

# LIVING WITH PARALYSIS

## Emergency Preparedness for People with Paralysis



CHRISTOPHER & DANA  
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## Emergency Preparedness for People with Paralysis

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Written by Liz Leyden

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p. 31 Franklin Peña [Gutierrez/pexels.com](https://www.gutierrez/pexels.com); p. 42 Roger Brown/[pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com).

### Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation

636 Morris Turnpike, Suite 3A  
Short Hills, NJ 07078  
Phone: 973-379-2690  
Toll-free phone: 800-539-7309  
[ChristopherReeve.org](https://www.ChristopherReeve.org)

## Emergency Preparedness For People With Paralysis

From record-breaking blizzards in upstate New York and devastating wildfires in California to powerful hurricanes off the coast of Florida, natural disasters are increasingly wreaking havoc on communities throughout the United States.

Severe weather poses a particular risk for people living with disabilities as the routines and infrastructure they depend on are dangerously disrupted. Impassable roads can prevent critical supplies such as prescription medicine or caregiving help from arriving. A lack of transportation may thwart the ability to quickly evacuate. Power outages can prove catastrophic for those who depend on ventilators.

It is critical that people living with paralysis plan today for tomorrow's challenges. The chaos and destruction caused by a natural disaster may feel too overwhelming to even imagine—but the reality will be even more terrifying if encountered unprepared. Before a crisis is underway, take time to identify and prepare for the risks likely to affect your community. Knowing what to do, before, during and after an emergency will help keep you independent, healthy, and safe.



## Assess Your Needs

Keep a detailed journal for one week to track the supplies, resources, and routines that are critical to your daily function. Do you use adaptive utensils to eat? Is your wheelchair electricity-dependent? Does a baclofen pump help you manage spasticity? Can you get out of bed on your own if local roads are closed and your caregiver cannot reach you? Chronicle every aspect of your life—big and small, within the home and beyond—and use these notes to create contingency plans for an array of worst-case scenarios.

## Understand Your Risks

Location matters. Whether you live in a seaside town prone to flooding and hurricanes or within a mountain range beset by wildfires, severe weather can instantly upend a carefully managed life. Begin planning for future emergencies with help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Risk Index (<https://hazards.fema.gov/nri>) a searchable map that compiles natural hazard data by region. Once you have identified your local risks, use the disaster-specific tips outlined in the Weather Hazards section of this booklet to understand what to do before, during and after any severe weather events.

If you live in a high-risk region prone to repeated storms, consider purchasing rental or homeowners' insurance to match the risks you face. For example, California residents may benefit from earthquake insurance, while those in the Midwest might consider tornado protection. To manage the costs of persistent floods, contact local government officials to determine whether your community participates in the National Flood Insurance Program or NFIP (<https://www.floodsmart.gov>), managed by FEMA: if so, you may be eligible to purchase federally backed flood insurance.

No matter where you live, or what risks you face, preparing for emergencies now will better protect you and your family down the road.



## PACK A GO BAG

Assume there will be no time to waste when a disaster strikes. Having a bag packed and ready to go helps ensure that you not only reach safety faster but are able to maintain your health and independence in unpredictable circumstances. Suggested items to include:

- Two weeks supply of essential medications
- Change of clothes
- Personal health items including rubber gloves, extra catheter supplies, suppositories, lubricants, baby wipes.
- Adaptive utensils
- Tool kit for wheelchair repair
- Cell phone charger
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Cash (including small bills)
- Local/regional map
- Blanket
- Face mask
- Whistle
- Reeve wallet cards (<https://www.ChristopherReeve.org/cards>) to share with emergency personnel if needed. They feature vital health information about autonomic dysreflexia, deep vein thrombosis, and sepsis.

Evaluate and plan for secondary health needs. For example, individuals with diabetes will need to pack additional essential supplies for evacuation including insulin and a cooling pack, extra syringes or insulin pen and needles, medication, blood glucose monitor, alcohol wipes, lancets, test strips, insulin pump and extra batteries or charger, glucagon injection kit, and emergency low blood sugar supplies such as glucose tabs, gels, fruit snacks and juice boxes.

Keep emergency kits anywhere you spend significant time, including your car or office. Add any additional items that are critical to your daily function: some people may pack a slide board for transfers, while others may need pressure cushions. Label adaptive equipment, including wheelchairs, with your name, contact information and operating instructions using index cards and clear packing tape.

## **Assemble an Emergency Kit for Home**

It is not always possible or safe to leave home during severe weather events. Keep a box filled with any supplies that you (and family members) will need to survive on your own for a week. Suggested items to include:

- One week supply of water (1 gallon per person, per day) and non-perishable food
- One week supply of essential medications and supplies to manage health conditions such as diabetes.
- Personal health items including rubber gloves, extra catheter supplies, suppositories, lubricants, baby wipes.
- Matches
- Manual can opener
- Flashlights for every household member
- First aid kit
- Wrench (to turn off utilities)
- Garbage bags
- Extra batteries and portable power banks
- Cell phone charger
- Face mask, plastic sheeting, and duct tape (in case of shelter-in-place order)
- One week supply of pet food and water (see *Plan for your Pet* section)
- Battery-powered or hand crank NOAA Weather Radio
- Whistle

## ORGANIZE KEY DOCUMENTS

Gather important personal and health records before an emergency arises. Store documents in a waterproof plastic bag, and scan and store copies on a portable thumb drive attached to a key chain. Keep with your go bag and be ready for a quick exit. Suggested items to include:

- Social Security card
- Insurance cards, including Medicaid and Medicare
- Medical records
- Medical prescriptions
- Bank records
- Living will
- Instructions (and serial and model numbers) for medical equipment
- Written contact information for family members, doctors, pharmacists, and support network (in case phone address book is inaccessible)

## PREPARE FOR POWER OUTAGES

Gale-force winds, torrential rains, and snapped tree branches can damage local power grids, leaving communities without electricity for hours or even days at a time. People who live with spinal cord injuries—especially those who require ventilators or can't control their temperature—should always be prepared for a power outage ahead of time. Suggested actions include:

- Identify all frequently used electricity-dependent medical equipment.
- Register with your local utility company if you are a power wheelchair user or dependent on a ventilator: oftentimes, this list will be used to prioritize restoration service.
- Consult with equipment suppliers about backup power options to keep at home, including rechargeable batteries or generators.
- Be aware of how long your extra batteries will last. Test by powering a wheelchair or ventilator using the battery alone until power runs out; the length of the charge can range from 30 minutes to nine hours.
- Test and understand how to operate backup generators ahead of time. Never use a generator inside the house, which can cause carbon monoxide poisoning.

