

UCPPM

How to Act in Emergencies

Guidelines for Persons with Disabilities

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About These Guidelines

These Guidelines support persons with disabilities across Europe to better prepare for and act during emergencies. They contribute to the objectives of the Preparedness Union Strategy, particularly Action 33 under Population Preparedness highlighting that every citizen must have an active role in crisis preparedness and response. They are grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), with focus on Article 11 on situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies, Article 9 on accessibility, Article 19 on independent living, and Article 21 on access to information and communication.

Preparedness is most effective when everyone has the tools, knowledge and opportunity to act confidently in an emergency. Accordingly, two complementary Guidelines were created:

1. **Guidelines for Persons with Disabilities:** Guidelines to support persons with disabilities to prepare, act, and recover in any emergency, and to guide the caregivers and other persons and institutions to support these activities.
2. **Guidelines for First Responders:** A guide to help emergency services personnel support persons with disabilities.

Both guidelines will also be available in more accessible formats, including Easy-to-Read.

These Guidelines are currently being reviewed and updated through two rounds of consultations taking place between May and June 2026. The process includes online meetings and written feedback from civil protection authorities, emergency response personnel, as well as organizations of and for persons with disabilities.

Who These Guidelines are for

These Guidelines are written for persons with disabilities across Europe. They help you prepare for emergencies and know what to do when emergencies happen. Their purpose is to offer tools for everyone to prepare and act in emergencies, no matter the level of autonomy and independence, living situation, health conditions, background, gender, age, or economic situation.

These Guidelines also recognize that preparedness is a shared responsibility and that some persons with disabilities require support in their daily lives as well as in preparedness activities. Family members, carers, and community members who want to support persons with disabilities can use these Guidelines too. A Guide for Caregivers and Community, in Module 7, provides complementary information and tools to start the preparedness journey and offer support safely and effectively.

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Glossary of Terms

72 hours preparedness: Preparation of supplies, water, food, and support to manage on your own for at least 72 hours (3 days), with a one-month supply of medication recommended for persons on long-term treatment or with chronic illness.

112 emergency number: You can reach 112 by text message, by video call, or through a dedicated app for persons who cannot make a voice call. Check what is available in your country, and in any country you are travelling to, and save the information in your emergency plan.

Communication card: A small card or document that tells emergency responders and shelter staff who you are, what your disability is, what you need, and how to communicate with you. You carry it with you at all times. It is especially important if you cannot speak, if you are in shock, or if you are in a situation where you cannot explain your requirements.

Emergency backpack: A bag you prepare in advance with everything you need for at least 72 hours, in case you have to leave your home quickly. Some countries call it a go-bag, a grab bag, or an emergency kit.

Emergency plan: A written document that says what you will do, who will help you, and where you will go in an emergency. It is the first practical step to preparedness and should include your evacuation details, your support network contacts, your medication list, and what you will need from response personnel.

Evacuation: Leaving your home, building, or area quickly and safely because of an emergency. Evacuation can be sudden, like in a fire, or planned in advance, like when a flood is approaching. Standard evacuation procedures often do not work for everyone.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP): An individual plan made between you and your employer, school, or facility. It says exactly how you will leave safely in an emergency from that specific place. It covers your route, the person who will assist you, and the equipment you need.

First responders: The trained professionals who arrive first in an emergency to help. They include firefighters, mountain rescuers, medical assistance personnel, police officers, 112 operators, social workers, and others. In these Guidelines, we help you prepare to tell first responders quickly and clearly what you need, require, and prefer.

- **112 operators:** The people who answer calls to the European emergency number, 112. They are trained to ask the right questions, decide which services to send (police, ambulance, or fire), and stay on the line with you until help arrives.
- **Firefighters:** The professionals who respond to fires, explosions, building collapses, road accidents, floods, and other emergencies where rescue is needed. Firefighters are often the first to reach a person who cannot leave a building on their own. In many countries, firefighters lead evacuation operations and carry out technical rescues, including assisting persons with disabilities.

- **Medical assistance personnel:** Medical assistance personnel are responders who provide emergency medical care to ill or injured persons at the scene and during transport, including doctors and ambulance staff. They need clear information about your medication, your disability, and your medical history to help you safely.
- **Police officers:** The officers responsible for public safety and order during an emergency. In an emergency, the police secure the area, manage traffic and crowds, support evacuation, protect property, and assist persons who need help. Police officers may also be the first responders on the scene, especially in situations involving violence, accidents, or missing persons.
- **Social workers:** Trained professionals who help persons deal with social, emotional, and practical difficulties. In an emergency, social workers can support you in a shelter, help you find temporary housing, contact your family, organise care for children or older relatives, restore your access to medication or assistive devices, and connect you with longer-term recovery services. Social workers play an important role after the immediate emergency is over, especially during the recovery phase.

Preparedness: Getting ready for an emergency before it happens. Preparedness means making a plan, building a support network, preparing your emergency backpack, and practicing what you would do.

Recovery: What happens after an emergency is over. Recovery means restoring your health, your home, your support network, your medication, your assistive devices, your documents, and your daily routines. For persons with disabilities, recovery often takes longer and needs more specific support.

Shelter: A safe temporary place where you stay during or after an emergency, when your home is not safe or does not support your wellbeing. A shelter provides security, protection from the weather, and helps prevent health problems. It can be a friend's home, a community centre, a school, a sports hall, a civil defence shelter, or tents. Shelters must be accessible from the start, including entrances, toilets, sleeping areas, information points, food distribution, hygiene facilities, charging points for assistive technology, quiet spaces, assistance animal support, and safe spaces for women and girls with disabilities.

Support network: The group of people who know you, know your requirements, and can help you in an emergency. Your support network can include family, friends, neighbours, personal assistants, colleagues and carers.

Warning system: The way authorities tell you that an emergency is happening or coming. Warning systems include sirens, text messages, apps, television, radio, and loudspeakers. Public authorities have the primary duty to ensure that warning systems are accessible to everyone, through multiple channels such as text, audio, visual, Easy-to-Read information, sign language, accessible apps, and relay services..

Introduction: Preparing Together

Europe is facing a new reality, marked by increased risk and deep uncertainty.

Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of floods, wildfires, heatwaves, droughts, and other extreme weather events. At the same time, new threats such as cyberattacks and disinformation can disrupt essential services, spread confusion, and affect daily life. These challenges are becoming more frequent, more complex, and more interconnected, making preparedness and resilience increasingly important for everyone.

Being prepared is your right, and your knowledge, skills, and experience make you an important part of your own safety and your community's resilience. Preparedness is a shared responsibility involving individuals, families, communities, governments, and essential services. These Guidelines are designed to help you prepare for emergencies and navigate any gaps that may remain, while not replacing the accessible support systems and services you have the right to expect.

What These Guidelines Contain

These Guidelines help you prepare step by step. You start with what is most important. You do not need to read everything at once.

START HERE: Self-Assessment. This helps you identify which sections are most relevant to your situation right now. It shows you where to begin based on your level of independence and preparedness needs. This way, you can focus on what matters most to you and prepare together with the people who support you.

CORE GUIDE: Essential Actions for Everyone. This section contains the most important things everyone should do to prepare.

Additional Modules (7). When you have more time, support, and resources, you can read the other modules. Choose the ones that fit your situation, interests, and needs. These span from preparing your home to recovering after an emergency.

Use the Toolbox for the Guidelines **that accompany them.** The Toolbox is the actionable part of the Guidelines because it gives you the tools to actually prepare and turn learning into life-saving action now. It has 3 tools you can already use: Personal Emergency Card, Personal Emergency Plan and Communication Cards. You can start getting ready today by filling them out and sharing them with the people who can support you.

START HERE: Self-Assessment

This self-assessment helps you find the information most important for you based on your specific situation.

Choose Your Preparedness Path

Think about how much support you need in daily life. This will help you understand how to approach emergency preparedness. The three paths below describe different approaches based on what you can do on your own and what you need support with.

According to Your Level of Independence

How much support you require affects how you prepare. Think about what you can do by yourself and where you need help for emergency preparedness. Which describes you best?

Path 1: I can prepare and act mostly on my own

In daily life, this means:

- I can go shopping or arrange for delivery on my own.
- I can read and understand written instructions without support.
- I can communicate and be understood by others.
- I can exit my building and move around my neighborhood independently (including walking or climbing stairs).

For emergency preparedness, this means that, ideally, I can:

- Shop for supplies and build my own emergency backpack.
- Fill out forms and plans (emergency plan, emergency card).
- Contact people to create my support network.
- Leave my home and reach a meeting point independently. Navigate to a friend's house or shelter if needed.
- Communicate with first responders about my requirement, needs and preferences.

Box 1. Your Preparedness Priority

Build your emergency plan, create your support network, and gather supplies for evacuation and shelter in place, adapted to your requirements and situation. Even though you can do most things independently, having a support network is important, especially if you live alone. Make sure you are known to emergency services and registered in at-risk registries where available. Practice your plan and evacuation route.

Start Here:

›

CORE GUIDE: Essential Actions for Everyone

› **MODULE 1: Home Preparedness**

- › Choose the other modules based on your time, preferences and priorities.
- › **Toolbox for the Guidelines**

Path 2: I require some support to prepare and act

In daily life, this means:

- Someone supports me with shopping or carrying heavy things.
- I need support reading complex information or filling out forms.
- I can do some things on my own, but need support for others.
- Someone supports me getting to appointments or new places.

For emergency preparedness, this might mean:

- I require someone to support me shopping for supplies or carrying them.
- I require support understanding and filling out my emergency plan.
- I require support to contact people for my support network.
- I require someone to visit shelters with me to check if they are accessible.
- I can navigate independently in the neighborhood, but I require support in existing my building.
- I might need support communicating with first responders.
- I might have difficulty seeing warnings or hearing alarms, even with glasses or hearing aids.
- I can leave my home on my own, but might need someone to alert me when there is an emergency.
- I can participate in making a list of shopping and organizing supplies at home, but need support.

Box 2. Your Preparedness Priority

Prepare together with your support network. Share these guidelines with them and read Module 7: Guide for Caregivers and Community together. Make sure you have people around you who can support you and that they know your needs, requirements, and preferences. Make sure you can receive emergency warnings in a way that works for you. Practice together often and update your plan whenever something changes. Register in at-risk registries where available or make yourself known to emergency services.

Start Here:

›

CORE GUIDE: Essential Actions for Everyone

- › **How to Ask for Help**
- › **Three Steps to Make Sure Emergency Alerts Reach You**
- › [Error! Reference source not found.](#)
- › **MODULE 7: Guide for Caregivers**
- › **Toolbox for the Guidelines**

Path 3: I rely on others for most daily activities

In daily life, this means:

- Someone takes care of my personal care needs (bathing, dressing, eating).
- Someone manages my medication and health appointments.
- Someone supports me with communication and decisions. I might have difficulty communicating, understanding or being understood.
- I need full support to leave my home.
- I live in a residential/ care home.

For emergency preparedness, this means:

- Someone else will shop for and pack my emergency backpack and house supplies.
- Someone else will create my emergency plan (but will involve me actively).
- Someone else will make arrangements to ensure I have a robust support network.
- Someone else will check shelters and make arrangements.
- I cannot leave my home alone. I need full support to evacuate.
- Someone will communicate with first responders for me.
- Someone will organize all supplies and keep them ready.
- Someone will oversee my medication and treatment continuity.

Box 3. Your Preparedness Priority

Make sure your caregiver or family knows what you need in an emergency, including medication, medical and assistive devices, communication preferences, and how to evacuate you safely. Share these Guidelines with them and ask them to read the Guide for Caregivers and Community. While they will do most preparation tasks, you should still be part of the planning. Your voice, preferences, and choices are important and should guide all decisions. You should also have a strong support network and be registered with specialized services, first responders, and at-risk registries where they exist.

Start Here:

- › **MODULE 7: Guide for Caregivers**

>

CORE GUIDE: Essential Actions for Everyone

- > **Be Prepared in a Care Home**
- > **Toolbox for the Guidelines**

CORE GUIDE: Essential Actions for Everyone

No matter where you live or what support you need, there are three things everyone must do to be prepared. This Core Guide walks you through the essential first steps of preparedness: making an emergency plan, building a support network, and packing an emergency backpack. These actions form the foundation of your preparedness.

Being Prepared for 72-Hours

Being prepared before an emergency is the most important thing you can do for your own safety. Emergencies come in different forms, affect different regions, and can last days, weeks or months.

In all of these situations, the first 72 hours, which means three days, are critical. In the immediate aftermath of a crisis, emergency services, like firefighters, police, ambulances, may be overwhelmed not be able to reach everyone immediately. It is important to know how to be as autonomous as possible until public authorities and emergency services can reach you.

STEP 1: Make Your Emergency Plan

Preparing now helps you stay safe in an emergency. A personal emergency plan sets out clearly what you will do where you will go, who will help you and how during a crisis. Preparing does not mean something bad is going to happen. It means that if

something does happen, you will know how to stay safe and how others can help you. You will be able to take care of yourself and you can help others in your community too.

Use the questions below to start your emergency plan today. Think about them on your own and discuss together with your family or support network or staff.

