Emergency Preparedness & Transportation: The High Road to Safety

Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living
May 29, 2014

Mike Collins, Author: Everyday Advocacy & Motorvation columns, New Mobility magazine
Emergencies or Disasters: The Big Equalizers
Why Should We Plan For The Future?

- Floods
- Earthquakes
- Fires
- Terrorists
- Power outages
- Hurricanes
More of Why Should We Plan For The Future?

- Tornadoes
- Derailments
- Riots
- West Nile Virus, Avian Bird Flu
- Hazardous Materials Accidents
- Volcanoes, Landslides
Why worry about Persons with Disabilities and Seniors?

- 19.6% of the population has some form of disability
- Many people are unable to evacuate themselves in an emergency
- Many people may be unable to contact help without assistance
- Many people lack the ability to see approaching danger or hear evacuation announcements
- Many people do not know where to go or how to get there
Issues that impact most Communities in ALL Types of Emergencies

- Disaster Planning
- Disaster Preparation
- Notification
- Evacuation
- Sheltering & Interim Services
- Long-Term Recovery
Planning Ahead is a key Part of All Phases

- PLAN for escape: From Home to Safe Shelter.
- PREPARE to Evacuate.
- NOTIFY others of your plan.
- EVACUATE in a timely manner.
- How will you return home from SHELTER?
- How will you transport the items needed to RECOVER after a disaster?
Emergency Planning Considerations for PWDs & Seniors

- Disability Inclusion in Planning is a requirement of the ADA: check your local plans

- Inclusion should occur at all levels: Statewide, Regional & Local

- Seek out local disability & Senior organizations to be at the planning table

- When planning, be sure to consider the needs of all types of disabilities, plus children and frail elderly individuals:
  - Sensory: Hearing & Sight
  - Mobility
  - Cognitive
  - Mental
Disaster Preparation
Problems in Past Disasters

- Haphazard Notification Methods: no backup methods
- First Aid supplies, Food and Water Not Stored
- Backup Medication not available or allowable under Medicaid or most insurance
- Homes not prepared with firebreaks or sandbags
- PWDs had no evacuation plans
- Local ILCs, AAAs and similar CBOs not included in Disaster Planning
- Durable Medical Goods not stockpiled
- Shelter sites not accepting service animals
Notification Problems

- Haphazard notification systems
- Television and Radio signals not available in remote area
- Some warning messages not accessible to people who are blind or deaf
- Evacuation orders were confusing, especially to persons with mental or cognitive disabilities
- Inadequate time from evacuation orders to the actual event (wildfires, floods, earthquakes, slides, derailments)
The Transportation Components of Emergency Preparedness

- Personal Escape
- With or Without advance notice
- Public Transportation
- Personal or Private
- Where to Go Next?

- Will the Road be Open?
Evacuation Problems

- Evacuees rushing to reach safety create traffic jams
- Evacuation plans not always followed
- Persons with disabilities & seniors stranded in homes or apartments with no way to leave
- Many evacuation announcements do not include destination advice
- Paratransit vehicles blocked from reentering evacuation zones
- Family members not allowed access to fire zones to aid relatives who had not been in contact
- Lists that identify PWDs needing assistance outdated or unavailable
- Mobility equipment and supplies did not accompany evacuees with disabilities
Shelter and Interim Services Problems

- Shelters not always accessible to PWD
- Communication equipment not accessible
- Interpreters/Caregivers not available at shelters
- Volunteers with disabilities turned away
- Presence of media and their equipment contribute to problems with access
- Shower and bathroom facilities not accessible
- Service animals not allowed in shelters
Long-Term Recovery Problems

- Evacuees not centrally located, making resettlement difficult
- Large number of donated goods stress transit systems’ ability to return victims efficiently
- Vacant rentals limited or non-existent
- Large increases in rent can occur, due to diminished housing stock
- Stress and mental anguish continue afterward, leading to increases in depression and suicide
- Health problems caused by ash, dust, or other debris are ongoing concerns
Plan FAR Ahead

- Join community planning efforts
- Focus on neighborhood
- Take Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training and form or join CERT teams
- Evaluate your needs in all types of emergencies
- Know what to do and where to go, no matter what happens
- Install smoke detectors and double-check batteries
Plan FAR Ahead

- Know how to:
  - Shut off utilities
  - Contact emergency help

- Inventory and record belongings and key data

- Register with 911 network if you need evacuation assistance

- Obtain ID chips from veterinarians for service animals and pets
Shelter in Place?