- Contact local emergency planning officials to determine what plans are in place (including priority shelter placement or transportation to local EMS facilities) to assist individuals who require electricity to support durable medical equipment.
- Identify locally accessible power sources such as police and fire departments, hospitals or local hotels and ask if you could use them as a backup for life-saving medical equipment during an emergency.
- If you refrigerate medication, speak with your doctor about how long it will last at room temperature. (During an outage, the refrigerator will keep items cold for four hours.)

Purchasing extra equipment such as batteries or generators can be expensive, but funding may be available in your community. For example, the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers (<https://disabilitydisasteraccess.org/application>) provides disaster preparedness services and resources throughout the state, including back-up batteries and other supplies for consumers who rely on power for life-saving medical equipment. Contact utility providers, independent living centers, and disability-related non-profits in your area to ask what additional supports and programs are available.



## DEVELOP RESPIRATORY RESPONSE

Individuals with respiratory challenges, especially those who depend on ventilators or oxygen, will need to anticipate how a disaster may put their life at risk. Take time to identify critical supplies and plan for specific needs ahead of time.

- Assemble emergency supply kits for the home and any places you spend considerable time.
- Ventilator emergency kit supplies may include extension cords, volt power supply, heated humidifier (if needed,) one gallon of distilled water, extra batteries and charger, circuit tubing, and multiple face/nasal masks.
- Oxygen emergency kit supplies may include a concentrator, volt power supply, extra tank(s), manifold backup, wrench, tank washers, multiple nasal cannulas, tubing extensions, extension connectors
- Nebulizer users will need tubing, tee, mouthpiece, reservoir, and 30-day supply of breathing medicine.
- CPAP/BiPAP breathing machine users will need one gallon of distilled water, face/nasal mask, oxygen enrichment adapter, and extension cords.
- Label all equipment and attach copies of instruction guides in plastic bags.
- Speak with healthcare providers about how best to continue care during and immediately after a disaster. Discuss where you will go if you need hospital care.
- Have healthcare provider contact numbers stored in your phone and written out with your emergency kit.
- Contact local emergency management officials to determine the location of shelters that can support individuals using durable medical equipment.
- Plan for a power outage. (See previous section.) Individuals who use an oxygen concentrator system might opt to use oxygen tanks or generators when the power is out. Know how to operate each ahead of time.

## ESTABLISH A SUPPORT NETWORK

Building strong relationships is a key component in any happy life—but a designated support network of friends, family and neighbors can also be critical for staying safe during an emergency.

Create a support network by asking at least three people (who live close by) if they will be willing to check on you during an emergency and offer help if needed. Additional suggested actions include:

- Program all members' contact information into your phone and print a hard copy out in case of disrupted phone service.
- Provide each member with a printed list of your own emergency contacts, including doctors, pharmacists, and out-of-town family members (who may be able to help coordinate evacuation or aid from outside the storm radius.)
- Don't assume communication will be possible during an emergency: arrange for someone to come to your home to check on you automatically if cell service is out.
- Share a housekey with at least one member of the network. Think about investing in a touchpad keyless door lock so you can give the number to helpers.
- Make sure members are familiar with the layout of your home ahead of time, including where you keep your go bag and other emergency supplies.
- Demonstrate (and have members practice) how to operate any critical equipment, including wheelchairs, ventilators, transfer boards, or evacuation chairs.
- Explain where and how to turn off utilities (gas, water, and electricity) if you will not be able to do so yourself. (Turn off only if you suspect the lines are damaged or leaking, or if local officials instruct you to do so.)
- If you do not drive, create a plan with a support network member who can help you evacuate if needed.



## PLAN FOR CAREGIVING INTERRUPTIONS

Paid caregivers—and family members who perform this role—will likely not be available during extreme weather. Road closures and personal safety concerns may prevent caregivers from reaching you. No matter whether an emergency strands you at home or forces an evacuation, decide now how you will manage without your usual caregiving help.

- Have a plan in place for support network members to assist you if your caregiver is unavailable, whether by helping you reach a family member in a safe location or providing emergency help in your home.
- Practice correct transfer techniques with family and support network members ahead of time.
- Keep your phone charged and accessible beside your bed to call for help.
- If you are concerned that you will need urgent help in the event of an evacuation, place a RESCUE label in a visible location on the front of your home. The labels, designed to speed emergency response times, are available from the Shepherd Center in Atlanta. (<https://www.shepherd.org/education/injury-prevention/rescue>)
- Keep a written care plan detailing your health conditions, specific care needs, and current treatments taped to your refrigerator; the information can help local EMS personnel assist you if you need to call 911.
- Whenever possible, let the weather guide you. If you suspect caregiving will be an issue due to an approaching storm, make plans to stay with family or friends before a dangerous situation emerges.
- If you have evacuated to an emergency shelter during a presidentially declared emergency, you can request personal assistant services. Speak with the shelter manager who will contact local and state officials to arrange the service, which offers basic personal care and also can address more complicated medical needs, including changing dressings on wounds, catheterization and respiratory care.
- Anticipate days and weeks after an emergency when your regular aide may be unavailable. If you work with an agency, find out if they will provide replacement support from staff outside the affected region.

## CREATE EVACUATION PLANS



The first step in a successful evacuation is always having a go bag packed. Next, anticipate the challenges that may arise in chaotic circumstances, whether trying to leave a high-rise apartment building during a power outage or waiting in long lines for gas on your way out of town. Prepare for what you can.

### When Should You Leave?

- If an evacuation order is given, do not delay your departure. It may be tempting to try to ride out a storm in a home that is set up around your function rather than navigate the challenges of an unfamiliar setting. But the risks to your health—and life—are too great. Prepare in advance. Leave early. Stay safe.
- Pay attention to local weather forecasts and the actions of neighboring counties. If your community officials are not responding to an approaching threat, take your safety seriously and err on the side of caution. Don't wait for an official evacuation order if you think your life will be at risk.

- Alert your support network and family members if you evacuate. In addition, call your local police and fire departments, especially if you're on a priority response list. Letting others know you are safe allows emergency personnel to focus on those who urgently need help.

### How Will You Go?

- Always keep your mobility device within reach.
- If you live in an apartment building or work in an office with an elevator, consult with the building manager to create an evacuation plan in case of a power outage. Make sure an evacuation chair is stored in an easily accessible location near the stairs. Designate support network members (including co-workers) to help you. Practice using the evacuation chair down the stairs ahead of time.
- Local transportation and taxi service will likely be suspended or limited before and after a natural disaster. If you do not drive, call local emergency management officials to see what may be available during emergencies for people with disabilities. Or arrange for a ride ahead of time with your support network.
- If you do drive, make sure your car is ready when you need it. Always keep the gas tank half full to avoid long lines at local gas stations. Store emergency supplies within reach, including jumper cables, reflective triangle or bandana to tie to side mirror (to signal for help,) ice scraper, cell phone charger, blanket, map, and a bag of kitty litter or sand (in case tires get stuck.)