Box 4. Questions to Help You Prepare and Plan

- › You cannot hear the alarm in your building. **How will you know when to get outside?**
- › The lift in your building is not working. **How can you get outside?**
- › You cannot reach your family or support person by phone. **Where will you meet?**
- › You depend on home care or medical equipment. **How will you get the care you need if normal services stop?**
- › You live in a care facility and your family lives in another city. **How will you stay in contact?**
- › The internet is down. **Where can you find reliable official information during an emergency?**

What to Include in Your Plan

- **Your personal information:** Your name and address. This allows emergency services to know who you are and find you quickly.
- **Your support network:** At least two to three trusted people who have agreed to help you before, during, and after an emergency. Include their names, phone numbers, and what role each person will play. You can also add a person from outside of the city.
- **Your meeting points:** Two places where you and your support network will meet if you cannot contact each other during an emergency. This can happen in an earthquake when phone lines are down or internet is not working. Choose one close to your home, and one further away. Agree on these places now and when to use them. Practice the route together. But also make sure you can reach it on your own.
- **Your medical requirements:** A list of your medications, doses, allergies and any specific instructions for your care. Include the contact details of your doctor or specialist.
- **Your assistance requirements:** Your disability type, your level of support required, and any instructions for how to help you safely. Mention how you prefer to communicate. Add information about assistive and guide animals.

Start Your Emergency Plan Today

Start by filling in the templates in these guidelines. You can do it on your own. You can ask for help. Or someone you trust can fill them in on your behalf.

1. **A Personal Emergency Card is a small card you keep with you.** The card tells first responders what you need if you are hurt and cannot talk. See the Toolbox section for the **Personal Emergency Card** template.
2. **A Personal Emergency Plan is a longer paper.** In this paper, you write all the things that can help you in an emergency. See the Toolbox section for the **Personal Emergency Plan** template.

Keep your plan where you can see it and find it fast. You can write your plan on paper. You can also write it on your phone or computer. Always keep a paper copy. This is important if the power goes out. Put it in your emergency bag, in a waterproof box on your fridge, or in a drawer in the hallway near the front door. First responders are taught to look in these places. Give a copy to each person who helps you.

Review and update your plan at least once a year, or whenever your situation changes.

Talk with Each Other

Thinking about an emergency might feel uncomfortable. Talk to the people around you and ask them to help you feel safe. Talking to someone you trust can help you feel calm. It can also help you see things in a new way.

Box 5. Are You Worried or Unsure?

Here are some steps you can take now to feel less worried and unsure:

- › **Talk about your feelings with people you trust,** like your family and friends, your doctor or support staff, your home carer, or your teacher.
- › **Break the task of preparing down into small steps.** Choose one thing and start with that.
- › **See if you can help others.** Listening to someone or offering help can make you feel useful and close to others.

STEP 2: Create Your Support Network

Your support network is made of people you already know. These people can help you in an emergency: your family, your friends, your neighbors, the people you work with, social workers, people from your disability group, or people from your community. Your support network should have at least 3 people. This way, someone can always help you.

1. **A person should live very close to you.** This person can come to you fast.
2. **A person should live far away.** This person will not have the same emergency as you. They can take you in their home, if you need.
3. **A person should know what you need and how to help you.**

These people are your support network because you have a plan with them. Having a plan with these people can help you stay safe in an emergency.

Box 6. If This Is You: You Are Alone or Hard to Reach

If you have no family close to you, or if you live far from other people, ask for help. You can ask your social services, your city hall or your local disability group. Tell them about your life and situation. Ask them what help they have where you live.

Remember, you are not alone.

Reach Out and Help Other People Too

You are an important part of your community. The people around you can learn from you. Some tasks might be harder for you, but you can still help others prepare.

Box 7. Questions to Get Ready with Others

Talk about getting ready and your plan with the people around you. Maybe your friend, the person you work with, or your neighbor has not thought about it yet.

- › Have you prepared for an emergency?
- › What have you prepared for? And how?
- › Do you need help preparing for an emergency?
- › Do you think anyone we know needs help preparing for an emergency?
- › Who else do we need to talk with to be better prepared?
- › Are people in the neighborhood getting ready? Are local groups getting ready?
- › What can we do right now to be better prepared as a community?
- › What plans can we make together?
- › How can we help each other?
- › Are you worried about an emergency happening? How can you feel less worried?

STEP 3: Make Your Own Emergency Backpack

Your emergency backpack is a portable bag you prepare in advance for at least 72 hours (3 days). You use it when you need to leave your home fast and may not be able to return for days. It is different from your home supply. Your home supply is for staying at home (see

How to Ask for Help

In an emergency, your family or support staff may not be with you. This is why you need to know how to ask for help and how to call 112. You need to know what happens

when help comes and how to communicate with first responders. This way, they can help you without causing harm.

Who Are the First Responders

In an emergency, there are people whose job is to help you and keep you safe. They are called first responders. You need to understand what each first responder can do for you. Some first responders wear uniforms that may scare you. You also need to learn how to talk to them. Tell them what you feel right now using simple words. This helps them support you faster.

Figure 1. First Responders Who Might Meet in an Emergency

Firefighters

Firefighters wear special clothes to stay safe. They wear a big helmet and gloves. They may carry a tank with air to breathe. They drive big trucks with loud sounds and lights.

- › Firefighters can help you get out of a building. They can carry you to a safe place.
- › If you use a wheelchair, they will try to keep it with you. Sometimes, they must leave it behind to keep you safe.
- › They can help you get out of a building that fell down in an earthquake.

Even if you cannot speak, point to your communication card or emergency plan. It tells them what they need to know to help you in a safe way.

Police

Police can wear a blue uniform. They drive cars with loud sounds and lights. They can also have working dogs with them. You may meet them first in an emergency.

- › They guide people in the streets away from danger.
- › Sometimes they look for people who are hurt or stuck.
- › They help to give out food, water, and medicine.
- › They give clear emergency information to people.
- › They can tell people where to find a safe place to stay.

Paramedic (Emergency Personnel on an Ambulance)

Medical emergency personnel can work on an ambulance or in a hospital. They can carry medical tools, like a first aid kit, but also a special bed to take you out of your building if you cannot walk on your own. They help you when you are sick or hurt.

- › Tell them what hurts you.
- › Tell them about your health. Tell them what medicine you take.
- › Tell them how they can help you.
- › Ask them to describe step by step what they will do to you.

Social Worker

You can meet a social worker at the hospital or at a shelter, for example. The social worker is a professional. They know about disability and how to help you. Tell them what you need.

- › They can help you get back in touch with family or carers, if you got lost from each other.
- › They can help you find a new home.
- › They can help you get the assistive equipment and medical supplies you need. They can also help with fixing or replacing them, if you need it.
- › They can listen to you when you feel sad or scared. They can help you feel calm.
- › They can help you ask for money after the emergency.
- › You can tell them if you are afraid of someone or if you need protection.

112 Operator

112 is the emergency phone number in Europe. You can call 112 when you need help. A 112 operator answers the phone and knows how to help you. Do not call 112 if you do not need it.

The 112 operator will ask:

- › **Who are you?**
- › **Where are you?**
- › **What happened?**
- › **How to help you?**

Tell the 112 operator if you are Deaf or do not hear well. In some countries there is a 113-text service that you can use instead. In other countries, the 112 operator has a sign language interpreter next to them to answer you on video.

How to Communicate with First Responders

When a first responder comes to assist you, first make sure they are who they say they are. Ask them their name and their job. They should wear a uniform or show you their badge. If you are not sure, you can call 112 to check before you open the door. Once you know who they are, you can also tell them how to help you. When you speak to them, explain your situation clearly. Tell them where you are, what is happening, what you need, and how urgent it is. Give them the most important information first.

- **Tell them your name. Tell them your disability or your condition and how you like to talk to people.**
- **Tell them how urgent your situation is, and what you need first.**
- **If you have a carer, tell them how to talk to your carer.** Your carer can help them help you in a better way.

- **Show them how to use your devices that help you**, if they need to know. Keep a pen and paper with you.
- **Tell them how you want to be helped.** Give them clear steps on how to help you in a safe way.
- **Give them more information.** Point to your emergency card or your plan.

Box 12. How to Call 112

Call 112 only if you have an emergency. You can call 112 in all countries in Europe.

When calling 112, you need to know how to answer these 4 questions:

1. **Who are you?** Tell them your name. You can add your disability or medical condition and how they need to talk to you. This helps them get ready and send the right help.
2. **Where are you?** Say where you are. If you do not know the street, just give them a landmark, like a church or a big park.
3. **What happened?** If you can only say one word, say it: “Fire.” “Accident.” That is enough to start.
4. **How to help you?** Tell them what they need to know to help you. Tell them how to move you. Or what medicine you need.

› **If you cannot speak at all:** Stay on the line. Do not hang up. The person on the phone will try to find where you are.

› **If you are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:** If you are Deaf, find out now whether your country has a text service for 112 (e.g., 113) and register. Or save a live sign language interpretation app on your phone where available. If you are Hard of Hearing, tell the operator you do not hear well.

› **If you are calling on behalf of a person with disability:** Tell the operator what helps that person and what to avoid. Responders can prepare before they arrive.

Get to Know First Responders

It is important to get familiar with first responders. Practice with your support network.

When you know what to expect, you feel calmer.

- **Look up pictures and videos of first responders in their full work clothes.** Look at them with your support network or your support staff before an emergency happens.
- **Practice what you would do if a firefighter came to your door.** Talk about it or act it out with your support network.
- **Visit your local fire station or police station.** Many stations have open days. On these days, you can meet first responders, see their tools, and ask questions in a calm place. Call the station before you go and tell them what you need.

- **Are you part of a group for persons with disabilities?** You can invite local first responders from your area to one of your events. Ask them to come in their work clothes and tell you what they do.

). Your emergency backpack is for leaving.

Box 8. About Your Emergency Backpack

- › **Keep your emergency bag where you can reach it fast.** You can keep it in the hallway. Do not hide it in cupboards. Make sure all the people in your family and your support network know where it is.
- › **If more than one person uses the same bag, make sure the bag has enough things for everyone.** Make sure the things meet the needs of everyone.
- › **Check your bag every six months.** Change the medicine, the batteries, and the food before they get old. Remember to update the contact details and the medical information when anything changes.

How to Build It with Little Money

Putting together your emergency backpack might be cheaper than you think. You may already have most of the things at home. You can build it up step by step over time. Start with what you already have (e.g., flashlight, batteries, document copies) and pack old clothes. You can also add one extra item each shopping trip, hunt for affordable articles at garage sales or thrift stores, and watch for seasonal sales on emergency supplies. Finally, ask a community food bank for food and reach out to your community group for help putting it all together.

How to Adapt It to Your Requirements

Every person needs a different emergency backpack. The list above is a good starting point. You have to add the items you need. Think about your disability and situation. Make the backpack fit the needs of all the people who use it. The table below shows items that you could consider adding depending on your requirements and needs.

Table 1. Emergency Backpack: Items to Add for Different Disabilities

Disability Type	Additional Items to Add
Visual Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Spare white cane. › Spare glasses or contact lenses and supplies. › Powerful wide-beam torch. › Labels or tactile markers for key items in the bag. › A list of contents in Braille.

Disability Type	Additional Items to Add
Hearing and Speech Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Spare hearing aid batteries and devices. › Whistle or flashlight for signaling. › Pen and paper. › A communication card stating your communication requirements. Add the contact of the interpreter.
Autism Spectrum Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Comfort items, like headphones, a weighted blanket or sensory toys. › A communication card, pictograms, writing boards and other AAC. › Spare items that help maintain comfort and routine, such as a familiar food or games.
Psycho-Intellectual Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Calming and comfort items, like headphones and toys. › Medication. Add instructions for how to get help during a crisis.
Locomotor and Mobility Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Work gloves to protect hands, if needed. › Wheelchair tyre repair kit, including pumps and extra cushions. › Backup wheelchair batteries and charger. › Spare manual wheelchair or other mobility aids and equipment like canes and crutches. › Catheter or other personal care supplies. › Written instructions for how to be moved safely and with dignity.
Complex Medical Dependencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Medication reserves in a waterproof bag. Add the prescriptions. › Portable cooler and ice packs for medication that needs to be kept cold. › Chargers, power banks, and spare batteries for devices. › Portable reserves of your medical devices. › Contact details of your specialist and treating facility. › Copies of medical reports and allergy list.

MODULE 1: Home Preparedness

In a crisis, you might not be able to go out and get what you need. This module helps you prepare the 7 basics you need to survive at home for at least 72 hours (3 days).

The 7 Basics of Preparedness

The goal for when there is an emergency and you cannot leave your house is to have everything you need at home for at least 72 hours. If you can, prepare for a full week. What matters most is that you know what you need and require and that you have it ready. Think about your medication, your assistive devices, your diet, and any equipment you use. A longer supply gives you more safety and more time before help arrives. It also means you may be able to share with others.

Water

Water is the most important thing you need in an emergency. You may need at least 3 liters of water each day for drinking and cooking. You may need more water if you use water for your medical devices. When an emergency happens, the water from your sink may stop working or may not be safe to drink. Your city may bring water trucks to your area. But you still need to keep water at home. Keep water bottles in a cool, dark place like a closet. Get new bottles when the expiration date has passed.

What to Keep at Home:

- Get containers and buckets with lids to collect and store water.
- Buy bottled water or fill up your own containers.
- Use small bottles, if you do not have strength or grip. You can also get special emergency water packets that last a long time and are easy to carry.
- Keep extra water for your medical devices, washing your hands, cleaning cuts, taking medicine, and staying clean.

Box 9. Good to Know: Water

- 1 Fill plastic bottles with water and put them in your freezer.** If the electricity cuts out, the frozen bottles keep your food cold for longer. When the ice melts, you can drink the water. Do not fill the bottles all the way to the top, water expands when it freezes and may crack the bottles.
- 2 You can buy water disinfection tablets.** Check for allergies before you buy them. Use the tablets if you think the tap water is not safe and you have no bottled water left.

