

Emergency Preparedness For

# PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR HAVE LOW VISION



If you are a person with limited vision, in addition to the general suggestions provided on the previous pages, you may want to take additional precautions to prepare for an emergency.

### **CANES . . .**

If you use a cane, make sure one is always readily accessible to you immediately following a disaster. Label and keep extra canes in your home, car, workplace or school, and at any other place that you frequent. Store them securely and consistently where they can be easily located.

### **MAKING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR VISION . . .**

- If you have some vision, there are things you can do to help yourself see as well as possible when the lights go out.
- Place security lights in each room in the wall outlets to light paths of travel. Make certain the special lights/timer will turn-on automatically if there is loss of power. There are also nightlights that turn on from dusk to dawn. Depending on the type of device, they may continue to operate for 1 to 6 hours, can be turned off manually, and may be used as a short-lasting flashlight.
- Store high-powered flashlights with wide beams and extra batteries. Flashlights can offer assistance for your mobility and that of someone who might be assisting you, but more importantly, for signaling purposes.
- Whistle. It is tiring to continue to shout at a high enough volume over time. Whistles are critical for signaling purposes.
- If you wear contact lenses, plan to have an alternate pair of contacts last 1- 2 weeks without cleaning or have disposable contact lenses. You may also consider using battery-operated cleaning device to clean contact lenses. Without power, you may not be able to operate the cleaning unit.
- A pair of work gloves, sturdy shoes, and kneepads can offer safety and security in exploring an environment after a disaster.
- Mark your emergency supplies with large print, fluorescent tape, or Braille.

**REMINDER:** Store the above-listed items securely and consistently where they can be easily located, and place them in a plastic bag to prevent corrosion.

## IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS . . .

- Keep an extra folding mobility cane and an extra pair of dark glasses or other optical aids in your emergency supply kit.
- Have a tape recorder with extra batteries.
- Service animals may become frightened, confused, and panicked during and after a disaster. Be prepared to calm your animal and to keep it confined or securely leashed or harnessed. The leash/harness is a very important item for managing a nervous animal. Have extra food, treats, water, favorite toy or blanket, and a leash or harness available.
- In the event that your service animal is unable to assist you, be prepared to use alternative ways to negotiate your environment.
- There may be major disruptions following an earthquake or other disaster, and you may not be able to rely on your usual auditory cues.
- Arrange in advance emergency phone numbers of family, friends, caretakers, and neighbors who can assist in describing damage and obstacles such as fallen trees, blocked sidewalks, debris, or gaping holes that may be present after a disaster.
- Anchor special equipment such as computers, printers, and TVs. Back up important data onto a portable hard drive or flash drive and store it off site.
- Know alternate transit, transportation, and pedestrian routes in your neighborhood and work environments.
- Create and implement your support system, including a reliable designated driver for home, school and work in case you need a ride.
- Request pre-event emergency planning information in accessible formats.