### Where Will You Go?

- Call local emergency management officials ahead of time to find out what area community centers, hotels, or organizations will serve as accessible shelters in the event of an emergency: visit ahead of time, if possible, to confirm they are accessible.
- Make a list of other possible locations you can shelter during a storm, including with friends or family, or at an accessible hotel that is out of the storm's range.
- Have a plan for your pet: shelters must take service animals but not necessarily pets. Find an accessible, pet-friendly hotel ahead of time.
- Familiarize yourself with alternative roads throughout your region. Follow any official evacuation routes to avoid potential road closures.
- Program 43362, FEMA's Shelter Locating Text Service, into your phone contacts. If an evacuation order is given and you are unsure where

to go, locate shelters near you by texting SHELTER and your ZIP code to this number. You can also find open shelters using the **FEMA App** (<https://www.fema.gov/about/news-multimedia/mobile-products>) or through a searchable map available on the **American Red Cross** website (<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services/find-an-open-shelter.html>).

Free communication assistance cards that can be shared with first responders are available for free download from the Administration for Community Living website (<https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2018-11/EmergInfoCommDisability.pdf>). The cards allow individuals to describe their specific disability and detail what assistance is needed in the event of an emergency.

If you are separated from a family member during an emergency and unable to locate them later, contact the **American Red Cross** (<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services/contact-and-locate-loved-ones.html>) and request help with an "emergency welfare inquiry." The agency's Reunification Activity workers in the disaster area can assist with locating lost loved ones. Call 1-844-782-9441 for more information.

### PLAN FOR YOUR PET OR SERVICE DOG



Protect your pet during a disaster by planning ahead. All animals should wear collars and tags with up-to-date name and owner contact information. Be ready for the worst-case scenario: include your contact information on your pet's crate or carrier and carry a photo of your pet in case you are separated during evacuation.

#### Pack an emergency evacuation kit for your pet, including:

- Two weeks' supply of water and food (dry or canned) in an airtight container. (Make sure to replace this supply every six months to prevent spoilage)
- Water dish, food bowl and can opener, if needed



- Extra leash
- Blankets
- Plastic bags for cleanup
- Crate with liners
- A week's supply of medication
- Pet first aid kit for injuries sustained during evacuation
- Emergency documents, including veterinarian contact information, medical and vaccination records, and copy of local license. These may be required for entry to shelters. Store in waterproof container or plastic bag.

Emergency shelters must admit service animals, but pets might not be allowed. Identify accessible hotels or motels beyond the storm radius where you will be able to stay with your pet during an emergency. Visit websites such as BringFido (<https://www.bringfido.com>) or the American Kennel Club (<https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/home-living/a-guide-to-pet-friendly-hotel-chains-in-the-united-states>), to find pet-friendly national hotel chains and properties near you.

## CONNECT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY



While FEMA directs disaster relief on a national level, local government agencies will be the first to respond during any severe weather events.

Find out how emergency alerts are delivered to residents in your community. Many cities, including New Orleans (<https://ready.nola.gov/stay-connected/emergency-alerts>), Los Angeles (<https://emergency.lacity.org/alerts/notifyla>), and New York (<https://www.nyc.gov/site/em/resources/notify-nyc-app.page>), use automated emergency notification systems (weather-

related and otherwise) to provide updates via phone calls, text or email. Sign up for local alerts.

Call your community's police and fire departments to see if they maintain a registry for disaster response. Let them know if you are dependent on life-support devices or have mobility challenges that will require help

during an evacuation. Visit the fire station (three days in a row to meet all personnel) and demonstrate how to use your wheelchair. Share your evacuation plan and ask if they have any additional suggestions.

Municipalities and state agencies may also offer similar registries for people with disabilities that are designed to increase assistance and response during emergencies. In New Jersey, this service is called Register Ready (<https://www13.state.nj.us/SpecialNeeds/Signin?ReturnUrl=%2fSpecialNeeds%2f>) and is available to residents with disabilities or access and functional needs. Though natural disasters can upend even the best laid plans, these registries can help determine priority status for evacuations, shelters, wellness checks, power restoration, and water shutdowns. Call your local emergency management department to see what may be available near you.

Familiarize yourself with local disability related non-profit organizations that may provide support and resources during a disaster. A good place to start is with your local Center for Independent Living: locate the center near you by visiting <https://www.ilru.org>.

## Stay Informed

Being prepared for an emergency requires paying attention. Before, during and after natural disasters, it's important to know where to find accurate, up-to-the-moment weather alerts and public safety information. Stay informed using a variety of government and media resources to help you prepare and stay safe.

- Download the FEMA app (<https://www.fema.gov/about/news-multimedia/mobile-products#shelter>) or use its text messaging service to receive real-time alerts from the National Weather Service (<https://www.weather.gov>) and find emergency shelters and disaster recovery centers in your area.
- Purchase a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio ([https://www.weather.gov/nwr&ln\\_desc=NOAA+Weather+Radio](https://www.weather.gov/nwr&ln_desc=NOAA+Weather+Radio)). This battery-operated radio receiver broadcasts around-the-clock weather reports and emergency alerts from the nearest National Weather Service office. During severe weather events, the network coordinates with federal, state and local officials to provide warnings and post-event information. You can buy these receivers at electronics and sporting goods stores, marina supply shops, and online. Be sure the radio features a "Public Alert" or

NOAA NWR logo to ensure it meets technical requirements to receive the broadcasts.

- Read local newspapers and watch nightly news and weather reports regularly: follow 10-day forecasts to avoid being caught off guard.
- Monitor social media before, during and after any storm. Weather alerts, road closures, and evacuation information can be found on the official Twitter accounts of the National Weather Service ([https://twitter.com/NWS?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor](https://twitter.com/NWS?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor)) and regional organizations and government agencies, including newspapers, television stations, mayor's offices, state police and fire departments, utility providers, governor's offices, and the state Department of Transportation.
- As emergencies develop, the Red Cross will likely be on the ground providing resources and operating emergency shelters. Locate open shelters in your region through a searchable map on its website ([https://maps.redcross.org/website/maps/ARC\\_Shelters.html](https://maps.redcross.org/website/maps/ARC_Shelters.html)), or by calling **1-800-RED-CROSS**. All Red Cross shelters are accessible, and requests for specific needs and assistive equipment or supplies can be made on site.
- Follow regional Red Cross Twitter accounts to learn about distribution sites for emergency supplies and shelters.

### Advocate for Access

Emergency preparedness planning and response should always incorporate input from residents living with disabilities. Before a disaster strikes, get involved with efforts in your community to create plans that are not only effective, but inclusive.