Food

Choose food that is good for you and keeps you full for longer. Pick food that does not need water to make or can be prepared with minimal water. In a power outage you can use a camping stove, primus, or outside grill to prepare meals. If possible, prefer energy-saving cooking methods like soaking, stewing, salting, and pickling. Instant noodle soup is an easy meal which you can enrich by adding a teaspoon of food oil.

Keep your food in a cool, dry, and dark place. When you buy new food, put it behind the old food. Eat the old food first. Check the expiration dates on your food every 6 months. Always keep an extra tin opener that you use with your hand.

What to Keep at Home:

- **Food that spoils hard:** grains, cereal, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, muesli, instant mashed potatoes, tortillas, crispbread, crackers, salt, and spices.
- **Food that comes in cans:** vegetables, fruit, and ready-to-eat meals.
- **Food that is rich in protein:** dried or tinned meat and fish, dried mushrooms, chickpeas, beans and lentils.
- **Food that is rich in fat:** oil, pesto, sun-dried tomatoes in oil, peanut butter, nuts, and seeds.
- **Foods that give you energy:** jam, chocolate, honey, protein bars, and dried fruit.
- **Food for children:** milk powder, oatmeal, and other baby food.
- **Drinks:** coffee, tea, UHT milk, hot chocolate mix, juice, or milk powder.

Box 10. Good to Know: Food

You can store food with other people.

1. **Start small.** You do not need to buy everything at one time. Add 1 or 2 extra things to your shopping each week. Build up your food supply step by step.
2. **If it is hard for you to build a food supply, ask someone to help you.** You can ask for help at food banks, at community kitchens or local groups that help people.
3. **If you have more food than you need, give some to other people.** Think about your neighbors and your community. Keep some food for them. You can also start a shared food store in your building or neighborhood.
4. **Grow your own food if you can.** You can grow food in your garden. You can grow food on your balcony. You can grow food on a windowsill. Use the fruits and berries that grow near you that you know are safe to eat.

Warmth

Staying warm in an emergency can save your life. When the power stops, your home gets cold very fast. If your home gets cold, go to one room with your family. Put blankets over the windows to keep the heat inside. Put rugs or mats on the floor. Dress in layers, as this keeps you warm better than one thick garment. Sleep next to each other to stay warmer. Emergency survival blankets keep your body heat in, are small and light to store, and are affordable.

Staying cool in an emergency is also important. When the power stops in summer, your home gets very hot. Heat can increase your symptoms and make it harder for you to function, which can be dangerous. Wind and any moving air cools you. Use a rechargeable

or battery powered fan. Water cools you: take a cold shower or go swimming. Put a wet towel on your shoulders or around your neck. When the water evaporates, it cools you down.

What to Keep at Home:

- Extra blankets, emergency survival blankets and sleeping bags. Keep at least one per person.
- Warm clothing: wool layers, thick socks, hats, gloves, and scarves.
- Complete change of clothes and waterproof shoes. Make sure they are right for the weather in your country.
- Sleeping mats or rugs to keep the floor warm.
- Rechargeable or battery powered fan and towels to wet for cooling down.
- Candles, matches, and a lighter. Or another way to stay warm that does not need electricity, like a gas heater or special fuel heater. Use these safely.

Box 11. Good to Know: Warmth

Always stay near your heater when it is on. If you use a different way to make heat, open your window a little bit to let fresh air in. Turn the heater off before you go to sleep.

Hygiene

If water and the toilet stop working, you can get sick quickly. It is important to have basic cleaning supplies at home. This means you can always stay clean and safe.

Wash your hands often. This is important especially before eating and after using the toilet. If tap water is not working, use wet wipes or hand sanitiser.

If the toilet will not flush, you need other ways to throw away waste. This helps you stay clean and healthy. You can still urinate in the toilet even when it will not flush. Put used toilet paper in a garbage bag or a bin with a lid. Keep excrement and urine apart so the smell is not too strong. Put a garbage bag inside your toilet bowl, or use a bucket with a lid. After each time, cover the excrement with compost litter, sawdust or clumping cat litter.

What to Keep at Home:

- Toilet paper, wet wipes and moist disinfectant wipes.
- Soap and hand sanitiser.
- Toothbrush and toothpaste.
- Menstrual products and diapers.
- Disposable gloves.
- Garbage or plastic bags for throwing away waste.
- Compost litter, sawdust or clumping cat litter.
- A bucket with a lid or a portable toilet.

Medicine and Assistive Supplies

You might run out of medication or lose an assistive device during an emergency.

Replacing it may take days or weeks. In an emergency, pharmacies may close or run out of products that you might need. Hospitals might be overwhelmed and medication for rare diseases might be very hard to find.

This is why it is important to have your own supply. You can keep enough for 3 days. One month is better for persons with chronic or long-term conditions. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to help you build up this small supply. Check the dates on your medicine every six months. Change your medicine before the date runs out. Always keep extra parts for your assistive devices. Make sure your devices have a back-up battery.

Store your essential items such as medication and important documents in one clearly defined and easily accessible place. Some people use a waterproof box in the fridge so first responders can quickly find it in an emergency.

What to Keep at Home:

- All medicines that need a prescription. Keep them in one place, such as in the fridge. Store them in a waterproof bag or box.
- A written list of all your medications, doses, allergies. Keep it visible and easy to find.
- A portable cooler and ice packs if any of your medication needs to be kept cold.
- Basic first aid supplies (like bandages, antiseptic wipes and pain relief medication).
- Extension lead, chargers, generators, power banks, and spare batteries. These are needed for any assistive device that uses power. This includes hearing aids, powered wheelchairs, and communication devices.
- Sensory and calming items (like headphones, spiky sensory massage ball).
- Assistive communication devices (like a mobile phone or tablet) and other communication supplies (like information cards, pictograms, writing board, pen and paper).
- Medical and assistive supplies and technologies (like walking canes, hearing aids, glasses, stomas, catheters, urine bags, or machines that keep you alive).
- Mobility equipment for evacuation (like a manual wheelchair, wheelchair tire repair kit, walkers, crutches, portable ramps, transfer board or transfer belt).

Information and Communication

You have the right to receive emergency warnings and news in formats you can understand. Authorities must communicate emergency information in accessible ways that reach everyone, including persons with disabilities.

It is important to know where you can get emergency news before a crisis happens. In some emergencies, like earthquakes, your phone, internet, and television may not work for days or weeks. The radio may be the only way to get news from authorities.

What to do now:

- Find the number for your local emergency radio station and write it on your radio.
- Make a list of official and reliable sources that are accessible to you, such as government websites, civil protection services, and city hall emergency pages
- Install official emergency apps on your phone.
- Ask your local disability organization or social services to help you find the right accessible sources for your country.
- Learn how to spot fake news and how to verify information.

You also need to talk to emergency services personnel. To support you, they need to know some things. They need to know who you are. They need to know what happened. They need to know where it hurts. They need to know how they can help you. If talking is hard for you, prepare other ways to communicate now.

What to Keep at Home:

- A radio that works with batteries, by turning a handle, or using sunlight.
- Spare batteries for the radio.
- A phone and a power bank. Keep the power bank always charged.
- A list of important phone numbers written on paper. Do not rely only on your phone.
- A phone charger that works in a car.
- Your assistive communication devices, such as pictograms or a writing board.
- Pen and paper for written communication, as a backup.

Cash and documents

In an emergency, you may not be able to pay online. The cash machines may be empty or not working. When you have cash at home, you can still buy the things you need.

Having copies of your important papers helps doctors and other persons who might want to support you take care of you. It also helps you go back to normal life faster.

These papers can be your ID card, your bank papers, your insurance papers, and your medical papers. Keep the real papers in one safe place at home. Keep copies in your emergency bag. Put your important papers in a waterproof bag in a drawer in the main hallway of your house, in a waterproof box on the fridge with a magnet to hold it in place, or a safe box at the bank. You can also save your papers on a computer, on a small drive, or on a safe cloud service or take a photo of your papers with your phone.

What to Keep at Home:

- Keep around 70 euro to 100 euro at home for each adult. Keep 30 euro at home for each child. Keep this cash in small bills and in a safe place.
- Documents of your house and family, like your ID, birth and house certificate. These prove who you are and help you get back in touch with family if you are separated.
- Your disability certificate and benefit documents. Keep the contact details of the services that are important for you. If payments stop during an emergency, you will know who to call.

- Health insurance card and medical information. Keep copies so you can get the care you need no matter what happens.
- Money and legal papers showing how you pay for your home and tax papers. These help you get your money situation back to normal and get help after a disaster.
- Your home insurance certificate. You also need to take pictures of your home right now. This helps you repair, rebuild, or replace what is damaged.
- A list of phone numbers and names of your doctors and people who take care of you.

MODULE 2: Staying Informed and Connected

In an emergency, the right information at the right time can save your life. This module helps you understand the risks where you live, know how warnings will reach you, and learn how to ask for help effectively. It also introduces you to first responders and shows you how to communicate your needs, requirements and preferences clearly.

Know Your Risks

Different places face different risks. Different people also face different risks. Your disability, where you live, and who you are all affect what an emergency means for you and what you need to do to stay safe. Knowing what emergencies are most likely in your area, and what they might mean for you, is the first step to know how to prepare for them. It also helps you find the barriers that could make an emergency harder to manage. This gives you time now to prepare and helps you stay safe and independent.

Risks are growing and becoming more diverse. These include disasters such as earthquakes and floods, heatwaves, wildfires, draughts, heavy rain and snowstorms. As well as health crises such as pandemics. Other threats include cyber-attacks, disinformation, or armed conflicts.

Know How Warnings Reach You

Different countries warn people in various ways when there is an emergency. Each city hall knows the risks in its own area. The city hall chooses warnings that fit these risks and tells people what to do, including loud sirens outside, text messages sent to all the phones in one area, news on the radio and television, special apps on your phone, first responders who come to your door, and messages on social media and on websites.

Not all ways work for everyone. For example, some might be using sound or sight. Find out now which ways are used where you live. Make sure you can use them in the way you require. It is important to make a plan for when alerts do not reach you.

Three Steps to Make Sure Emergency Alerts Reach You

1. **Find out what systems for alerts exist where you live.** Ask your city hall or your disability organisation. Check your national civil protection agency's website.

2. **Sign up for alerts.** Find out which channels and apps send alerts. Sign up now for all types of emergencies. Make sure the alerts come in formats you can understand (like audio, text messages, pictograms, or sign language).
3. **Learn what each alert means and exercise.** In many countries, public emergency alert systems are tested on specific days of the week, or at specific times during the year. Some tell you to pay attention, some warn you of danger right now. And some just want to give you important news. Learn what each alert means. Prepare how to act on each of them.

How to Ask for Help

In an emergency, your family or support staff may not be with you. This is why you need to know how to ask for help and how to call 112. You need to know what happens when help comes and how to communicate with first responders. This way, they can help you without causing harm.

Who Are the First Responders

In an emergency, there are people whose job is to help you and keep you safe. They are called first responders. You need to understand what each first responder can do for you. Some first responders wear uniforms that may scare you. You also need to learn how to talk to them. Tell them what you feel right now using simple words. This helps them support you faster.

Figure 1. First Responders Who Might Meet in an Emergency

Firefighters

Firefighters wear special clothes to stay safe. They wear a big helmet and gloves. They may carry a tank with air to breathe. They drive big trucks with loud sounds and lights.

- › Firefighters can help you get out of a building. They can carry you to a safe place.
- › If you use a wheelchair, they will try to keep it with you. Sometimes, they must leave it behind to keep you safe.
- › They can help you get out of a building that fell down in an earthquake.

Even if you cannot speak, point to your communication card or emergency plan. It tells them what they need to know to help you in a safe way.

Police

Police can wear a blue uniform. They drive cars with loud sounds and lights. They can also have working dogs with them. You may meet them first in an emergency.

- › They guide people in the streets away from danger.

- › Sometimes they look for people who are hurt or stuck.
- › They help to give out food, water, and medicine.
- › They give clear emergency information to people.
- › They can tell people where to find a safe place to stay.

Paramedic (Emergency Personnel on an Ambulance)

Medical emergency personnel can work on an ambulance or in a hospital. They can carry medical tools, like a first aid kit, but also a special bed to take you out of your building if you cannot walk on your own. They help you when you are sick or hurt.

- › Tell them what hurts you.
- › Tell them about your health. Tell them what medicine you take.
- › Tell them how they can help you.
- › Ask them to describe step by step what they will do to you.

Social Worker

You can meet a social worker at the hospital or at a shelter, for example. The social worker is a professional. They know about disability and how to help you. Tell them what you need.

- › They can help you get back in touch with family or carers, if you got lost from each other.
- › They can help you find a new home.
- › They can help you get the assistive equipment and medical supplies you need. They can also help with fixing or replacing them, if you need it.
- › They can listen to you when you feel sad or scared. They can help you feel calm.
- › They can help you ask for money after the emergency.
- › You can tell them if you are afraid of someone or if you need protection.

112 Operator

112 is the emergency phone number in Europe. You can call 112 when you need help. A 112 operator answers the phone and knows how to help you. Do not call 112 if you do not need it.

The 112 operator will ask:

- › **Who are you?**
- › **Where are you?**
- › **What happened?**
- › **How to help you?**

Tell the 112 operator if you are Deaf or do not hear well. In some countries there is a 113-text service that you can use instead. In other countries, the 112 operator has a sign language interpreter next to them to answer you on video.

