropriate family games, puzzles, experiments the uses of a variety of mathematics, science and technology.

This article is printed from the Center For Family Involvement in School, Rutgers University, www.rci.rutgers.edu.

Setting the Table



If you are looking for easy educational activities to do with your children at home or school, check out www.gryphonhouse.com. This website offers a ton of fun activities that you can do with any age child.

From the book, *Linking Language*, is this great language building activity called *Setting the Table*. The opportunities for communication while preparing the table for meal time are abundant. Setting the table and learning names of the utensils provide practice in both receptive and expressive language skills. Groups of children using social language while setting the table can increase expressive collaboration.

What you will need:

- ◆ Actual food items, magazine pictures of foods, or colored photos
- ◆ Utensils
- ◆ Place mats with outlines of utensil placement

Words you can use:

Fingers, hands, knife, fork, spoon, plate, bowl, cup, glass, napkin, set, prepare, table, snack, food, place mat, names of food items.

What to do:

Ask the children what their favorite food is. The re-

sponses will probably include the use of their fingers and hands as well as knives, forks, spoons, plates, bowls, cups and glasses. Tell the children that each day someone will set the table for the entire family. Depending on the food served, one or more of the utensils that they mentioned will be used.

Either show or name several food items, could be snack items like apples, grapes, celery, peanut butter on crackers, ice cream, milk and juice or if can be a meal like spaghetti, pizza, hamburgers, pork chops, rice, pasta, or ice tea. As you show or name each item, ask the children to name the utensils they would use to eat the item. If it's a finger food, ask them what would be the preferred utensil.

Let the children help set the table for more meals and allow them to discuss the different utensils. Allow a variety of items that requires the use of more than one utensil. Talk about how each utensil helps us eat our food.

More:

Depending on your preference, you can easily take this activity one step further and discuss nutrition and healthy snacks and meals.



Ten Lessons for Parents to Maximize their Children's Cognitive Abilities

In their highly practical chapter in Volume 5, of *The Handbook of Parenting*, professors Wendy C. Williams of the Department of Human Development at Cornell University and Robert J. Sternberg of the Center for the Psychology of Abilities, Competencies and Expertise at Yale University provides parents with Ten Lessons for Maximizing their Children's Cognitive Abilities.

The lessons are based on rigorous empirical research from a wide range of disciplines regarding what is known to help or hinder a child's cognitive development. Drs. Williams and Sternberg have distilled the research evidence into practical lessons, or guidelines that parents can apply immediately.

Lesson 1: Recognize what can and cannot be changed in your children.

Lesson 2: Aim to meaningfully challenge your children, not bore them and not overwhelm them.

Lesson 3: Teach children that the main limitations on what they can do is what they tell themselves they can't do.

Lesson 4: Remember that it is more important that children learn what questions to ask, and how to ask them,

than that they learn what the answers to questions are.

Lesson 5: Help children find what really excites them, remembering that it may not be what really excites you or what you wish would really excite them.

Lesson 6: Encourage children to take sensible intellectual risks.

Lesson 7: Teach children to take responsibility for themselves - both for their successes and for their failures.

Lesson 8: Teach children how to delay gratification - to be able to wait for rewards.

Lesson 9: Teach children to put themselves in another's place.

Lesson 10: Remember that it is not the amount of money you spend on your child that matters, but rather the quality of your interactions with your child and the nature of your child's experiences.



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5. Identify a specific evacuation location if an evacuation is directed:
 - ◆ Write down your means of transportation in case of an evacuation.
6. Install smoke detectors in your residence.
7. Have a floor plan of your residence:
 - ◆ Identify primary and alternate exits
 - ◆ Practice using different ways out of your residence.
8. List any equipment you will need for assistance.
9. Practice or write down brief, clear, specific instructions or directions.
10. Write down plans for your pet and/or service animal.

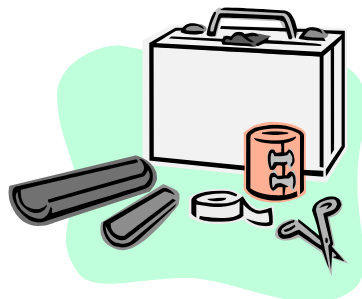
Disaster Supply Kit

The following list contains your basic disaster supplies for your residence and your disability related supplies. You should keep enough basic supplies to maintain you in your home for at least three days, preferably seven or more:

1. A supply of water for drinking and cooking (one gallon per person per day). Store in sealed, unbreakable containers.
2. A supply of non-perishable packaged or canned food, and a non-electric can opener.
3. A change of clothing and shoes, raingear.
4. Blankets or sleeping bags (1 per person).
5. A first aid kit and additional prescription medications.
6. Extra eyeglasses or contact lens supplies.
7. A battery-powered radio, flashlight, extra batteries.
8. Credit cards and cash in a water proof container.
9. Extra keys.
10. Books, magazines, cards, toys and games.
11. Important documents in water proof container (Will, Insurance Policies, Deeds, etc.)
12. Photographs or videotapes of personal property and up-to-date inventory.
13. Hygiene and sanitary supplies, grooming supplies.
14. Tools (Hammer, Screwdriver, Wrench, etc.)
15. Fire extinguisher.
16. Food, leash, harness, and other items for service animals and/or pets.
17. Eating utensils.
18. Dressing, writing or hearing devices.
19. Source of oxygen with flow regulator.
20. Suction equipment.
21. Dialysis equipment.
22. Urinary supplies.
23. Osmotic supplies.
24. Wheelchair, walker, crutches, cane.
25. Dentures.
26. Monitors.

First Aid Kit

A first aid kit is a part of your disaster supply kit.



The following items are suggested as a minimum:

1. Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes.
2. 2 inch and 3 inch sterile gauze pads.
3. Hypo allergenic adhesive tape.
4. Triangular bandages.
5. 2 inch and 3 inch sterile roll bandages.
6. Scissors, tweezers, needle.
7. Safety razor blade.
8. Bar of soap.
9. Moistened towelettes.
10. Antiseptic spray.
11. Thermometer.
12. Tongue blades and wooden applicator sticks.
13. Tube petroleum jelly or other lubricant.
14. Safety pins in assorted sizes.
15. Cleansing agent/soap.
16. Latex gloves.
17. Sunscreen, insect repellent.
18. Aspirin, anti diarrhea medication, antacid, laxative and other non prescription drugs.

Making Your Residence Safer

One of the best ways to reduce damages from a disaster as well as avoid possible injuries is to prepare your residence before the disaster. The following is a list of suggestions to help make your residence safer:

- ◆ Check the hallways, stairwells, doorways, windows, and other areas for any hazards that may keep you from leaving your residence.
- ◆ Secure or remove furniture and other items that may block your escape route.
- ◆ Keep battery powered emergency light to provide illumination in case of a power outage.

During the Disaster

Watches and Warnings: The National Weather Service gives severe weather information to the public. These include thunderstorms, freezes, floods, and tornadoes. Listen for the following terms:

Watch: A "Watch" means that severe weather is threatening and may occur in your area. Continue to listen to the radio or watch television for information and advice.

Warning: A "Warning" means that the event is happening now; it is imminent or has been seen on weather radar. This is the time to immediately protect yourself.

Some events happen quickly and there may not be time to issue warnings. The time to take action is when severe weather may be moving into your area, even if no official watch or warning has been issued.

Hurricanes: If you have not been advised to evacuate the area, stay in the middle of your residence, away from windows. If you are visually impaired, use a long cane in areas where debris may have fallen or furniture may have shifted. This is recommended even if you do not usually use a cane indoors. Watch your television or listen to your NOAA weather radio for updates. Stay

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in close contact with your support system “buddies” and be prepared to evacuate if directed.

Floods: Flooding not only can accompany hurricanes but torrential rains can also cause serious flooding in the New Orleans area. In case of flooding, evacuate immediately if directed. Avoid areas subject to flooding. Do not attempt to cross or drive over a flooded road. The roadbed may be washed out and you could be stranded. If you have a two story residence, move to the second floor.

Tornadoes: Hurricanes also spawn tornadoes. A tornado warning means a tornado has been sighted; take shelter immediately. Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls. Protect yourself from falling objects or flying debris. Go to an interior part of the structure on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway). If at all possible get under something sturdy; such as, a heavy table, and stay there until the danger has passed.



Evacuation

The Greater New Orleans Metropolitan Area presents a difficult evacuation problem due to the large population and a limited road system which is susceptible to flooding. Listen to the radio and/or television for emergency information and current updates. An evacuation notice will be issued if a disaster presents a danger to the New Orleans area. It is important to evacuate as early as possible to avoid road closings.

Contact your support system and begin to implement the evacuation portion of your disaster plan. If you have no transportation or none is available to you, the Emergency Evacuation Assistance Program (see enclosed application) has been designed for people with disabilities who require assistance with activities of daily living in an evacuation center, or people who cannot use public transportation or require transportation for evacuation purposes due to age, medical condition, or disability. Evacuation centers are available as a last resort for people who have no other place to go. If you need to evacuate, you should first contact your support system and seek shelter with relatives, friends, community organizations or in hotels/motels.