- Contact your local emergency management office to determine if there is a designated disability coordinator within the department. If not, lobby the local council or mayor's office for the creation of this position.
- Some communities may have emergency planning committees comprised of both government agencies and non-profit organizations. If there are no members on the committee with mobility challenges, volunteer to join yourself.
- Determine how the needs of people with disabilities are specifically addressed in emergency plans, including notification alerts, evacuation mandates, emergency transportation, and on-site access to medications,

refrigeration, and back-up power at designated shelters.

- Help spotlight transportation needs: Will there be accessible transportation (school buses or transit buses with lifts) to assist people who use wheelchairs or scooters in the event of an evacuation.
- If it does not already exist, suggest the creation of a voluntary, confidential registry of persons with disabilities to be used by first responders in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- Meet with local first responders to ensure that they have equipment to assist people with mobility challenges, such as transfer slings and evacuation chairs that may be needed in an emergency.
- Work with local emergency preparedness committees or non-profit organizations to organize training that educates first responders about disabilities and emergency-related responses, including lifting techniques, backboard transfers and how to assist service animals.
- Ask state and local government officials to train emergency shelter staff and volunteers to help persons with disabilities with daily living activities such as wheelchair transfers.
- At work, join the office emergency preparedness committee or become a fire warden: having a person with paralysis involved in planning efforts helps ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are incorporated into any evacuation plans.

### LIZ TRESTON: SURVIVOR ON A MISSION



*As Superstorm Sandy churned toward the beach beside her Long Island home, Liz Treston went outside to look around. It was the first high tide, and the wind was strong, but Treston, who lives with a C6 complete spinal cord injury, could easily move around in her power wheelchair.*

*"I thought, 'Ok, this is nothing,'" she says. "We can still walk around. We're good."*

*Like most of her neighbors, Treston had decided not to evacuate despite the call to do so from local officials. A year earlier, they'd left home for Hurricane Irene only to return to minimal damage. They assumed that Sandy—not even classified as a hurricane at that point—would be the same. But that night, as winds rocked the house and water rushed through the basement door, Treston realized her mistake. She grabbed a pen and wrote her Social Security number on her arm, just in case.*

*Treston survived—but her life was upended. Over the next few chaotic weeks, she struggled to find a place to stay and to gather the supplies she needed for daily life, including medication and catheters. Her new adaptive van was destroyed, forcing her at one point to power her wheelchair along a busy road with her service dog beside her.*

*"If you're not prepared, you have to be a survivor and a MacGyver at the same time," she said. "But why go through all that anxiety and stress if you don't have to?"*

*Treston soon became a fierce advocate for emergency preparedness. She helped found the Long Beach Community Organizations Active in Disasters (<https://www.facebook.com/LBCOAD>) and eventually was elected to the Long Beach, N.Y. City Council, where she continues to spotlight the need for accessible services and inclusion in emergency planning efforts.*

*As she works to strengthen community response, Treston urges people with disabilities to immediately build their own plans. Make lists of daily needs. Gather extra supplies. Know where to go and what local organizations to contact for help.*

*"The emergency management people will tell you: 'Plan for a disaster during a blue-sky moment,'" she says. "It's true. Don't wait till it's cold and the wind is blowing. Start the process now."*

*Once you're ready, she says, don't make the same mistake she did: evacuate when the time comes.*

*"The first thing I tell people is 'You've got to get out,'" Treston says. "Will evacuating be 100 percent perfect? No. Will you have some comfort at 50 percent? Yes. And that will get you to the next day."*

With your go bag packed and home emergency kit ready, you've taken critical steps to stay safe during severe weather events. Now, understand how to best communicate during a storm and prepare for the specific hazards that affect your region.

### Communication Tips

- A surge of calls can overwhelm communication networks in an emergency. Texting may be the fastest way to reach family and friends as it requires fewer network resources: make sure to activate dictation features on your phone and tablets ahead of time.
- Limit phone calls to keep networks free for emergency communications.
- If you must make a call and encounter a busy signal, hang up and wait 10 seconds before redialing to limit network congestion.
- If the power goes out, conserve cell phone batteries by deleting apps not in use, reducing screen brightness and setting the phone to airplane mode.
- If you have a landline in your home and are evacuated, forward calls to your cell phone.

### Weather Hazards

Be ready for the specific natural hazards that can affect your community.

### FLOODS

Flooding is a year-round threat to communities across the United States, causing more deaths than any weather-related hazard besides excessive heat. Flash floods are especially dangerous: sudden snowmelt and heavy rainfall occurring in a short period of time can not only cause water to rise as high as 30 feet, but also trigger rock and mudslides.

#### Before:

- Clear drains and gutters of debris and leaves.
- Install a sump pump in the basement.
- Consider purchasing flood insurance.
- Move valuable and sentimental possessions to highest floors.

**During:**

- Never drive through flood waters. Six inches of water is strong enough to knock a person over, one foot is enough to sweep away a car.
- Do not drive on bridges over fast moving water.
- Follow local evacuation orders.
- If trapped at home, evacuate to the highest level that you are able to access.

**After:**

- Do not return home until local authorities deem the area safe.
- Tune in to local news stations to make sure water is safe to cook with or drink.
- Do not touch standing water which may contain sewage, chemicals, or sharp objects.
- After returning home, check the house for snakes or other animals.
- Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or in standing water to avoid electrocution.

## EARTHQUAKES

Earthquakes, triggered by rocks moving deep underground, occur thousands of times each year. While earthquakes can occur anywhere, Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Washington, and the Mississippi River Valley face the highest risk.

**Before:**

- Most injuries and deaths caused by earthquakes are due to falling objects. Keep heavy pictures and mirrors away from the bed. Move heavy objects onto low shelves. Secure heavy furniture and shelves to wall studs. Install latches on cabinets to prevent objects from flying out at high speeds.
- Store oxygen tanks in a container that is secured to wall and away from flammable objects.
- Identify safe spots to shelter in every room, including under a sturdy table or desk or beside an interior wall.
- Know the warning signs that signal an impending earthquake: a sudden jolt followed by shaking or an increasingly loud rumbling.

**During:**

- Quickly move to designated safe spots away from anything that can fall or shatter, including heavy furniture, lamps, mirrors and glass

windows. Cover your head with your arms and hold on.

- If you are not able to leave your wheelchair, move to an interior wall and lock the wheels. Put a pillow or book over your head to protect it from falling objects. Bend over in your chair and hold on till shaking subsides.
- Do not shelter in a doorway.

**After:**

- Be alert to damaged utility lines, especially gas. If you smell it, open all the windows and doors, and leave immediately. Once you are a safe distance away, call 911.
- Stay away from damaged areas and buildings; aftershocks and further collapse is possible.
- If you live near the ocean, be prepared in case a tsunami develops in the earthquake's wake. (See below.)

## TSUNAMIS

A surge of violent ocean waves known as a tsunami can be triggered by an earthquake. Coastal communities in Alaska, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are at the greatest risk for tsunamis.