How to Communicate with First Responders

When a first responder comes to assist you, first make sure they are who they say they are. Ask them their name and their job. They should wear a uniform or show you their badge. If you are not sure, you can call 112 to check before you open the door. Once you know who they are, you can also tell them how to help you. When you speak to them, explain your situation clearly. Tell them where you are, what is happening, what you need, and how urgent it is. Give them the most important information first.

- **Tell them your name. Tell them your disability or your condition and how you like to talk to people.**
- **Tell them how urgent your situation is, and what you need first.**
- **If you have a carer, tell them how to talk to your carer.** Your carer can help them help you in a better way.
- **Show them how to use your devices that help you,** if they need to know. Keep a pen and paper with you.
- **Tell them how you want to be helped.** Give them clear steps on how to help you in a safe way.
- **Give them more information.** Point to your emergency card or your plan.

Box 12. How to Call 112

Call 112 only if you have an emergency. You can call 112 in all countries in Europe. When calling 112, you need to know how to answer these 4 questions:

5. **Who are you?** Tell them your name. You can add your disability or medical condition and how they need to talk to you. This helps them get ready and send the right help.
 6. **Where are you?** Say where you are. If you do not know the street, just give them a landmark, like a church or a big park.
 7. **What happened?** If you can only say one word, say it: “Fire.” “Accident.” That is enough to start.
 8. **How to help you?** Tell them what they need to know to help you. Tell them how to move you. Or what medicine you need.
- › **If you cannot speak at all:** Stay on the line. Do not hang up. The person on the phone will try to find where you are.
- › **If you are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:** If you are Deaf, find out now whether your country has a text service for 112 (e.g., 113) and register. Or save a live sign language interpretation app on your phone where available. If you are Hard of Hearing, tell the operator you do not hear well.
- › **If you are calling on behalf of a person with disability:** Tell the operator what helps that person and what to avoid. Responders can prepare before they arrive.

Get to Know First Responders

It is important to get familiar with first responders. Practice with your support network. When you know what to expect, you feel calmer.

- **Look up pictures and videos of first responders in their full work clothes.** Look at them with your support network or your support staff before an emergency happens.
- **Practice what you would do if a firefighter came to your door.** Talk about it or act it out with your support network.
- **Visit your local fire station or police station.** Many stations have open days. On these days, you can meet first responders, see their tools, and ask questions in a calm place. Call the station before you go and tell them what you need.
- **Are you part of a group for persons with disabilities?** You can invite local first responders from your area to one of your events. Ask them to come in their work clothes and tell you what they do.

MODULE 3: How to Act in an Emergency

When disaster strikes, you may not have time to think. This module gives you five clear steps to follow in any emergency, plus specific guidance for different types of crises. These actions help you stay calm, protect yourself, and make decisions that keep you safe.

Five Steps in Every Emergency

When an emergency happens, you may not have time to think about your plan. These 5 steps tell you what to do to stay safe.

1. **Step 1: Stay calm:** Stay as calm as you can. Take one breath. Look at what is around you. Ask yourself: What do I see? What do I hear? What do I smell? What do I feel?
2. **Step 2: Protect yourself first:** What you do will depend on the emergency. You can: Lean into an interior wall. Get down low. Move away from windows. Protect your head.
3. **Step 3: Take your important things and go to a safe place:** Take your important things with you if they are close. Your important things can be: your emergency bag, your medicine, your walking stick, wheelchair, or communication cards. Then go to a safe place. It can be a place in your house, a friend's house or a public shelter. If your important things are not close, leave without them.
4. **Step 4: Tell someone:** Ask for help. Call 112. Tell them where you are and how they can help you. You can also: send a message to a friend or neighbour. Or signal in the window for emergency services to find you by using the whistle or the flashlight.
5. **Step 5: Listen to the emergency news:** Turn on your radio that works with batteries. Listen only to the authorities, such as the government or the firefighters.

Do not believe all messages on the internet. Do not believe information when you do not know where it comes from.

How to Avoid Getting Bored or Worried

In a longer emergency, you need to think about how to pass the time. When there is no electricity, there is time for many activities. Remember that staying busy helps you stay calm.

Things you can do:

- Read books, play board games, dice games, card games, puzzles, and quizzes together.
- Exercise, do fitness, go on bike trips, swim in natural waters, or play outdoor games.
- Do crafts, knitting, solitaire, or other hobbies.
- Try to think of the situation as a survival game. As a person with disability, you are a master at creating individual solutions to problems. You can use the same skills to survive an emergency.
- Enjoy the time together with your loved ones. Prepare treats and try to turn an emergency meal into a celebration.

MODULE 4: Evacuating and Finding Shelter

In some emergencies the safest choice is to leave your house. This module prepares you for evacuation. You will learn how to make a personal evacuation plan, find and check your nearest shelter, and understand what to expect when you arrive. Knowing your route, making sure the shelter meets your requirements and needs, and planning how to reunite with your support network and first responders means you can reach safety with less stress and more confidence.

Be Ready for Evacuation

What keeps you safe is also different depending on the emergency. Some emergencies will find you on the road or at work. Other emergencies will happen at home, like the pandemic. Then, you will need to stay home for many days or many weeks. This is called shelter in place. In the case of an air raid, the safest thing to do is to go inside and hide. Other times, it is not safe to stay inside. Then, you need to leave. This is called evacuation. Evacuation can happen fast, like in a fire or over many hours, like in a flood or in a war.

When you leave, you need a place to go. This can be a shelter. A better choice is the house of a friend. This is more comfortable and less stressful. It can also fit your requirements and needs better than a shelter. Think about the place before the emergency happens.

How to Make Your Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan

You may not be able to leave your home by yourself. Your family, your neighbors, your support network, or the first responders may need to help you. **Make sure at least 2 people know that you need support.** Tell them how to support you before an emergency happens. A Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan helps you do this.

Box 13. Your Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)

Your Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan sets out:

- › **The warning system in your building:** Warnings can be lights or sounds. The warning may not reach you. If this happens, a neighbor, a teacher, the person you work with, or the building manager should warn you.
- › **Who your support persons are and what they will do.** If you are Deaf, you might need someone to warn you so that you are not left behind. If you have a mobility disability, you need at least 2 people to help get you out of a building. Talk to them and plan what they will do. Plan what you need.
- › **How you get out of the building:** You can leave with someone helping you. You can leave with your mobility device. You can leave in a special chair for emergencies. You can leave on a stretcher. Make sure the equipment is there. Make sure the equipment is checked often. Make sure everyone knows how to use it. Teach them how to move you in a safe way. Remember to take your emergency bag with you.
- › **How you get out of your home or building.** Pick 2 ways to get out of every room if you can. Do the same for the building. The lift may not work in an emergency. The stairs may not be safe in an earthquake. Plan for different things that can happen.
- › **The assembly points and shelters that work for you:** An assembly point is a safe place where you can meet with community members and first responders. It must be far from dangers. Dangers can be falling cables, falling trees, or falling buildings. Find out if you can get there by yourself. If you need help, find out what kind of help. Plan the safe roads to get to them.
- › **What to do if you are stuck and cannot get out:** Move to a safe place inside the building. Call 112. Show first responders where you are. You can use a whistle. You can use a torch. You can use something that first responders can see from the window. This way, first responders can find you faster.

Write it down and keep it with your Personal Emergency Plan. Practice it with your support network or staff at least twice a year, including at night or on waking. Try different routes each time. **In a home fire scenario, everyone should be able to exit to safety within two minutes.**

Going to A Shelter

A shelter is a safe place you stay during or after an emergency when your home is unsafe or does not support your wellbeing. A shelter can be a friend's or family member's home, a church, or a camp of containers or tents; in some countries it's a building basement opened only during emergencies, while in others everyday spaces like schools, sports halls, and community centres become shelters when needed.

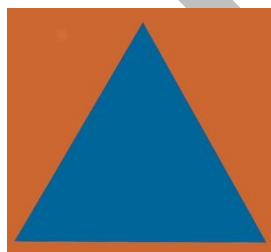
Find and Check Your Shelter Now

Because shelters can vary, you need to prepare now to understand what you might need depending on the situation and how to make sure you are in the right place.

Step 1: Find your shelter options

- Identify friends or family members who live in different areas and could host you.
- Find the nearest emergency shelters or civil defence shelters (marked with a blue triangle inside an orange square) on your city hall emergency plan or ask civil protection authorities.

Figure 2. Emblem of Civil Defence



Source: Emblem of Civil Defence available at [International Civil Defence Organization \(ICDO\)](https://www.icdo.org/).

Step 2: Check if shelters meet your needs

- Plan a visit or contact shelters before an emergency.
- Ask a friend or family member to go check it out with you, if needed.
- Check if they provide toilets, showers, cooking spaces, and communal areas that are accessible to you.
- Make sure they can provide medical support, have everything you need for your assistive technology and devices.
- Check what other services they provide, such as space for service animals, if applicable.

Step 3: Test your route

- Travel to each shelter you are considering before an emergency happens.
- Time how long it takes.
- Check if you can get there on your own or what support you need.
- Ask a friend or family member to go check it out with you, if needed.
- Look for obstacles (stairs, narrow paths, busy roads).
- Find alternative routes.

Step 4: Add to your emergency plan

- Write down addresses and contact information for all shelter options.
- Save them in your phone.
- Talk with friends or family about staying with them during emergencies.
- Share your plan with people who support you.

Important: Leave early during an emergency so you have enough time to safely get to the shelter. Roads or paths may become dangerous or blocked if you wait too long.

What to Do When You Arrive at a Shelter

When you arrive at a shelter, these are the main steps:

1. **Tell the staff your name.** Tell them about your disability and health condition.
2. **Ask if there is a help desk for people with a disability.** If there is no help desk, ask for one of these people: a social worker, a staff member from a group that helps people with a disability, a medical staff member. Ask the staff to take you to one of these people.
3. **Tell the staff what you need.** The staff must provide you: medical care, support for your feelings, a place you can move around in easily. If you do not receive these things, ask for them.
4. **Ask for help that fits your needs.** The shelter may not be able to give you what you need. Then ask the staff to send you to a better shelter for your requirements.
5. **Ask the staff to help you find your family and friends.**

Remember that you have rights in a shelter, such as being able to move around easily, being treated with respect, getting the same help as other people, and being safe.

How to Stay Safe in A Shelter

Here are some general safety tips:

- Stay close to people you know and trust.
- Keep your daily routine the same as much as you can.
- Use things that bring you comfort.
- Ask staff upfront how you can report a problem or if someone is bothering you.
- Tell staff right away if you feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or unwell.

Box 14. If This Is You: You Have Specific Needs in A Shelter

› **If you are a woman or a girl with a disability:** You have the right to bathrooms and sleeping spaces dedicated only to women. You have the right to lights that work. You have the right to enough privacy. Ask for these things as soon as you arrive.

- Ask for period products.
- Ask for care if you are pregnant or breastfeeding a baby.
- Stay close to people you know.

-
- Tell staff right away if you feel not safe. Tell staff right away if someone bothers you.
 - You can ask for a woman staff member if you want one.
 - Ask how you can report a problem.

› **If you are a child with a disability: You may be apart from your family.**

- Stay with an adult you know at all times. Do not stay alone.
- Ask the worker to help you contact your family. Ask about services that bring families back together.
- Tell staff right away if you feel unsafe or if someone bothers you.

› **If you are an LGBTIQ+ person with a disability. You have the right to be safe. You have the right to be treated with respect. You only need to share the information you feel comfortable sharing.**

- Tell staff right away if someone bothers you, treats you badly or hurts you.
- Ask for a private sleeping area, if you need it.
- Stay close to people you know.
- Avoid going to the bathroom alone.
- Ask a staff member you trust to help you if you need to report a problem.

› **If you have a psychosocial or intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, or dementia. A shelter can feel confusing. A shelter can feel like too much.**

- Tell staff what you need as soon as you arrive.
- Ask for a quieter area if available.
- Use things that bring you comfort.
- Keep your daily routine the same as much as you can.
- Stay close to people you trust.
- Tell staff right away if you feel unsafe or unwell.

› **If you have a mobility disability:**

- Check all shared spaces right away when you arrive, such as toilets, washing areas, sleeping rooms, exits. It is not enough to reach your bed.
- Make sure you can reach the toilet and the exit on your own.
- Ask staff for reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodation means changes that help you use a place or a service like everyone else.
- If the shelter cannot meet your needs, ask to go to another shelter.

› **You got a disability or injury during the emergency. You may feel shocked and sad. You may not have the devices or support you need yet.**

- Tell the shelter medical and social staff right away about your condition.
- Ask for a check-up.
- Ask for any devices you need now, such as a crutch or a wheelchair).

- Ask for mental health support if you feel sad or feel it is too much. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness.

MODULE 5: Recovering After an Emergency

An emergency does not end when the immediate danger passes. This module supports you through recovery: managing the emotional impact, replacing lost medication or assistive devices, returning home safely, and rebuilding your sense of normal. Recovery takes time, and you do not have to do it alone.

How to Feel Better After an Emergency

An emergency can be very hard, and you might feel lonely, worried, scared, or tired. Sometimes you feel fine at first and only feel bad days or weeks later, when the danger is over but your life is still not back to normal. Feeling this way does not mean you are weak; it means something very hard happened to you, and it is normal.