Past disasters have demonstrated that transportation out of a Disaster Zone may NOT be an immediate option.
What to Expect—How to be Ready

- Earthquakes are everywhere

- Are you living or working in a fire, earthquake, tornado, hurricane or flood zone?
  - Clear debris from exterior property
  - Identify evacuation routes
  - Arrange for backup notification and transportation assistance
  - Set up phone trees
Involve Your ‘Network’

- Caregivers
- Family Members
- Distant Relatives (your family’s after-disaster contact point)
- Friends and Peers
- Neighbors
- First Responders
- Paratransit and other service providers
Become an ‘Expert’

- Know the issues surrounding emergency preparedness

- Study appropriate responses and readiness

- Become an example to friends and neighbors—ask if THEY ARE ready

- Don’t forget your pets (Does your transportation work for them too?)
Preparing for Whatever Happens
Personal Emergency Supplies

- One gallon of water per person per day, for drinking and sanitation

- Children, nursing mothers, and sick people may need more water

- If you live in a warm weather climate even more water may be necessary

- Store water tightly in clean plastic containers such as soft drink bottles (sterile)

- Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person
More Emergency Supplies

- A portable generator with fuel
- Propane stove
- Sleeping bags and/or blankets
- Flashlights
- Lanterns
- Portable radio

Note: Hand-cranked flashlights and radios are readily available...and cheap
Plus More Supplies

- Store *at least* a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water
- Pack a manual can opener and eating utensils
- Choose foods your family will eat:
  - Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
  - Protein or fruit bars
  - Dry cereal or granola
What kind of Food?

- Peanut butter
- Dried fruit
- Nuts
- Crackers
- Canned juices
- Non-perishable pasteurized milk
- High energy foods
- Vitamins
- Food for infants
- Comfort/stress foods
First Aid Supplies

- Two pairs of latex or other sterile gloves (if you are allergic to Latex)
- Sterile dressings to stop bleeding
- Cleansing agent/soap and antibiotic towelettes to disinfect
- Antibiotic ointment to prevent infection
- Burn ointment to prevent infection
- Adhesive bandages in a variety of sizes
- Eye wash solution to flush the eyes or for use as a general decontaminant
More First Aid Supplies

- Thermometer

- Prescription medications you take every day such as insulin, heart medicine and asthma inhalers. You should periodically rotate medicines to account for expiration dates

- Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood pressure monitoring equipment and supplies

- Pet medications
Other Useful Items

- Cell Phone (if power is out, they won’t always work)
- Scissors, Tweezers
- Non-prescription drugs:
  - Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
  - Anti-diarrhea medication
  - Antacid (for upset stomach)
  - Laxatives
More Prep Tips

- Install alternate Mobility Cues and Emergency Lights in each room—it may be dark
- Label Emergency Supplies with Braille, large print, or fluorescent tape
- Back up and store Computer files with important information
- Pre-program emergency and contact numbers in all phones
- Scan all important documents: Keep the CD in a safe-deposit box or with a trusted distant family member
What About Your Best Friends?
Tips From
United Animal Nations (UAN.org)

- Take several pictures of all your animals and keep these photos with the important insurance papers that you would take with you if you had to evacuate.

- Talk to your veterinarian to see if he/she has an outline of a pet-friendly disaster plan.