**Before:**

- Know where to access emergency alerts. Tsunami warnings may be broadcast on local radio and television stations, NOAA Weather Radio Stations, or via air sirens and automatic telephone alerts.
- Consider earthquake and/or flood insurance policies.
- Identify an accessible shelter or hotel about 100 feet above sea level or at least one mile inland.
- Know how to spot tsunami warning signs including: an earthquake that causes more than 20 seconds of very strong ground shaking; a loud roar coming from the ocean; and the sight of exposed sea floor or a sudden wall of water.

**During:**

- Evacuate immediately if the order is given.
- If driving toward safety, avoid fallen powerlines and never drive through floodwaters.
- If at home, take shelter under a table, cover your head, and hold on. Otherwise, lock wheelchair wheels. Put a pillow or book over your head to protect it from falling objects. Bend over in your chair and hold on

till shaking subsides.

- Stay away from windows, the fireplace, and outer walls. Do not stay in a doorway or under a hanging light fixture.
- If outside, move quickly to higher ground. Find open spaces; avoid buildings and utility poles.
- Be ready for aftershocks.

#### **After:**

- Do not drive through flooded areas.
- Avoid damaged buildings.

## **HURRICANES**

Hurricanes are tropical storms with wind speeds of at least 74 miles per hour. While these storms pose a significant threat to coastal communities, they can also cause torrential rains and severe flooding hundreds of miles inland.

#### **Before:**

- Be aware of your risk: Pacific Hurricane Season is May 15-November 30; Atlantic Hurricane Season is June 1-November 30.
- Make sure the interior of your house or apartment is secure to prevent injuries from falling debris. Have family members or friends fasten heavy picture frames and mirrors away from beds. Move heavy objects to low shelves. Secure shelves to wall studs.
- Familiarize yourself with your evacuation route.
- Prepare for possible floods.

#### **During:**

- Evacuate immediately if the order is given.
- If you are home, shelter in a windowless room, or away from large furniture or objects that can fall on you.
- If you are trapped inside and water enters your home, go to the highest level of building you can access while waiting for help.

## **WILDFIRES**

Wildfires may begin in natural areas like forests and prairies but can quickly become a danger to residential communities. Hazardous air conditions and emergency evacuation are likely. Sudden power outages may also occur as public utilities proactively turn off regional grids



to lower the risk of power lines igniting. Flood risks will also increase immediately after wildfires as the scorched landscape will no longer be able to absorb water. Individuals with paralysis should be prepared for all possible scenarios.

#### **Before:**

- Identify a safe space in your home that can be closed off from the outside, such as a bathroom.
- If you have secondary conditions affecting your lungs, set up a portable air purifier to help keep the room clean even if it's smoky in the surrounding area.
- Create fire resistant zones around the property. Store wood piles on gravel or in an enclosed shed at least 30 feet away from the house. Keep the yard free of mulch, leaf debris, and pine needles.
- Contact local utility companies and government agencies to find out how residents will be alerted to a public power shutdown but be aware that advance notice may not always be given.
- Know your evacuation routes ahead of time in case you need to leave quickly.

#### **During:**

- Close all windows and doors. If you are trapped, call 911.
- Turn on lights to help rescuers find you.
- Wear an N95 mask to limit smoke inhalation.

- Move to a windowless, interior room.
- If possible, get out of your wheelchair and onto the floor. Smoke rises, and the best air for breathing will be down low.

#### After:

- Don't touch fallen powerlines.
- Wear rubber gloves and dust mask during cleanup. Ash from wildfire may irritate the skin, nose, and throat.
- Don't use leaf blowers or shop vacuums to clean up ash, which can blow small particles into the air. Sweep up ash carefully, place in a plastic garbage bag, and throw out.
- Wash service animals and/or pets to remove residual ash on fur and skin.

### EXTREME HEAT

Extreme heat, long a risk for western states, is increasingly an issue throughout the southern half of the country, including Texas, Arizona and Florida. Extreme heat can pose a particular risk for people who have difficulty regulating body temperature due to spinal cord injury.

#### Before:

- Call local emergency management officials to determine the locations of community cooling centers; visit ahead of time to make sure they are accessible.
- Identify public spaces, such as big box stores with wide aisles, where you can safely cool off during heat waves.
- Install shades or curtains to shield the sun on hot days, add weather stripping to doors and windows and install window air conditioners. (Individuals who receive benefits such as Social Security Disability Insurance may be automatically eligible for the federally funded Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (<https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/623>), which provides support for energy-related home repairs, including weatherization.)

#### During:

- Visit local cooling centers and public spaces with air conditioning.
- Stay hydrated. Always carry water, along with spritz bottles and towels. Spray or apply damp towels to the skin to help cool off. Keep extra water in the car or travel bag.
- Wear wide brimmed hats and lightweight, wicking clothing.

- Pay attention to wheelchairs and mobility equipment which can become extremely hot when left in the sun. Overheated equipment can burn the skin of individuals who brush up against hot armrests and seats or place bare feet on a metal footrest.
- When leaving a wheelchair outdoors, place it in a shady spot and cover it with a towel to prevent overheating.
- Be aware of hot car interiors; open windows or run air-conditioning for a couple minutes before use when possible. Do not sit for long in a car, or leave an animal in the car, during periods of extreme heat.
- Monitor skin for sunburn, which can cause pressure injuries and trigger autonomic dysreflexia, a life-threatening medical emergency that affects people with spinal cord injuries at the T6 level or higher.
- Recognize signs of heat exhaustion: heavy sweating, muscle cramps, vomiting, fatigue, dizziness, heat stroke including temp above 103 degrees, red, hot and dry skin that is not sweaty, rapid pulse, dizziness, and confusion. If symptoms emerge, seek medical attention immediately.



### WINTER WEATHER

Hazardous winter weather regularly creates dangerous conditions for communities in northern states, and across the Midwest, and in mountain ranges throughout the western U.S. Blizzards and ice storms can cause road closures, disrupt delivery and supply chains, and lead to

days without power or phone service. Extreme cold also poses a risk to people who have difficulty regulating body temperature due to spinal cord injury.

#### **Before:**

- Refuel home heating sources (including oil and propane) before you are empty. Fuel carriers may not reach you for days after a winter storm.
- Make sure to have a plan in place ahead of time for shoveling exit paths, driveway, and sidewalks; ask family and friends for help or hire a professional service.
- Keep a first aid kit and emergency supplies in the car in case you get stranded on the road during a storm. Include blankets, flares, jumper cables, sand, a flashlight, warm clothes, blankets, bottled water, non-perishable snacks, and a red cloth to tie to antenna or door to signal rescuers.