You might:

- Worry a lot.
- Have trouble sleeping. Have bad dreams.
- Feel guilt. Guilt is when you think something bad is your fault.
- Feel shame. Shame is when you feel bad about yourself.
- Feel angry.
- Feel like everything is too much.
- Feel like it is hard to feel happy or close to other people.

3 Steps to Feel Better

Every person feels different after an emergency. When things are hard, it is important to take care of yourself. Here are 3 steps that can help you feel better:

1. **Step 1: Acknowledge your feelings and accept them:** Say what you feel. For example, "I feel angry" or "I feel sad" or "I feel scared" or "I feel hopeful." Let yourself feel sad. Let yourself cry. Let yourself be angry. Do not be hard on yourself for feeling this way.
2. **Step 2: Take care of yourself:** Do small things that make you feel good. For example, take a walk. Rest, eat, drink water and go outside everyday. Be patient with yourself. Keep a daily routine, to the extent possible. A daily routine is the things you do every day at the same time.
3. **Step 3: Ask for help and stay with people:** Do not stay alone. Talk to people you trust. Ask for help when you need it. Help other people too.

Table 2. What to Do and Not to Do to Feel Better After an Emergency

✓ Do	✗ Do Not
<p>✓ Pay attention to your sleep patterns. Sleep at the same time each night. Create a calming routine. If you cannot sleep for several nights, ask for help.</p>	<p>✗ Do not ignore sleep problems. Do not use alcohol or drugs to sleep or feel better.</p>
<p>✓ Eat good food. Drink enough water.</p>	<p>✗ Do not skip meals. Do not eat too much. Do not eat only fast food.</p>
<p>✓ Be kind to yourself.</p>	<p>✗ Do not blame yourself for what happened.</p>
<p>✓ Keep your daily routine, to the extent possible.</p>	<p>✗ Do not make big life choices during a hard time. For example, do not get a divorce, do not move to a new town, do not leave your job.</p>
<p>✓ Ask for help. Go to therapy. Join a support group.</p> <p>Therapy is when you talk to a special person about your feelings. A support group is a group of people who meet to help each other.</p>	<p>✗ Do not feel bad about asking for help. Do not wait until you feel very bad.</p>
<p>✓ Move your body. Go outside when you can.</p>	<p>✗ Do not stay inside all the time. Do not think about bad things all day. Do not watch the news and social media all the time.</p>
<p>✓ Do things that make you happy. For example, sport, reading, or games.</p>	<p>✗ Do not stop doing things you love. Do not do things that can hurt you. For example, do not spend too much money or play games for money.</p>
<p>✓ Say no when you cannot do something. Know what is too much for you.</p>	<p>✗ Do not do more than you can. Watch for signs that you are very sad or very tired.</p>

✓ Do	✗ Do Not
✓ Talk to family and friends. Spend time with people you love.	✗ Do not stay alone. Do not push people away. You are not a problem for other people.

When to Get Professional Help

Everyone recovers in their own way. There is no fixed time that works for everyone. Some people feel better after a few weeks. After 1 month, you may still feel a little sad. If you feel a little better, you will likely get well without treatment.

Every country in Europe has helplines that can support you. You can find the helplines in your country. Ask your disability organization or support staff.

Recovering Your Medication and Devices

In an emergency, you might lose your medication, devices, and assistive technology. For some people this is very dangerous, because if you rely on a machine or medication to stay alive, missing your treatment can make you very sick very fast. For others, it means losing the ability to do things on your own, like moving or talking to people. Both situations are serious, so you need to keep your treatment going and get your independence back as fast as you can.

This is why it is important to plan now. Keep extra medication at home for 1 month if you can. Ask your doctor for extra medication before an emergency. Find out where the nearest treatment place is. Make a list of other doctors who can help you if your doctor is not there.

If you have lost your medication or your medical equipment, do these things:

1. **Talk to staff right away.** Tell the shelter doctor, nurse, or social worker. A social worker is a person who helps people in need. Show them your medication list if you have one.
2. **Ask for special emergency medication.** Some medications cannot be changed for another one. If you take this kind of medication, tell the staff right away. Say it is urgent. You cannot wait. You cannot use other medication instead.
3. **Ask for a fridge if you need one.** Some medications must stay cold. Ask for cold storage right away.
4. **Ask to move if the shelter is not safe for you.** Some medical equipment needs power all the time. If the shelter cannot give you power all the time, ask to move. You can go to a hospital or another safe place.
5. **Ask for help to find another treatment place.** Ask a social worker or the shelter staff. They can help you find the nearest place for treatment.

What to Do If You Have Lost Your Assistive Device or If It Is Broken

If you lose your assistive device or if it is broken, you have the right to get a new device. This is what you can do:

1. **Tell staff right away.** Tell them if your device is lost. Tell them if your device is broken. Tell them if your device does not work well.
2. **Ask for a device to use for now.** You can borrow a device while you wait for a new one. You can ask:
 - Your disability group.
 - The Red Cross. The Red Cross is a group that helps people in an emergency.
 - Social services. Social services is a government office that helps people in need.
3. **Ask for fitting and training with your new device.** Fitting means the staff make sure the device is right for your body. Training means the staff show you how to use the device. Without fitting and training, the device can be hard to use or not safe.
4. **Keep your other devices with you all the time.** Do not leave them behind.
5. **Write down what you lost or what is broken.** Ask about insurance or money to pay for a new device. Insurance is money you get to pay for things you lose. Compensation is money you get when something bad happens to you.

What to Do If You Lose Your Guide Animal or Assistance Animal

In an emergency, you might need to prove that your assistance or guide animal is yours and that it is a working animal. Keep the papers that prove this and put them in your emergency plan. If the assistance or guide animal gets lost, ask for help right away

1. **Tell staff right away.** Tell the shelter staff and the emergency workers.
2. **Share information about your animal.** Use your emergency plan. Share:
 - The name of your animal.
 - What your animal looks like.
 - The number on your animal's ID tag.
 - The phone number of your vet. A vet is a doctor for animals.
3. **Ask people to help you find your animal.** You can ask shelter staff or your disability group or the local animal rescue service.
4. **Ask for support while you wait.** Ask shelter staff what help they can give you. You need help to move around while you do not have your animal.
5. **Check your animal when you find it again.** Look to see if it is hurt. Use the supplies in your emergency backpack to take care of it. Ask for a vet, food, or other supplies for your animal if you need them.

Returning Home Safely

Coming Back Home

When an emergency ends, going home can mean different things. Your home might be damaged and take time to return to normal, or you might not be able to return home, so give yourself time to adjust. If you cannot move around safely at home, do not stay there;

ask your local authority, social services, or disability organisation for a safe place, or go somewhere you planned before, like a friend's home. If you moved to a new area, sign up again with your local authority or disability service to get the services you need.

Here are some things you can do to make coming home easier and safer:

- Do not turn on the water, the electricity, or the gas by yourself. Contact local authorities. They will tell you when it is safe to use them again.
- Check all the food and water in your home. Throw away any food or water that got wet, warm, or touched by smoke.
- Check your support devices, your medical equipment, and your medicine. Make sure they are still there. Make sure they still work. Contact the company that gave you the device if something is lost or broken.
- Check all the things in your home that help you move around. For example: ramps, stair lifts, adapted bathrooms, and wide doors. They may be broken or blocked. Get them fixed.
- Tell the people who support you where you are. Ask for help.
- If you lost your papers, contact your local authority to get new ones. Your papers can be: your identity card, your birth paper, your driving paper, and your medical papers.
- Take photos of all the damage before you clean or throw things away. You will need the photos for your insurance.
- If another person took care of your guide animal or your support animal, bring the animal back to you. Take the animal to the vet for a check.

Feeling Safe with Your Finances Again

After a disaster, it takes time to feel safe with your finances again. Here are the most important steps to take:

- **Contact your insurance company as soon as you can.** Contact them in the first 60 days after the disaster. Do not throw anything away before the insurance company looks at the damage. Keep the paper that shows what you paid for. Keep the papers for: your place to stay, the repairs, the food, and the medicine.
- **Ask your local authority for an official paper about the disaster.** The paper says that the disaster happened. You will need this paper for your insurance.
- **If you cannot live in your home, contact your water, electricity, and gas companies.** Ask them to stop sending you bills. Talk to the people you owe money to before you need to pay. Tell them what happened. Most of them will help you find a solution.
- **Ask social services and disability organizations about money help.**
- **Start to save a small amount of money for the future**, when you feel safe again.

Going Back to Normal

Recovery takes time. It is not a single moment. Recovery can take months or even years. Going back to normal might also take a long time. For this to happen, you need to go back to your activities and routine.

In the weeks and months after an emergency, you do not have to recover alone. Local authorities, social services, and volunteers all play an important role, especially after a disaster or larger emergency. They can help you clean up your home, find supplies, contact services, and rebuild daily routines. Reach out to your neighbours, community groups, disability organisations. Tell them about your situation and ask for support.

1. **Going back to your home:** Your home may be damaged or destroyed. You have the right to support. Ask your local authority about finding you a new home. Or for support programmes to repair or rebuild your older home. Your home may need changes to be accessible. Ask for these changes to be part of the repair plan from the start. Accessible design is best when it is built in from the start.
2. **Going back to work or school:** When you feel ready, contact your workplace or your school. Ask about flexible arrangements while you recover. Your workplace or school may also be affected by the emergency. You might not be able to go there in person. You might need to connect online for a while. Find out if that is possible.
3. **Getting back your support:** Before the emergency, you may have used some services. These services can be personal assistance, transport, home care, disability benefits, social services. You have the right to use these services again. You may have lost your papers during the emergency. You can ask for help to get new papers. And for help to register again.
4. **Getting connected again:** During the emergency, you may have lost: your phone or computer, your internet connection, your assistive technology. These tools are important. They help you get information. They help you use services. They help you stay in touch with your support network. Make sure to get these tools back soon.

MODULE 6: Being Prepared Everywhere

Emergencies do not always happen when you are at home. This is why you need to be ready everywhere. Where you are when an emergency happens changes everything. It changes who is near you, what help you can get, and what you can do. This module helps you be prepared everywhere.

Be Prepared at Home

As the majority of persons with disabilities, you too might live in the community, on your own or with family, in cities or in villages. Where you live affects how you experience an emergency. It changes what type of emergencies can happen, how fast help can reach you, and whether people know about your disability. You may need to evacuate

your home independently, handle your own medical requirements, and make decisions quickly about your safety.

Top 5 Actions to Take This Week

1. **Start your emergency plan.** Fill out the Personal Emergency Plan template in the Toolbox. Include your medication, support contacts, and evacuation needs. Share it with someone you trust.
2. **Build your support network.** Have a conversation with at least one neighbor. Tell them what support you might need and give them your phone number. Register with your local civil protection authorities or emergency services.
3. **Prepare your household supplies.** Start gathering supplies and begin building your emergency backpack with essential items for 72 hours.
4. **Check your building's emergency plan.** Talk to your building manager. Walk your evacuation route and make sure it is accessible. Ask for emergency plans that work for you and support with what you might require.
5. **Find out about risks and download alerts.** Learn what hazards exist in your area. Download emergency apps that work for you, like the 112 app and local alert systems. Make sure you can receive warnings.

Box 15. If This Is You

- › **You live far away from emergency services or in an area with bad infrastructure:** Focus on storing supplies for longer than 72 hours, register with emergency services, learn first aid, and build a strong local support network.
- › **You live isolated in the community:** Prioritise registering with emergency services, including social assistance services, and connecting with disability organisations who can check on you and help you build a support network.
- › **You have a low income or limited budget:** Check out the **How to Build It with Little Money** section under **STEP 3: Make Your Own Emergency Backpack**.

Be Prepared in a Care Home

A care home is a place where people live and get support every day. If you live in a care home, you may need help with daily activities, have complex health needs, or not have much support outside the facility. Your wellbeing in an emergency depends on the care home being safe and accessible, with the necessary equipment and supplies to support you during an emergency. It also depends on having an emergency plan that includes your individual needs and staff being well trained to help you.

Top 5 Actions to Take This Week

1. **Ask to see the care home's emergency plan.** Request a copy and check if it includes a personal plan for you. Your personal plan should cover how you communicate, how you evacuate, your medication needs, and who helps you. If you cannot leave quickly on your own, ask what equipment is available (evacuation chairs, refuge areas, etc.) and make sure staff know how to use it.

2. **Keep your Personal Emergency Card with you at all times.** Fill out the template in the Toolbox. Include your communication needs, medication, and emergency contacts. Keep it in your pocket or bag so first responders can find it.
3. **Get to know the staff.** Know which staff members work during the day and at night. Learn who is responsible for helping you evacuate. Learn how to ask for help in different situations: if you feel unwell, if you hear an alarm, or if something feels wrong.
4. **Learn the building and evacuation routes.** Know how to leave the building, where to meet outside, and what to do if you cannot leave on your own. Practice your evacuation route with staff.
5. **Participate in practice drills and speak up.** Ask to be included in every evacuation drill. After each drill, tell staff what worked and what did not. If you are worried about how the care home prepares for emergencies, tell your family, your disability organization, or a staff member. Your voice matters.

Box 16. If This Is You

- › **You have limited mobility or cannot move on your own:** Make sure your personal plan includes specific evacuation procedures for you. Ask what equipment is available and where refuge areas are if you cannot evacuate immediately. Practise with staff regularly.
- › **You have family outside of the care home:** Give them a copy of your emergency plan and the care home's contact information. Make sure the care home has their phone numbers and knows to contact them in an emergency.
- › **You are in temporary care or going home for periods:** Keep your **Personal Emergency Card** with you always, even when you leave. Make sure both the care home and your family have updated copies of your emergency plan and medication list.
- › **You are in a hospital:** Ensure your emergency plan and medication list follow you to the hospital. Tell hospital staff about your requirements, needs, and preferences. Make sure someone knows where you are. Keep your phone with you.

