

Emergency Preparedness For

**PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF, DEAF-BLIND,
OR HARD-OF-HEARING**



DEAF, DEAF-BLIND, OR HARD-OF-HEARING . . .

Maintaining and having access to communication is especially critical during times of crises. You will need to plan for communicating clearly with emergency personnel or your support network. You will want to stay current on the latest information regarding the disaster by watching news that is captioned or provides sign language interpreters, notification alerts, the Internet, or other types of communication systems that may be available to you.

STORING HEARING AIDS OR COCHLEAR IMPLANT DEVICES . . .

When not in use, always store your hearing aid(s) or cochlear implant devices in the same, familiar location. That way, you'll be able to find them when you need them during or after an emergency.

- Attach the container for the hearing aid or cochlear implant device(s) to the nightstand or bed frame with Velcro. You can expect that replacing or repairing damaged or missing hearing aids or cochlear implant devices may be difficult or impossible immediately after a major disaster. You may need to wait until there is access to an audiology department with your provider.
- Consider how you will replace your devices if damaged or lost. External parts, if new, may have a warranty from the manufacturer that will replace equipment lost, damaged beyond repair, or stolen, at no cost.
 - In the event your warranty expires, contact the manufacturer to see if they have a service contract. For repair and replacement coverage, check your health insurance plan and your homeowner's insurance policy.
- If you can, store an extra hearing aid or behind-the-ear cochlear implant device with your emergency supplies.
- Carry a back-up battery wherever you go.
- Keep extra flashlights, extra batteries, and consider having camping lanterns in your kits as communication will be more difficult in the dark.
- Consider a battery operated TV that displays closed captions to stay informed during an emergency.
- Have zippered plastic bags to keep devices dry and protected.
- Purchase a drying case for the processor and for your hearing aids.

- In the event there is no power, use the car battery with an inverter (electrical device that converts DC to AC) to power the drying kit. By using an inverter or solar power, you would also be able to charge your mobile phones or other devices.
- Another method of drying is to use rice. You will need a plastic container that seals well, a small cup large enough to store about half a cup of rice and a clean towel. Put the cup of rice on one side of the container and the towel on the other side. Place the device on the towel and close the lid on the container. Leave overnight and the device will be dried.

BATTERIES . . .

- Keep an extra supply of batteries on hand and in your “Go Kit” for your hearing aid or cochlear implant. Rotate them regularly.
- Maintain TTY batteries according to the manufacturer’s operating manual.
- Have a back-up charger for your mobile phone, laptop, and other communication devices. Note that some emergency crank operated radios also have built-in mobile phone chargers.

SMOKE ALARMS AND CARBON MONOXIDE DEVICES . . .

- Install both audible and visual smoke alarms.
- Install both audible and visual Carbon Monoxide Devices.
- Check batteries monthly and change them every 6 months or at least once a year.

COMMUNICATION . . .

- Plan how you can communicate with emergency personnel without your hearing aid(s) or cochlear implant, should it become necessary.
 - Store pens/pencils and paper or small notebooks with your emergency supplies. Include a dark felt tip pen and high contrast paper if that makes it easier to see.
 - Consider carrying and laminating personal communication boards and/or communication cards with pre-printed messages such as:

- “I use American Sign Language (ASL). I need an ASL interpreter.”
 - “If you make announcements, please write them down for me and hand them to me. I cannot hear them.”
 - “I do not write or read English.”
 - “I am allergic to _____.”
- Include Braille Communication Cards if you are deaf-blind. o
- Pre-program your communication devices with messages, important medical information, and instructions on how to assist you.
- Include business cards for personal care attendants (PCA), support service providers (SSP), sign language interpreters (SLI), other service agencies, and any other individuals or organizations that may be able to provide assistance to you.
- Determine which broadcast television stations are usually accessible and which provide continuous news that is captioned. This will allow you to have access to emergency reports, assuming that the power is on.
- Determine if any local television stations will provide sign language interpreters on screen for breaking news and emergency information.
- Have a car charger for communication and mobile devices.
- Develop plans on how you will communicate if your videophone and mobile devices do not work due to a power outage.