- If an animal is on long-term medication, always keep a backup supply on hand, since a veterinary office may not be open for some time following a disaster.
Tips From
United Animal Nations (UAN.org)

- Have a harness and leash for each of the dogs in your household

- If your dog is kept in an outdoor run, make sure it's in a location where falling debris (tree limbs, shingles, power lines, chimney bricks, etc.) won't fall on the run and possibly injure the dog

- Comfort your animals during a disaster

- Know where the animal shelters or animal rescue organizations are in your area, in case you’re separated
Always keep a collar and tag on those animals that should normally wear collars

Identify several possible locations where you can take your animals should you have to evacuate

Start a buddy system with someone in your neighborhood so that they will check on your animals during a disaster in case you are not home

In addition to your regular supply of animal food, have at least a week’s supply of food and water on hand for use during a disaster
Take it With You

Recommended Supplies to Include in a Portable Kit:

- Cash and Extra identification
- Water
- Food: at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered radio and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio with tone alert, and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First Aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
More Stuff to Take

- Prescription medications, and updated prescriptions
- Toilet Tissue
- Dust mask or cotton t-shirt, to help filter the air
- Moist towelettes for sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Unique family needs, such as infant formula or diapers, and important family documents
- Garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
Notification Recommendations

- Implement Enhanced & Reverse 911 systems statewide—get vulnerable people registered
- Coordinate with 211 to set-up a clearinghouse for people in need of help and people that want to help
- Work with local media to ensure all messages are accessible to all people
- Work with paratransit providers to relay evacuation orders to regular riders
- Work with volunteer organizations to create emergency phone trees to close gaps
- Consider disability needs when purchasing communications technology to assist in evacuation notifications
Transportation Recommendations

- Transit agencies need to be included in planning
- Paratransit vehicles could be treated as emergency vehicles
- Transit providers should be reimbursed for emergency costs
- Paratransit rider lists should be available to emergency personnel
- Drivers should receive training in evacuation procedures
- Dispatchers should contact PWDs & seniors during emergencies to check on their ability to evacuate
Shelter and Interim Services Recommendations

- ILC & AAA staff should be included in shelter operations and planning
- Interpreter lists should be available for accommodating people who are deaf
- Media areas should be located so they do not block walkways and impede access for PWDs
- Sheltering, and all services provided, should be designed with accessibility in mind
- All volunteers should be trained on disability etiquette
- Access should be maintained at shelters at all times
Recovery Recommendations

- Volunteer Organizations should be enlisted to help PWDs and seniors in all aspects of recovery stage

- Emergency rent controls should be considered

- Arrangements should be made with transit providers to return both evacuees and belongings after a disaster

- Include mental health services in recovery services provided
Resources

- NFPA Center for High-Risk Outreach: [NFPA.org](http://NFPA.org) (Under Learning/Public Education menus)
- National Organization on Disability: [NOD.org](http://NOD.org)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency: [FEMA.gov](http://FEMA.gov)
- U.S. Fire Administration: [usfa.fema.gov/index.shtm](http://usfa.fema.gov/index.shtm)
Resources

- Prepare Now  

- Prepare.org  [www.prepare.org](http://www.prepare.org)

- American Red Cross  

- American Foundation for the Blind  [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org)
More Resources

- The Access Board  [www.access-board.gov](http://www.access-board.gov)
- Job Accommodation Network  [www.jan.wvu.edu/media/emergency.html](http://www.jan.wvu.edu/media/emergency.html)
- S.a.f.e.t.y. first evacuation program  [www.easter-seals.org](http://www.easter-seals.org)
- Disability Preparedness Center  [www.disabilitypreparedness.com](http://www.disabilitypreparedness.com)
Resources

- GetReadyGear [www.getreadygear.com](http://www.getreadygear.com)
- United Animal Nations Emergency Animal Rescue Service [www.uan.org](http://www.uan.org)
Resources

- “Nobody Left Behind” Project: http://rtcil.org/speakout1.htm
Thank You

Are There Any Questions?
Mike Collins, Executive Director

California State Independent Living Council

1600 K Street, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (866) 866-7452
TTY: (866) 745-2889
Fax: (916) 445-5973

Or you can contact the SILC via Internet Homepage at:

www.calsilc.org