Be Prepared in the Workplace

Work is an important part of life. You have the right to be safe at work. In Europe, about half of persons with disabilities have a job. Often, this is because of barriers and discrimination in the work place.

People can also get a disability at work. Disability can also happen to anyone. This can happen because of accidents and long-term illness. You have the right to stay at home until you recover. Your employer should make sure you are safe and have everything you need to come back to work.

Top 5 Actions to Take This Week

1. **Tell your employer or building emergency officer about your requirements.** Explain what you need to be safe during an emergency. This could include accessible alarms,

evacuation assistance, or specific equipment. Ask them to conduct a risk assessment for you. Request all answers in writing.

2. **Ask for a personal evacuation plan.** Your plan should explain how you will leave the building, who will help you, what equipment you need, and what to do if your usual exit is blocked. Make sure it is written down and shared with the building emergency officer.
3. **Choose an evacuation buddy.** Find a trusted colleague who can help you in an emergency. Give them clear instructions on how to support you. Practice your evacuation route together. Make sure you have a backup buddy in case your main person is absent.
4. **Check that alarms work for you.** Test if you can hear or see the emergency alarms. If standard alarms do not work for you, ask for accessible alternatives (visual alarms or a colleague to come find you).
5. **Participate in safety drills.** Ask to be included in all workplace evacuation drills. Use these as opportunities to practice with your evacuation buddy and test your plan. After each drill, give feedback on what worked and what needs to improve. Your voice matters.

Box 17. If This Is You

- › **Your employer has not responded to your requests:** Contact your disability organisation for support. They can help you advocate for your rights and explain what accommodations your employer is legally required to provide.
- › **You work from home or remotely most of the time:** You still need an emergency plan for your home workspace. Follow the guidance in **Be Prepared at Home** and make sure your employer knows how to reach you in an emergency.
- › **You recently acquired a disability at work:** Talk to your employer about what you need to return to work safely. Request a risk assessment. Ask for accommodations and updates to the emergency plan to include your requirements. **MODULE 7: Guide for Caregivers and Community** has guidance your employer can use.

Be Prepared at School

School is where you spend a large part of your day learning and playing. It is also where you are away from your family and might need individual support. You have the right to be safe at school, which means your school must have an emergency plan that includes your specific requirements. This means teachers must know how to support you, alarms must work for you, evacuation routes must be accessible, equipment must be available, and you must be able to participate in drills and courses. You also need to be able to get together with your family safely after an emergency.

Top 5 Actions to Take This Week

1. **Tell your teacher about your requirements.** Explain what you need to be safe during an emergency. This could include help evacuating, accessible alarms, communication

support, or a safe place to wait. Ask if the school has an emergency plan that includes you.

2. **Create a personal emergency plan with your teacher and parents.** Your plan should explain how you will leave the building, who will help you, what you need to communicate, and how to get in touch with your family. Make sure both your teacher and your parents or guardians have a copy.
3. **Choose a buddy in your class.** Find a classmate or friend who can help you in an emergency. Tell them what support you might need. Practice together.
4. **Ask your teacher to help you check that alarms and evacuation routes work for you.** Test together if you can hear or see the school's emergency alarms. Walk your evacuation route with your teacher and make sure you can use it. Ask about accessible exits and equipment if you need them.
5. **Enroll in school drills and preparedness activities.** Take part in every drill. Enroll in first aid classes and preparedness courses, if available. After each drill, tell your teacher what worked and what was difficult for you. Ask your parents to talk to the school if drills and preparedness activities are not accessible or do not include you.

Box 18. If This Is You

- › **You are a child or preschooler:** Your parents or guardians should read this section with your teacher and create your emergency plan together. **MODULE 7: Guide for Caregivers and Community** has specific guidance for them.
- › **You walk to school on your own:** Know safe routes home and to safe places if an emergency happens during your walk. Have more than one route in case your usual path is blocked.
- › **You live in a school dormitory:** Make sure the dormitory has an emergency plan for nights and weekends. Know who will wake you and help you evacuate at night. Practise evacuating from your dorm room and make sure you can contact your family quickly.

Be Prepared While Travelling

Travel and tourism are your rights. You have the right to travel, rest, explore, and see the world. You also have the right to accessible transport, hotels or other accommodations, and emergency help wherever you go. When you travel, you are in a new place with unfamiliar emergency systems. You may be far from your support network. Your assistive devices may not work with local power outlets, and emergency services may work differently than at home. This does not mean you must stay home. It means you must prepare before you go.

Top 5 Actions to Take Before You Leave

1. **Research your destination before you book.** Find out what emergencies are common in that area. Learn how emergency services work and what the emergency number is

(112 in all EU countries). Look for travel blogs by persons with disabilities and websites about accessible travel.

2. **Tell hotels or other accommodations, transport, and tour operators about your requirements when you book.** Ask for accessible rooms, evacuation support, and photos of the facilities before you arrive. For transport (planes, trains, buses), inform them of your requirements at least 2 days before travel. Request answers in writing.
3. **Prepare your travel emergency kit.** Pack extra medication (more than you need for your trip), copies of prescriptions in English or the local language, your Personal Emergency Card translated, if possible, backup batteries or chargers for assistive devices. Check that your travel insurance covers your disability, health conditions, and equipment.
4. **Register your trip with your consulate or embassy.** Tell them in writing about your trip, where you are staying, and your disability or health conditions. They can help you if something goes wrong, find a doctor, or arrange to go home in an emergency.
5. **Brief your travel companion on your emergency plan.** Make sure they know how to support you and communicate with local emergency services.

Box 19. If This Is You

- › **You use medical equipment that needs electricity:** Bring adapters and backup power options. Know where the nearest hospital or medical facility is. Ask your hotel or other accommodation if they have backup power.
- › **You take medication that needs refrigeration:** Confirm your hotel or other accommodation has a fridge in the room. Bring a portable cooler for transport. Research pharmacies and hospitals at your destination.
- › **You travel alone:** Share your itinerary with family or friends at home. Check in with them regularly. Register with your consulate. Make sure your hotel or other accommodation knows your requirements. Keep your **Personal Emergency Card** with you.
- › **You are travelling to a country where you do not speak the language:** Translate your Personal Emergency Card and medication list into the local language. Download translation apps that work offline.

MODULE 7: Guide for Caregivers and Community

This section is for family members, caregivers, support staff, and community members who support someone with a disability. If you help someone prepare for emergencies, this guide shows you where to start. It helps you understand your role, learn what the person you support needs, and know what to do in an emergency. Use it together so everyone learns the same things and can work as a team.

For Family Members, Relatives, and Friends

You are often the closest support in the life of a person with disability. You may live together, or you may stay in close contact from a distance. You may be their first call when something goes wrong. Your role is to support and not to take over. Every decision about their preparedness must be made with them, not for them. Many persons with disabilities can prepare and act independently with the right information and some practical support. Others need support with specific tasks, such as shopping for supplies, filling out forms, or practicing evacuation routes. Your job is to find out what they actually require, need and prefer.

Start Here: Add depending on their situation and needs:

- › **START HERE: Self-Assessment** to understand their level of independence and support needs.
- › **CORE GUIDE: Essential Actions for Everyone** for the three essential steps.
- › **Be Prepared at Home** for guidance on living in the community.
- › **Toolbox for the Guidelines** for templates you will use together. Read these sections together with the person you support.

What to Do First to Support Their Preparedness

1. **Create the emergency plan together.** Use the **Personal Emergency Plan** template in the Toolbox and fill it in together. Cover how they communicate, where to meet if separated, medication needs, and support network contacts. Keep copies on the fridge in a waterproof box, inside the front door, and in the emergency backpack. Review together at least once a year.
2. **Build the emergency backpack and supplies together.** Gather core items including disability-specific adaptations. Help with shopping and carrying but let them decide what goes in the bag. Check it together once a year and replace old items.
3. **Build their support network together.** Help them identify at least 3 people: someone close by, someone far away, and someone who knows their needs well. Connect with neighbours (give phone number and spare key), building managers (for safer alarms and equipment), and social services and disability organizations. Share the plan with everyone and practice together.
4. **Make the home and building safer together.** Check for obstacles blocking evacuation routes and test that alarms work for them. If not, arrange for neighbours to warn them and authorities to make them accessible. Identify a friend's house they can stay with or find the nearest shelter and check if they can reach it independently.
5. **Practice evacuation together.** Walk at least two escape routes to the meeting point, time how long it takes, and identify obstacles. Test alarms and practice regularly at different times of day with actual equipment. Advocate for accessible evacuation in their building and arrange for reasonable accommodations.
6. **Connect with emergency services:** Contact the city hall, fire station, or civil protection to register them on at-risk groups registries, if available, stating where they live and what help they might need.

Getting Yourself Ready to Support

1. **Make your own emergency plan and backpack.** Have your own emergency plan and supplies. In an emergency, you may be affected too or stuck at work, and if you are prepared, you can help them better.
2. **Know their medication and devices.** Learn what medication they take, when, how much, and what happens if they miss a dose. Learn how their assistive devices work, how to charge them, where backup batteries are stored, and where to get replacements if devices are lost.
3. **Attend first aid and preparedness courses.** Sign up for first aid classes and emergency preparedness training offered by civil protection services, or the Red Cross.
4. **Prepare the spaces where they spend time.** If you live together, stock up on the 7 Basics from MODULE 1: Home Preparedness. If they live in a care home, ask the manager if their specific needs are included in the emergency plan and advocate for better planning if needed. If they attend school, check with teachers that the school has a personal emergency plan for them and that they are included in all drills. Keep communication open with all the places where they spend significant time.

5. **If you travel together:** When traveling together, carry their emergency plan, medicine list, health papers, and emergency contacts with you. Know how to help them leave a building in an emergency and how to communicate their needs to hotels or other accommodations, transport staff, and emergency services. Help them research accessible travel options, communicate with hotels or other accommodations in writing about accessibility, notify transport staff at least 2 days before travel, and arrange travel insurance that covers their disability and health conditions.

For Caregivers and Support Staff in Institutions

You might be a paid professional supporting persons with disabilities in their own homes and communities or in care homes, residential facilities, and day centers. Your role is to work with them and their families to ensure they have an emergency plan that includes you with clear roles and responsibilities.

Your responsibilities include knowing what they need, require, and prefer in an emergency, their medication and treatment plan, having backup plans for their medical and assistive devices, and knowing how to brief first responders and medical staff. During emergencies, you may be their primary source of safety, their connection with emergency services, and their link to family. You must involve them in creating these plans and participating in drills, not decide for them. Practice the plan and update it regularly.

Start Here:

- › **START HERE: Self-Assessment** to understand their level of independence and support needs.
- › **CORE GUIDE: Essential Actions for Everyone** for the three essential steps.
- › **Be Prepared at Home** for guidance on living in the community.
- › **Toolbox for the Guidelines** for templates you will use together. Read these sections together with the person you support.

What to Do First to Support Their Preparedness

1. **Create personal emergency plans together.** Use the **Personal Emergency Plan** template in the Toolbox and fill it in with each person. Cover how they communicate, how they evacuate, medication needs, who helps them, and emergency contacts. Involve them actively in every decision. Keep copies in their room, with their file, and with the institutional emergency plan if applicable.
2. **Ensure each person has their emergency card and medication list.** Help them fill out the **Personal Emergency Card** template and keep it with them at all times (pocket, bag, or wheelchair). Include communication needs, medication, allergies, and emergency contacts. Laminate the card for protection, if needed.
3. **Build their support network beyond the institution.** Help them maintain contact with family, friends, and disability organizations. Keep updated emergency contact information for everyone in their support network. You or the care home must call these contacts immediately in an emergency and keep them informed. Encourage residents to

get to know their roommates and floor neighbours. They are often the closest people who can warn each other and ask staff for help. If supporting someone in the community, help them register on at-risk registries at city hall or fire stations.

4. **Check institutional plans include everyone (if you work in an institution).** Review the emergency plan with your manager. Verify it includes individual plans for every resident, evacuation equipment, accessible alarms, and staffing plans for nights and weekends. Check that there is a plan to keep residents safe inside if they cannot leave the building fast. Staff must have the right equipment (refuge areas, evacuation chairs, fire extinguishers and more), regularly maintain them and know how to use it. If plans are inadequate, raise this with management and find inclusive solutions.
5. **Conduct regular drills and include everyone (if you work in an institution).** Every resident must participate in drills, to the extent to which their condition allows. If there are no drills happening, organize one and ask for support from civil protection authorities. Practice evacuating with mobility aids and assistive devices at different times of day and night, including when short-staffed. Residents who participate in drills are better prepared and safer. After each drill, ask what worked and what was difficult, then update plans based on feedback.