#### **During:**

- If you are low on home heating fuel (oil and propane) conserve heat by lowering the thermostat.
- Conserve heat by closing off unused rooms and laying rolled up towels in doorway cracks.
- Eat and drink to maintain energy levels. Avoid alcohol and caffeine to lower risk of dehydration and hypothermia.
- If leaving the house, wear warm layers and always keep hands and head covered. Signs and symptoms of frostbite and hypothermia may be harder to detect without sensation in the extremities.
- If you are trapped in a car during a storm, stay in the vehicle. Run the motor about 10 minutes each hour for heat and open the window a little for fresh air to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

### **TORNADOES**

Tornadoes can be triggered by thunderstorms, tropical storms, or hurricanes. The funnel-shaped cloud, containing violently spinning air, can leave a path of devastation a mile wide and 50 miles long. Tornadoes are most common in the Great Plains, but occur throughout the U.S.

#### **Before:**

- Identify a safe space to take shelter. If the basement is not accessible, plan to use a windowless room, such as a bathroom



or closet, on the lowest possible level of the home.

- Familiarize yourself with tornado warning signs, including a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud near a thunderstorm, a loud roar or a sudden silence within the storm, and/or dark or greenish skies.

#### **During:**

- If you are home, shelter in the basement, if possible, or in a windowless room. Lock wheelchair wheels.
- If you are in a car, do not stop under an overpass or bridge. Instead, find a low, flat location.
- No matter where you are, cover your head and neck with your arms, or a book or blanket, to protect it from flying objects.

#### **After:**

- Avoid fallen powerlines.
- Travel with caution. Roads may be closed due to damage, and even after power is restored, traffic signals may not be immediately working.

### **CHEMICAL EMERGENCY**

Industrial accidents, or an event such as a train derailment, may require individuals to shelter in place. If local officials give this order, immediately:

- Shut all windows and doors.
- Seal doors with towels or blankets.
- Close the damper in the fireplace.

- Turn off the air conditioning and HVAC systems.
- Shelter in an interior room without windows.
- Carry cell phone, charger and/or battery powered radio.
- Monitor local media and radio alerts for updates: do not go outside until authorities announce it is safe to do so.

## SUPPORTING EDUCATION AND ACTION

Since 2014, the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation Quality of Life Grants Program has awarded more than \$200,000 to organizations across the country working to ensure that the needs of people with paralysis are met during disasters.

In Utica, New York, **the Resource Center for Independent Living** (<https://www.rcil.com>) used its grant to create an online resource center to help community members and caregivers identify and prepare for emergencies. In Puerto Rico, **Movimiento para el Alcance de Vida Independiente** (<https://mavi-pr.org>) conducted extensive trainings for organizations working with people with disabilities to strengthen preparedness and response before, during and after a disaster. And in Berkeley, California, **Easy Does It Emergency Services** (<https://easydoesitservices.org>) visited families and caregivers to help prepare and earthquake-proof homes.

*“The Reeve Foundation is incredibly proud to be the only national foundation providing disaster preparedness funding aimed specifically at ensuring the safety of people living with paralysis,” says program director Mark Bogosian. “The work done by our grantees has helped thousands of families prepare for emergencies and also provided support for local emergency management officials to better understand the needs of people with disabilities, leading to a more effective and inclusive community response.”*

**The Quality of Life Grants Program** (<https://www.ChristopherReeve.org/get-support/grants-for-non-profits/program-overview>) offers more than 25 funding areas ranging from emergency preparedness initiatives and adaptive sports programs to respite caregiving services for family members and caregivers of people living with paralysis. For more information on the grant application process, visit the **Reeve Foundation website** (<https://www.ChristopherReeve.org/get-support/grants-for-non-profits/application-process>).

## AFTER A DISASTER: WHAT COMES NEXT

### Returning Home

If you have evacuated, do not return home until local authorities announce that it is safe to do so. Arrive during the daytime when you can more easily assess damage and avoid hazards, especially if the power is out. If you hear any shifting or strange noises in your home, leave immediately: the building or roof might be in danger of collapsing. If you smell gas upon return, leave immediately. Call the fire department or the utility company for an emergency inspection and don't return until the property has been assessed and deemed safe.

If your power remains out, spend your days in heated (or air-conditioned) emergency shelters. Do not use generators or camp stoves inside your home. Carbon monoxide poisoning is one of the leading causes of death after storms in areas experiencing power outages.

### Documenting Damage



Take photos of property and personal items before cleaning up. You will need these for insurance claims and FEMA assistance.

**Track losses:** Dictate or type a running list of personal property losses on your phone; keep adding items as you think of them. Itemized lists (with replacement costs) are critical for insurance reimbursement. Losses that are caused by a federally declared disaster that are

not covered by insurance may be deducted on your federal income tax return. (You may not deduct casualty and theft losses covered by insurance.)

**Keep receipts:** Most homeowners insurance will activate ‘loss of use’ coverage in the event of damage due to a natural disaster. Items and expenses that need to be replaced when a home is not livable, including groceries, clothing, short-term rentals, are typically covered. Keep all receipts in case your insurance plan reimburses you after the fact. Check with insurance to see if you have this coverage and make sure it is applied if so.



## Cleaning Up

Recovery from natural disasters can take weeks, months or even years. The first step toward resuming regular life is tackling the cleanup, which may range from collecting wildfire ash and broken glass to remediating black mold in the basement. Suggestions for safe clean-up include:

- Always wear protective gear, including rubber gloves, safety goggles and dust masks.
- Open doors and windows and use industrial fans to dry wet areas.
- If you have asthma or other health conditions affecting your lungs, do not enter buildings where mold can be seen or smelled.
- Items that can't be dried quickly, including mattresses, rugs, upholstered furniture, books, and paper products, should be thrown out.
- If sewage or flood waters have contaminated drywall and/or insulation, remove the damaged sections as soon as possible.
- Scrub all wet items and surfaces with hot water and laundry or dish detergent.
- Repair leaks in roofs, walls, or plumbing as soon as possible.
- If using bleach to clean, always open windows and doors first.
- Check with your local municipality to see if there is a plan in place for debris removal, including damaged personal items and fallen branches.
- If you will be unable to return to your home for a longer period due to extensive damage, pause service on your utilities (electricity and gas) and newspaper delivery. Open a post office box and forward mail.

## Managing Emotions

Natural disasters leave devastated communities and ravaged landscapes in their wake, and the emotional toll on individual lives can be overwhelming. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's multi-lingual Disaster Distress Helpline (<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline>) provides counseling and support before, during and after disasters. Individuals experiencing emotional distress related to disasters can call 1-800-985-5990 at any time of day for support and referrals to local disaster-related resources and crisis centers.