Emergency Evacuation Centers are designed to provide only the basic needs. Personal Care Assistance and Home Health Nursing Care will not be provided. Special Needs Refuges (shelters) that provide disabled access and toilet facilities will be announced. If possible, areas within a refuge (shelter) will be cordoned off as a “Special Needs Area”.

After the Disaster

Disasters have many effects. Some are pre-

dictable and others are not. You should know what can happen and what your environment may be like after the disaster.

Hurricanes: Do not return to your residence until local officials have informed you that it is safe. Keep tuned to the radio or television for instructions. Drive carefully along debris-filled streets. Roads could be undermined and collapse under the weight of a vehicle. Avoid loose or dangling wires, and report them immediately to your power company or to the police or fire department. Report broken sewer or water mains. Avoid using any open flames to prevent fires. Because of decreased water pressure, fire fighting becomes difficult. Check refrigerated food for spoilage if power has been off during the storm. When you arrive home, have your “buddy” assist you in checking for visible structural damage before you go inside.

Floods: Roads and sidewalks may be covered by mud, water, or debris, so you may not be able to tell where they begin or end. If fresh food has come in contact with flood waters, throw it out. Boil drinking water before using. Electrical equipment should be checked and dried before using. Use flashlights, not lanterns, torches, candles or matches. Report broken utility lines.

Tornadoes: Homes and buildings may be totally destroyed or left isolated. Your residence could be damaged so that it is unlivable for a long time. Streets may be filled with debris. Power lines may be down, sewer and water mains may be broken. Tornadoes are nature’s most violent and erratic storms. A tornado can travel for miles along the ground, lift, and suddenly change direction and strike again.

Your usual way of getting groceries, medications, and medical supplies may be disrupted. It may take several days before stores reopen, so you may not be able to readily replace even basic items related to your disability, i.e. hearing-aid batteries and prescription medications.

1. You may not be able to carry out your daily activities as you did before the disaster.
2. You may have difficulty reaching the police, fire department, EMS, doctors, hospitals, pharmacies, veterinarians, or home health providers.
3. Utilities may be disrupted for a long time.
4. You may not be able to cook, cool or heat your home, use the telephone, watch television, use medical equipment dependent on electricity, use banks or ATM machines, or fill your vehicle with gas.
5. Public transportation may not be operating. Routes and schedules may be changed. RTA lift systems may not be operating.
6. Roads may be damaged or blocked. Road signs may be down. Traffic lights may not be operating. Travel time may be longer because of obstacles, detours, and additional traffic.
7. You may need temporary housing for your pets.

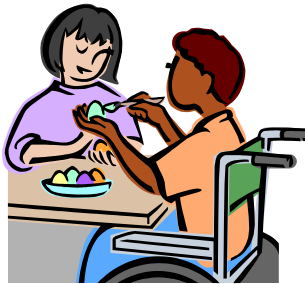
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Disaster Related Stress

Experiencing a disaster can be overwhelming. Stress can make many medical conditions worse. If you experience any symptoms that affect your ability to function, seek medical attention. Some people may never have a reaction. Others may have delayed reactions that can appear days, weeks, or even months after a disaster.

After a disaster, be sure to talk to someone about how you are feeling, i.e. a member of the clergy, a counselor, someone in the Employee Assistance Program provided by your employer, or seek the assistance of a mental health professional who can help you deal with the stress related to your disaster experience.

You are accustomed to being in a certain environment. A disaster can change your ability to deal with that environment. It is important that you anticipate for the lowest level of functioning for your individual disaster plan. Your condition may become worse because of physical or emotional reactions to stress. For example: people who do not need the aid of devices on a daily basis may need a wheelchair after a disaster.



After a disaster, you may need to ask for help to do things you usually would have done independently. This may make you feel especially vulnerable. You may need assistance putting your home back in order, filling out forms, or providing documentation and information to disaster relief agencies. This can add to the stress you may be feeling. A personal support network that knows your needs may anticipate some of them and make your recovery easier and less stressful.

For more information or to information on how to register for special needs assistance, call your local Office of Emergency Preparedness:

- Orleans 658-8700
- Jefferson 349-5360
- St. Bernard 278-4267
- Plaquemines 682-0081

For a list of "Disaster Kit Supplies" as suggested by Louisiana's Office of Emergency Preparedness, please call our office at 504-888-9111.

This article was copied from the Orleans Parish Emergency Preparedness website www.new-orleans.la.us/home/departmentsAndAgencies/noeep/



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