Getting Yourself Ready to Support

1. **Know each person's needs, medication, and devices thoroughly.** Know everyone's assistive needs, how to use their devices, treatment plans, medication schedules, what needs refrigeration, and how long supplies last without power. Know where backups are stored and how to get replacements. Make sure all responsible care staff know how each resident communicates, evacuates, and their medication needs.
2. **Know evacuation responsibilities clearly (if you work in an institution).** Ensure every resident has a designated staff member for evacuation, documented in writing. Know who you are responsible for and have backup assignments for staff absences. If you support someone in the community, know their evacuation plan, how they want to be supported, and who else can help you.
3. **Know how to brief first responders and medical staff.** Practice explaining each person's disability, communication needs, medication, and how to help them safely. Keep their emergency card and plan accessible to show quickly.
4. **Attend first aid and preparedness training.** Sign up for first aid classes and emergency preparedness courses offered by civil protection services, the Red Cross, or community groups.
5. **Connect with emergency services and enforce safety rules.** If in an institution, ask your manager to invite fire services and civil protection authorities to meet residents, and train you and the residents. Practice drills together and improve based on feedback.
6. **Prepare for relocation if needed (if you work in an institution).** If residents must evacuate to another facility, their medication, care plans, and assistive devices must go with them. Prepare grab bags with care documentation and send information to receiving facilities ahead of time when possible. Have these arrangements in place especially for persons who need continuity of care and have very specialized requirements and needs.

For Neighbors

You may be the closest person who can help in an emergency. You might hear alarms they cannot hear, check on them when family cannot reach them, and act quickly when no one else is there.

Your role is to build trust now, understand what they require and be ready to help with dignity. You do not need medical training or disability expertise, but knowing a few things before an emergency helps you support them effectively according to their requirements, needs and preferences. Start by saying hello and getting to know your neighbours. You may not know who needs support until you ask.

Remember, persons with disabilities are not passive victims. They bring resilience, expertise, and resources to emergencies and can help you too. Create a plan that works both ways and keep your community safer together.

Start Here:

- › **START HERE: Self-Assessment** to understand different levels of independence and support needs.
- › **CORE GUIDE: Essential Actions for Everyone** to know more about preparedness in general and the three essential steps.
- › **MODULE 1: Home Preparedness** and **Be Prepared at Home** for guidance on how to prepare at home and in the community.
- › **Toolbox for the Guidelines** for templates you will use together. Read these sections together with the person you support.

What to Do First to Support Their Preparedness

1. **Introduce yourself if you have not already.** Knock on their door, say who you are, and offer to help if they ever need it. Give them your phone number and ask for theirs. If you do not know your neighbours yet, start small. You can say hello in the hallway or at building meetings.

2. **Explore how you can help each other in an emergency.** Have a simple conversation about what they might need: someone to warn them if alarms sound, help evacuating, checking on them during power outages, or talking to emergency personnel. Check that their alarms work for them (some use sound or light). Also explore what they can do to support you. They might check on your children, warn you in different situations, or offer other support. Create a plan that works both ways.
3. **Exchange keys if both you and them are comfortable.** If your neighbour trusts you and agrees, exchange spare keys. This allows you to check on them if they cannot come to the door. Only do this if they are comfortable. Respect their privacy and boundaries.
4. **Help them prepare their home and practice together.** Help them check their home for things that could block evacuation routes. Walk escape routes together. Test their alarms together. Practice what you would actually do in different emergency scenarios (fire, power outage, evacuation order).
5. **Know their emergency contacts.** Ask for phone numbers of their family or close friends. If something happens and you cannot reach your neighbour, you will know who to call.
6. **Check in regularly.** Do not wait for an emergency to talk to them. Check in regularly, by saying hello, asking how they are doing, offering help with small things like carrying groceries. Building a relationship now makes it easier to help each other when emergencies happen.

Getting Yourself Ready to Support

1. **Learn what their needs, requirements, and preferences are.** Depending on what you decided your role is, understand their medication needs, accessibility requirements, and how they want to be helped. Get to know the local disability community and learn more about disability and inclusion. Practice you plan together often. Review and update them as needed.
2. **Be ready to support them as decided.** Make sure you can reach them in time to warn them if that is what you decided, and that you have a signal and system in place. Make sure you have all the equipment in place if you need to support them with evacuation or transportation, and that you know how to communicate their requirements to emergency services if needed.
3. **Attend first aid and preparedness training.** Sign up for first aid classes offered by civil protection services, the Red Cross, or community groups. Basic first aid knowledge can make a significant difference in an emergency.
4. **Make your own emergency plan.** Have your own plan and supplies ready. In an emergency, you may be affected too. If you are prepared, you can help your neighbour better.
5. **Advocate for accessibility and inclusion in your building and community.** Tell the building manager what needs to be changed and improved (e.g., better alarms, accessible evacuation routes, and equipment). Ask for common drills that include everyone. Push for a building where all residents can be safe.

For Teachers and School Staff

You teach or work in schools, preschools, or educational facilities where children and young people with disabilities spend their days. During school hours, you are responsible for their safety. When emergencies happen, you may be the only adult they can rely on.

Your role is to ensure the school has an inclusive emergency plan that includes every student with a disability and that you know how to support them safely.

Students with disabilities have the right to be safe at school. They must have access to alarms that work for them, accessible evacuation routes, necessary equipment, and participation in drills and preparedness activities. Preparedness also means building students' wellbeing and resilience alongside plans and procedures. When schools create calm, informed, and emotionally supportive environments, students are better equipped to cope with uncertainty and recover from difficult experiences.

Schools are often where preparedness begins. For many families, preparing at school happens before preparing at home. Schools are a great place to start and disseminate these Guidelines and preparedness information in general. By teaching preparedness at school, you help students and families get ready at home too.

Start Here:

- › **START HERE: Self-Assessment** to understand different levels of independence and support needs.
- › **CORE GUIDE: Essential Actions for Everyone** to know more about preparedness in general and the three essential steps.
- › **Be Prepared at School** for specific guidance on school settings.
- › **Toolbox for the Guidelines** for templates that you can use together to support their preparedness journey. Read these sections together with the person you support.

What to Do First to Support Their Preparedness

1. **Create personal emergency plans with students and parents.** Use the **Personal Emergency Plan template** in the Toolbox and start filling it in together with each student and their parents. Cover how they communicate, how they evacuate, what they need to feel safe, and how to reunite them with their family. Keep copies with the student, and include relevant information with their file, and with the school emergency plan.
2. **Ensure each student has their emergency card.** Help students fill out the **Personal Emergency Card** template and keep it with them (in their backpack or pocket). Include communication needs, medical information, and emergency contacts.
3. **Assign a buddy or a staff for each student with disabilities.** Pair each student with a disability with a trusted classmate or designate a staff member. Train the buddy to help in an emergency and practice together. Make sure both students (or the staff member and student) understand the plan. Have a backup buddy or staff member in case the main person is absent.
4. **Include all students in drills and preparedness activities.** Every student with a disability must participate in every drill. After each drill, ask students what worked and what was difficult, and update plans based on their feedback. Teach emergency preparedness to all students, either as part of the curriculum or, where those courses are not available, through courses organized by different NGOs such as the Red Cross or local civil protection authorities.
5. **Support students' emotional preparedness and resilience.** For students with developmental disabilities, being prepared for emergencies is not only a matter of safety but also of self-confidence. Teach them to understand their own reactions, feel confident asking for help, and know how to protect themselves. Use adapted materials, practical skills, and structured support. Help all students recognize and manage emotional reactions like fear after stressful events by telling the truth, checking facts, adding hope, creating space for discussion, normalizing different feelings, and letting feelings be expressed.

Getting Yourself Ready to Support

1. **Know each student's requirements, needs, and communication preferences, and how to keep them calm.** Know what helps each student feel safe, what triggers anxiety, and how they communicate.
2. **Connect with parents and establish emergency procedures.** Keep updated emergency contacts, work with parents to create plans together, and establish reunification procedures for after emergencies. Do not release a student to anyone not listed in their emergency plan.
3. **Take part in designing the school's emergency plan and include students with disabilities.** Make sure their requirements are included and the school is inclusive and accessible (accessible alarms, evacuation routes with tactile carpets, signs and images, ramps, elevators, wide doors). If your school does not meet these standards, raise this with school leadership.

4. **Attend first aid, preparedness, and mental health training.** Sign up for first aid classes and emergency preparedness courses offered by civil protection services, the Red Cross, or education authorities, as preparedness is not a formal requirement in initial teacher education in many European countries. Also seek out training programs that strengthen resilience, inclusion, and mental health support to help you better understand what young people are going through and feel prepared to discuss difficult topics.
5. **Ensure alarms, evacuation routes, and evacuation responsibilities work for all students.** Test whether students can hear or see emergency alarms and arrange alternatives if needed. Ensure every student has a designated teacher or staff member for evacuation, have the necessary equipment in place, and practice routes and equipment together regularly.
6. **Conduct regular drills and make preparedness part of school culture.** Practice together with emergency services by inviting local fire services and civil protection to visit, meet students, and train staff. Evaluate the school's emergency plan regularly through quality assurance systems.

For Employers and Colleagues

If you are an employer: The law says you must keep everyone safe at work, including employees with disabilities. You must make changes in the workplace so they can do their job, ensure workstations, doors, hallways, stairs, and bathrooms are accessible, check risks for workers with disabilities, have an emergency plan that includes their requirements, and include them in drills. Your legal responsibility also extends to employees who acquire a disability at work through accidents or long-term illness. You must ensure they have everything they need to come back to work safely.

If you are a colleague: You may be the closest person who can help in a sudden emergency. You may be asked to be an evacuation buddy or support person, as in someone who can warn them, help them leave the building, communicate their needs to first responders, help with medication or accessibility issues, and contact their family if needed. This is a serious responsibility that requires understanding their needs, practicing together, and being reliable. Your role is to support them according to their plan and preference.

Start here:

- › **START HERE: Self-Assessment** to understand different levels of independence and support needs.
- › **CORE GUIDE: Essential Actions for Everyone** to know more about preparedness in general and the three essential steps.
- › **Be Prepared in the Workplace** for specific guidance on workplace settings.
- › **Toolbox for the Guidelines** for templates that you can use together to support their preparedness journey. Read these sections together with the person you support.

What to Do First to Support Their Preparedness

For Employers:

1. **Check risks and create personal emergency plans.** Conduct risk assessments for each employee with a disability as required by law. Work with the building emergency officer to create personal evacuation plans covering how they leave, who helps them, what equipment they need, and what to do if routes are blocked. Answer all requests in writing and on time.
2. **Make the workplace accessible and safe.** Ensure workstations, doors, hallways, stairs, and bathrooms are accessible. Check that alarms work for employees with disabilities and provide accessible alternatives if needed (visual alarms or colleague alerts). Remove obstacles that could block evacuation routes.
3. **Provide necessary equipment and assign support colleagues.** Make sure evacuation equipment is in place (evacuation chairs, refuge areas, accessible exits). Ensure every employee with a disability has a designated support colleague, provide clear instructions, and give them time to practice.
4. **Include employees with disabilities in all safety drills.** After drills, ask them to join discussions about what worked and what needs improvement, and use their feedback to update plans.
5. **Plan for business continuity that includes employees with disabilities.** If the workplace closes in an emergency, have plans for how work continues and whether employees can work from home in accessible ways.

For Colleagues:

1. **Learn their personal emergency plan and what they need from you.** Ask to see their plan, if it includes you, and understand what you are expected to do. Know how they want to be supported, how they communicate, what equipment they use, their medication needs, their preferred evacuation route, and their emergency contacts.
2. **Know how to support them in different emergency scenarios.** Know how to warn them if alarms sound, help them evacuate, assist with accessibility issues, communicate their assistive and medical requirements to first responders, and reach their family or emergency contacts. Be prepared to advocate for them, if needed.
3. **Practice together regularly.** Walk the evacuation route together, identify obstacles, and practice at different times of day. Practice helping with medication if needed, communicating their needs to first responders, and contacting their family in emergencies.

Getting Yourself Ready to Support

For Employers:

1. **Understand your legal obligations.** Know that the law requires you to keep employees with disabilities safe, conduct risk assessments, provide accessible emergency plans, and include them in drills. Consult your national occupational health and safety authority and disability rights organizations to ensure compliance.

2. **Establish communication channels with employees with disabilities.** Create safe channels for employees to request accommodations and raise safety concerns. Respond to all requests in writing and on time, and involve employees in designing solutions.
3. **Train building emergency officers and support colleagues.** Ensure building emergency officers know how to create personal evacuation plans for employees with disabilities. Train support colleagues on how to help safely and communicate medical needs to first responders. Make sure training is ongoing and renewed appropriately.
4. **Evaluate and improve workplace accessibility regularly.** Conduct regular safety audits that include accessibility. Check that evacuation routes, alarms, equipment, and refuge areas work for everyone and fix gaps immediately.

For Colleagues:

1. **Take the support role seriously and know their medical and accessibility needs.** Understand that being a support colleague is a responsibility. Know their medical requirements, medication, what happens if they miss a dose, how their assistive devices work, and what accessibility barriers they face.
2. **Know how to communicate their needs to first responders and their family.** Practice explaining their disability, communication needs, medication, and how to help them safely. Keep their emergency card and plan accessible to show first responders quickly and know how to contact their family or emergency contacts.
3. **Attend first aid and preparedness training.** Sign up for first aid classes and emergency preparedness courses offered by your employer, civil protection services, or the Red Cross.

Toolbox for the Guidelines

How to Use This Toolbox

This Toolbox has 3 tools to help you get ready for an emergency. You can print each document. You can keep each document in a place that is easy to reach. You can share them with your friends, family, colleagues and support staff. You can use more than one tool together. Use the tools that work best for you.