## APPLYING FOR FEMA DISASTER ASSISTANCE

People who have been affected by a natural disaster, and who do not have adequate insurance coverage, can apply for financial assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA.) FEMA disaster assistance is not taxable and does not affect other government benefits, including Social Security Insurance, Medicaid, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

### FEMA Assistance May be Available for:

- Housing, ranging from temporary shelter in hotels and rental properties to home replacement, if home is inaccessible, unsafe, or destroyed due to storm damage.
- Repairs related to hazard mitigation, including elevating water heaters or furnaces, and moving electrical panels to avoid future flood damage.
- Damaged essential items, including clothing, wheelchairs and other mobility devices, durable medical equipment, medications, and vehicles.
- Increased child-care expenses, and medical and dental expenses caused by injuries sustained during the disaster.

Apply for the FEMA Individual and Households Program (<https://www.fema.gov/assistance/individual/program>) in person at a Disaster Recovery Center (text DRC and your zip code to 43362 for a nearby location,) online at DisasterAssistance.gov (<https://www.disasterassistance.gov>) or by calling 1-800-621-3362 (TTY 1-800-462-7585.)

It is critical for people with paralysis to answer YES to all relevant disability-related questions on the registration form.

When you respond yes, you will be asked to describe what you will need throughout the recovery process, ranging from replacing a damaged wheelchair or adaptive van to help with daily living needs caused by interrupted caregiving.

If possible, watch the instructional FEMA video (available on its YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGi1h1R2CDI>) before you fill out your application. And, before submitting the form, double check that you have answered yes to all disability-related questions. If you register by phone, ask that the representative read back your answers at the end of the call to make sure they have been accurately recorded.

If you receive FEMA assistance, keep all receipts for purchases and expenses for at least three years in case of future audits.

### **Strengthening Disaster Response for People with Disabilities**

*Sherman Gillums, Jr. understands that people would rather not think about disasters. Who wants to ruin their day imagining a worst-case scenario that hasn't yet arrived?*

*"But you've got to do it," he says. "I compare it to life insurance. The worst time to talk about life insurance is right before a loved one is dying. You've got to do it when everyone is clear-headed and has time to think through the details. And it's the same thing with emergency preparedness."*

*As Disability Coordinator and Director of the Office of Disability Integration and Coordination at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Gillums is working to not only ensure that FEMA supports people with disabilities in the event of a disaster, but that the community itself is ready. Collaborating with disability organizations and state, local, tribal and territorial partners, Gillums encourages people to be proactive. Pack a go bag. Make a plan with friends and family members. Identify evacuation routes and connect with local emergency management officials. Sign up for mobile alerts to stay apprised about severe weather.*

*"How do we best prepare people for the worst?" he says. "We do that by empowering people with the information they need to reduce as much uncertainty as possible."*

*Gillums' efforts are informed by his own experience. In 2007 — five years after he sustained a C6-C7 spinal cord injury in a car accident — wildfires came dangerously close to his San Diego home. "I could taste the soot in the air," he says.*

*But he was both unprepared and unwilling to evacuate, skeptical that he would get the help he needed at an emergency shelter.*

*"I was concerned I'd be treated like a burden because of my unique needs," he says.*

*Gillums was lucky, but the experience has shaped his approach at FEMA.*

*"I began to think, 'How do I think backward to that decision point to encourage somebody to make a different decision than*



*I did," he says. "That's the key to my approach for FEMA's Disability Integration preparedness efforts."*

*Along with extensive outreach, Gillums also incorporates input from people with disabilities into FEMA's planning, mitigation and response. Community feedback, he says, is critical to improving post-disaster outcomes, from assessing the effectiveness of alert systems to helping FEMA's on-the-ground disability integration advisors provide local emergency managers with a comprehensive*

*understanding of how to best support individuals in shelters. "The planning process needs to include people with disabilities, so everyone can understand the ways that the system will serve them," Gillums says. "So, that no one feels defeated before they even leave home. The idea is to help people prepare and have faith in the system."*

**Find emergency preparedness resources at [ready.gov/disability](https://www.fema.gov/disability).**

### **Operation Blue Roof**

Immediate and free assistance to repair damaged roofs may be available after a disaster. Operation Blue Roof (<https://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Emergency-Operations/Blue-Roof-Information>), overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in partnership with FEMA, provides emergency fiber-reinforced sheeting to roofs damaged by natural disasters, allowing homeowners and renters to remain at home until permanent repairs can be made.

To qualify for the service, the home must be a primary residence and the roof cannot be more than 50 percent damaged. Eligibility to determine whether the tarping can be attached to metal roofs and mobile homes will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

To apply for Operation Blue Roof call **1-888-ROOF-BLU (1-888-766-3258)**

## APPEALING FEMA DECISIONS

If you have applied for FEMA assistance and received notice that your request has been denied or your application is incomplete, you have the right to appeal (<https://www.fema.gov/assistance/individual/after-applying/appeals>).

First, determine why your application was denied. A list of denial codes can be found in “Help After a Disaster - Applicant’s Guide to the Individuals and Households Program” ([https://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/process/help\\_after\\_disaster\\_english.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/process/help_after_disaster_english.pdf)) on FEMA’s website; see section on page 11, “If you are not eligible for help.”

An appeal must be submitted in writing within 60 days of receiving the decision. The National Disaster Legal Aid Resource Center (<https://www.disasterlegalaid.org/femaappeals>) provides a free online template to help individuals create an appeal letter. When appealing a decision, include relevant supporting documents, such as contractor estimates and denial letters from insurance companies.

### **Mail Written Appeals to:**

FEMA - Individuals & Households Program  
National Processing Service Center  
P.O. Box 10055  
Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055

Or fax to:

1-800-827-8112

Attention: FEMA - Individuals & Households Program

### **Legal Services**

Survivors of federally declared disasters may be eligible for free legal services through FEMA’s Disaster Legal Services Program (<https://www.disasterassistance.gov/get-assistance/forms-of-assistance/4464>).

The American Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Division ([https://www.americanbar.org/groups/young\\_lawyers/projects/disaster-legal-services](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/young_lawyers/projects/disaster-legal-services)), in cooperation with FEMA, provides pro-bono lawyers — who are not FEMA employees and do not share information with FEMA — to assist with a wide range of issues that impact disaster survivors, including insurance claims for medical bills, eviction issues, home repair contracts, and lost property, and FEMA appeals. For more information, or to apply for help, call 1-800-621-3362.

Additional legal resources to assist people affected by disasters who cannot afford a lawyer may be found through the National Disaster Legal Aid Resource Center (<https://www.disasterlegalaid.org/legalhelp>), a non-profit organization launched after Hurricane Katrina, and Law Help (<https://www.lawhelp.org/find-help>), a program that provides referrals to nonprofit legal aid organizations throughout the country, free legal rights resources, court forms and self-advocacy tools.