What's Inside

1. **Personal Emergency Card Template**
This is a short card. You can keep it in your wallet or bag. You can take it with you when you go out.
2. **Personal Emergency Plan Template**
This is a full plan to help you prepare. The plan is for you. The plan is also for the people you live with. The plan is also for your support network and staff.
3. **Communication Cards**

These cards are ready to use. You can add your own details. The cards help you share your requirements. You can give them to first responders or other people who want to help you.

Personal Emergency Card

This Personal Emergency Card has your key information for emergency staff or other persons who want to support you. In an emergency, you may not be able to say what you need. The card speaks for you. You can carry it with you. It fits in your wallet, your wheelchair bag, or your purse. Keep the card with you at all times.

Print the card or fill it in on a computer. Ask your family or friends to help you if you need it. Fill it in now, before anything happens.

Personal Emergency Card	
IF YOU FOUND THIS CARD I may need your help. Please keep this card private. Only show it to emergency workers, doctors, or nurses.	FOR THE PERSON WHO OWNS THIS CARD Keep this card in 3 places: in your wallet, in your emergency bag, and on the inside of your front door.
1 This Card Belongs to Me	
My name: My address: My phone number:	
2 What You Need to Know About Me	
My disability:	

My health problem:

Things I use to help me (like a wheelchair or walking cane):

My Helper Animal (guide dog or service animal)

My animal's name:

Species:

Do not pet, feed, or play with my animal. My animal is working and trained to help me.

3 How You Can Help Me

How to help me move safely:

How to talk to me:

My Sign Language Helper (interpreter)

Name:

Phone:

4 Where I Will Meet My Support Network

If there is an emergency, I will go to one of these places.

Place 1 — close to my home

Name of place:

Address:

Place 2 — far from my home

Name of place:

Address:

5 Who Can Help Me

Person 1 — lives close to me

Call this person when: There is an emergency. You need someone to come for me fast.

Name:

Phone:

Address:

How I know this person:

Person 2 — lives far from me

Call this person when: You cannot reach Person 1. Or I need a place to stay.

Name:

Phone:

Address:

How I know this person:

Person 3 — knows me well

Call this person when: You want to know what I need. You want to know how to help me.

Name:

Phone:

Address:

How I know this person:

6 Other Important Phone Numbers

My family doctor:

My specialist doctor:

My animal's vet (animal doctor):

Other phone number:

This card was last updated on:

Source: Adapted from Prepare for an Emergency Situation Information Booklet (2025), the

Personal Emergency Plan

This personal emergency plan is a plan you make with the people close to you. These people can be: the people you live with or the people in your support network. You can fill in the plan with your partner, children, parents, neighbours or support staff.

You can share the plan with the people who agreed to help you in an emergency.

They need to know how to help you. Talk about the plan with them. Take a photo of the plan and give it to them.

You can have more than 1 copy of the plan. You can keep 1 copy in your emergency backpack. You can keep 1 copy on your fridge in a waterproof box or in a drawer on your main hallway next to the front door. First responders are trained to look in these places.

Make sure you have a printed copy. This can help you in a power cut. You can also fill it in on a computer. You can ask your family or friends to help you. Fill in the plan now, before an emergency happens. Update the plan every year or when anything changes.

Personal Emergency Plan

FOR THE PERSON THIS PLAN BELONGS TO

Fill in this plan with the people you live with. Share it with your support network. Keep a copy in your emergency bag, in a waterproof box on your fridge, and in a drawer in the

FOR A HELPER FILLING IN THIS PLAN

Ask the person. Listen to the person. Use their words. Write what they need and how they want to be helped.

hallway near the front door. Check the plan once a year.

1 Who Lives Here with Me?

Person 1 — Name:

Phone / Year of birth:

Person 2 — Name:

Phone / Year of birth:

Person 3 — Name:

Phone / Year of birth:

Pets

Pet 1 — Name:

Type / Important information:

Pet 2 — Name:

Type / Important information:

2 How Can You Help Me?

How to help me move safely:

How to talk to me:

Sign language interpreter — Name:

Phone:

My equipment and devices

3 Where We Live and How We Get Out of the Building?

Our address:

Where I keep my emergency plan:

How to get out of my home safely:

What to do if the normal way out is blocked:

4 Where We Meet in an Emergency?

Meeting Place 1 — Close To Home

Name of place:

Address:

Meeting Place 2 — Far From Home

Name of place:

Address:

5 How We Get Information?

How we will share news with each other:

Be careful: some news on WhatsApp or the internet is not true. Ask: Where did this news come from? If you are not sure, do not share it.

6 Who Can Help Me?

Person 1: lives close to me. Call when: There is an emergency. Someone needs to come for me fast.

Name:

Phone:

Address:

Person 2” lives far from me. Call when: You cannot reach Person 1. Or I need a place to stay.

Name:

Phone:

Address:

Person 3: knows me well. Call when: You want to know what I need and how to help me.

Name:

Phone:

Address:

7 Important Phone Numbers

Numbers For Everyone

112 — Emergency services

Family doctor:

Specialist doctor:

Vet for my guide / assistance animal:

My Personal Numbers

Other number 1:

Other number 2:

Other number 3:

Other number 4:

Sign language interpreter:

Insurance / Work / School /
Childcare

Insurance:

Work:

School / Childcare:

8 Important Agreements with the Support Network

Things to think about various situations where you might either require or offer support.

This plan was last updated on:

After you finish this plan: talk about it with your family and support network. Give a copy to each member of your support network. Keep the plan where you can find it fast, in your emergency bag, in a waterproof box on your fridge, or in a drawer in the hallway near the front door.

Communication Cards

Print the cards that fit your situation. You can carry more than 1 card. This is useful if you have more than 1 disability or health condition. If you can, cover them in plastic to keep them safe. Keep the cards in your wallet and in your emergency backpack. You can also make the cards into tags. You can put the tags on a lanyard. You can wear the lanyard around your neck, under your jacket, when you go out.

Show the cards to first responders. You can also show them to other people who want to help you. Each card tells people what they need to know. The card helps them talk to you in a safe way. The card helps them treat you with dignity.

CARD 1

I Am Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- 1 Face me directly. Keep your face visible and well-lit. Do not cover your mouth.
- 2 Write to me on paper or a phone screen. Keep sentences short and simple.
- 3 Do not shout or exaggerate mouth movements. Speak at a normal pace.
- 4 If I use sign language, find an interpreter before decisions are made. Write to me while waiting.

I communicate using:

- Sign language
- Lip-reading
- Writing
- My phone
- Other

Interpreter: _____ | **Phone:** _____

Emergency contact: _____ | **Phone:** _____

Co-occurring conditions: _____

Confidential · My Personal Emergency Card or Plan is in my wallet or backpack.

CARD 2

I Am Deafblind

I cannot hear or see you. Please follow these steps.

- 1** Gently touch my hand or arm to signal your presence. Do not call out or wave.
- 2** To communicate: place your finger on my palm and print capital letters one at a time. Spell your name, your role, and key words: FIRE, SAFE, LEAVE, WAIT.
- 3** Do not separate me from my interpreter or deafblind companion.
- 4** Guide me by offering your arm. Do not grab or push me.

Deafblind companion: _____ | **Phone:** _____

Emergency contact: _____ | **Phone:** _____

Co-occurring conditions: _____

Confidential · My Personal Emergency Card or Plan is in my wallet or backpack.

CARD 3

I Am Blind or Have Low Vision

I can speak and hear you. Let us work together.

- 1 Describe everything in words. Do not say “over there” or “that way.” Say: “Stop, there is an obstacle to your left/ right.”
- 2 To guide me: offer me your bent elbow or shoulder. Do not grab or push me.
- 3 Tell me when we go up/ down the stairs. Tell me when we go up/ down a step. Do not only say there is a step ahead.
- 4 Never separate me from my white cane, guide dog, or phone.
- 5 Describe the new space: exits, walls, seating, toilet. Let me build a mental map before you leave.
- 6 Never walk away without telling me first.

Guide dog name (do not pet or distract — they are working):

Emergency contact:

Phone:

Co-occurring conditions:

Confidential · My Personal Emergency Card or Plan is in my wallet or backpack.

CARD 4

I Have a Speech Disability

I can understand you. Please be patient.

- 1 Give me time to communicate at my own pace. Do not interrupt or finish my sentences.
- 2 Use yes or no questions if open communication is not working.
- 3 Do not remove or switch off my communication device.
- 4 If I cannot communicate at all right now, contact my emergency contact.

I communicate using:

- Writing
- AAC device
- Pictograms
- Gestures
- Other

Emergency contact:

Phone:

Co-occurring conditions:

Confidential · My Personal Emergency Card or Plan is in my wallet or backpack.

CARD 5

I Am Autistic/ I Have Autism

My name: _____

- 1 Reduce sensory overload: lower sirens, take me to a quiet place, avoid sudden movements.
- 2 Give me one instruction at a time. Wait for me to complete it before giving the next.
- 3 If I am not responding to words, use gesture, pointing, or show me what you need me to do.
- 4 Do not restrain me unless there is immediate danger. Let me fidget and stim. It helps me calm down.
- 5 Do not leave me alone. I may wander.

I communicate using:

- Speech
- AAC device
- Pictograms
- Gestures
- Other

Comfort object or calming support:

What triggers strong reactions:

What helps me calm down:

Emergency contact: _____

Phone: _____

Confidential · My Personal Emergency Card or Plan is in my wallet or backpack.

CARD 6

I Have Dementia or a Memory Condition

My name: _____

- 1 Speak calmly and at a normal pace. Not too fast, not too slow. Use short, simple sentences. Repeat as many times as needed.
- 2 Do not argue or correct me. Redirect gently if I am distressed.
- 3 Find my carer or support person as soon as possible.
- 4 Do not leave me alone. I may wander.

Carer or support person: _____

Phone: _____

Emergency contact: _____

Phone: _____

Co-occurring conditions: _____

CARD 7

I Have an Intellectual Disability

Please use simple words and short sentences.

- 1 Use simple words and short sentences. Give me time to understand and respond. Repeat, if needed.
- 2 Ask closed questions, with “yes” or “no” answers.
- 3 Do not assume I understand because I am nodding. Check by asking differently.
- 4 Offer me choices.
- 5 Do not leave me alone. I may wander.
- 6 Do not treat me like a child.

Support person: _____

Phone: _____

Emergency contact: _____

Phone: _____

Co-occurring conditions: _____

CARD 8

I Have a Complex Medical Dependency

I must have access to treatment and specialized medical assistance.

- 1 My medication must travel with me. Do not separate me from it.
- 2 Do not disconnect or move my medical devices without knowing what they do.
- 3 Confirm the receiving location can take care of my requirements.
- 4 Contact my specialist or emergency contact immediately.

My condition and treatment: _____

Device requires power: Yes No

Specialist: _____

Phone: _____

Emergency contact: _____

Phone: _____

CARD 9

I Have Epilepsy or a Seizure Condition

If I am having a seizure, follow these steps.

- 1 Cushion my head. Remove anything dangerous nearby. Turn me onto my side.
- 2 Stay calm. Time the seizure. Most seizures end within one to three minutes.
- 3 Do not hold me down or restrain me. Do not put anything in my mouth.
- 4 Call 112 if the seizure lasts more than five minutes or I do not recover consciousness.

My medication:

Emergency contact:

Phone:

Co-occurring conditions:

Confidential · My Personal Emergency Card or Plan is in my wallet or backpack.

CARD 10

I Am Accompanied by a Guide or Assistance Animal

- 1 My animal is working. Do not pet, feed, or distract them.
- 2 The law allows my animal to accompany me in every public space and transportation.
- 3 Do not separate me from my animal. Their presence is essential to my safety.
- 4 If my animal seems distressed, allow me to calm them. Do not intervene without asking first.
- 5 Do not take my animal without asking first.

Animal name / Species:

ID tag:

Vet name and phone:

Emergency contact:

Phone:

Confidential · My Personal Emergency Card or Plan is in my wallet or backpack.

CARD 11

I Am a Child with a Disability

This card was prepared by my parent or carer. If you have found this card, I may be separated from them.

- 1 Please do not leave me alone. Stay with me until you reach my parent or carer.
- 2 Speak to me calmly and simply. I may be frightened.

3 Find my emergency card or plan. They must be in my backpack.

My name: _____

Date of birth: _____

My address: _____

My disability or condition: _____

How to communicate with me: _____

Parent or carer: _____

Phone: _____

Second emergency contact: _____

Phone: _____

Confidential · My Personal Emergency Card or Plan is in my wallet or backpack.

CARD 12

I Do Not Speak the Local Language

1 Find an interpreter or translation support before decisions requiring my understanding.

2 You can use translation apps on you phone to talk to me.

3 Use gestures, pictures, or pictograms to communicate basic information.

My language: _____

My country of origin: _____

Local support organisation and phone: _____

Translation or interpreter service / app: _____

Emergency contact: _____

Phone: _____

Confidential · My Personal Emergency Card or Plan is in my wallet or backpack.

CARD 13

I Have Diabetes

Signs of low blood sugar: confused, shaky, sweaty, pale, or unresponsive.

1 If I am conscious and can swallow, give me something sweet immediately: juice, sugar, glucose tablets.

2 Do not leave me alone. Stay until I recover or emergency services arrive.

3 If I lose consciousness, do not give anything by mouth. Call 112 immediately. Put me in the safety position (on one side).

4 My insulin or medication must travel with me and may require refrigeration.

Type 1 Type 2 Other

Treatment and dosage:

Doctor or specialist:

Phone:

Emergency contact:

Phone:

Confidential · My Personal Emergency Card or Plan is in my wallet or backpack.

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