## FRAUD ALERT

People struggling to navigate devastating loss and unwieldy cleanups may be especially vulnerable to fraud, financial scams, and identity theft. Suggested tips to avoid scams:

### **Protect Yourself — Verify Identity**

- FEMA representatives will ask for personal information when you apply for assistance, including bank account details and Social Security number. However, you should never give out any personal information to anyone until you have confirmed that you are speaking with a government official.
- If a person knocks on your door claiming to be from a government agency, double check their identity. Simply wearing a FEMA jacket or shirt is not proof of employment. Agents in the field are required to carry official identification and are never allowed to request or accept money. If you receive a telephone call from someone who claims to be working for the government, hang up and call the official agency number listed on its website to confirm their identity.
- FEMA staff will not contact you unless you have called the agency for help or applied for aid.
- Do not give out your FEMA registration number; inspectors working with FEMA will already have a record of it, and your Social Security number and banking information.
- Be aware of individuals who claim their services are linked to federal aid agencies; FEMA does not endorse individual contractors.
- All U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employees who do assessments for Operation Blue Roof will carry U.S. government identification cards. Contractors will have a copy of a signed Right of Entry form to access the property. If these documents cannot be presented, do not allow entry.
- There is never a fee to apply for aid from FEMA or Operation Blue Roof.

## Beware of Fake Charities and Insurance Scams

- Don't click on links in suspicious or unsolicited emails or texts. Before donating to any unfamiliar charity, confirm the donation link through the official website or by calling the organization directly.
- If you receive a call from someone claiming to handle your insurance claim, or from a contractor claiming to work with your insurance company, hang up and call the company directly to confirm their identity.

## Report Price Gouging

It is illegal to hoard or sell essential supplies, including respirators or ventilators, at higher prices after a disaster. (Higher prices are defined as 10% or more of what the price would have been a month before the emergency.) If you believe you are the victim of price gouging, report this or any suspected fraud to the National Center for Disaster Fraud at 866-720-5721 or online at <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

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**Sources:** Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA,) FEMA Office of Disability and Integration, [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov), National Weather Service, National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration, Government of Canada, City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Federal Communications Commission, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Americans with Disabilities Act National Network, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Department of Justice, National Center for Disaster Fraud, Administration for Community Living, Muscular Dystrophy Association, JDRF, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, No Person Left Behind, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Department of Homeland Security, Earthquake Country Alliance, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Shepherd Center RESCUE Program.

**Resources:** Learn more about the organizations and programs listed in this booklet. Or, for additional help finding resources in your community, Reeve Foundation Information Specialists are available Monday through Friday, toll-free at 800-539-7309 from 9 am - 8 pm EST.

## Administration for Community Living: Communication Card

<https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2018-11/EmergInfoCommDisability.pdf>

## Administration for Community Living: Emergency Preparedness for Older Adults and Caregivers

[https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2016-10/Just\\_in\\_Case030706\\_links.pdf](https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2016-10/Just_in_Case030706_links.pdf)

## ADA National Network: Emergency Power Planning

<https://adata.org/factsheet/emergency-power>

## California Foundation for Independent Living Centers: Disability Disaster Access & Resources

<https://disabilitydisasteraccess.org>

## Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Clean Up Safely After a Disaster

<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/cleanup/facts.html>

## Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Natural Disasters and Severe Weather

<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/index.html>

## Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation: Quality of Life Grants Program

<https://www.ChristopherReeve.org/QOL>

## Earthquake Country Alliance: Earthquake Preparedness for People with Disabilities

[https://www.earthquakecountry.org/library/ShakeOut\\_Earthquake\\_Guide\\_Disabilities\\_AFN.pdf](https://www.earthquakecountry.org/library/ShakeOut_Earthquake_Guide_Disabilities_AFN.pdf)

## Federal Communications Commission: Scams after Storms

<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/after-storms-watch-out-scams>

## FEMA: Disaster Aid Registration Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGi1h1R2CDI>

**FEMA Disaster Assistance: Shelter Locator**

<https://www.disasterassistance.gov/information/immediate-needs/emergency-shelter>

**FEMA: Disaster Fraud**

<https://www.fema.gov/about/offices/security/disaster-fraud>

**National Center for Disaster Fraud**

<https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud>

**FEMA: How to Appeal Decisions**

<https://www.fema.gov/assistance/individual/after-applying/appeals>

**FEMA: Individuals and Households Program**

<https://www.fema.gov/assistance/individual/program>

**FEMA: Mobile App**

<https://www.fema.gov/about/news-multimedia/mobile-products>

**FEMA: National Risk Index**

<https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/>

**FEMA: Office of Disability Integration and Coordination**

<https://www.fema.gov/about/offices/disability>

**Independent Living Research Utilization: Directory of Centers for Independent Living**

<https://www.ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory>

**JDRF: Disaster Preparation Emergency Checklist**

<https://www.jdrf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Disaster-Preparation-Emergency-Checklist.pdf>

JDRF offers a checklist for diabetics.

**LawHelp.org: FEMA Appeals and Template Letter**

<https://www.lawhelp.org/resource/how-to-appeal-femas-determination-on-disaster-assistance>

**Muscular Dystrophy Association: Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities**

<https://www.mda.org/care/resource-list/emergency-resources>

**National Flood Insurance Program**

<https://www.floodsmart.gov>

**National Weather Service**

<https://www.weather.gov>

**National Weather Service: NOAA Weather Receiver**

[https://www.weather.gov/nwr/nwr\\_receivers#buy](https://www.weather.gov/nwr/nwr_receivers#buy)

**No Person Left Behind: Respiratory Disaster Planning Information**

<http://nopersonleftbehind.org/oxy/www/index.htm>

**No Person Left Behind: Oxygen Users Disaster Evacuation Planning Checklist**

<http://nopersonleftbehind.org/oxy/www/RespiratoryDisasterPlanning/O2%20Class%20Material/Checklist%20OXYGEN%20DISASTER%20Plan.pdf>

**Operation Blue Roof**

<https://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Emergency-Operations/Blue-Roof-Information>

**Ready.gov: Disasters and Emergencies**

<https://www.ready.gov/be-informed>

**Ready.gov: Build a Kit**

<https://www.ready.gov/kit>

**Red Cross: Find Open Shelters**

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services/find-an-open-shelter.html>

**Red Cross: Reunification of Loved Ones**

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services/contact-and-locate-loved-ones.html>

### Shepherd Center: Rescue Program

<https://www.shepherd.org/education/injury-prevention/rescue>

Offers labels to put in your windows to alert rescue workers.

### Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: Disaster Distress Helpline

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline>

### U.S. Office of the Administration for Children & Families' Office of Community Services: Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/low-income-home-energy-assistance-program-liheap>





## **We're here to help.**

Learn more today!

### **Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation**

636 Morris Turnpike, Suite 3A

Short Hills, NJ 07078

(800) 539-7309 toll free

(973) 379-2690 phone

[ChristopherReeve.org](http://ChristopherReeve.org)

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