



PREPAREDNESS FOR OLDER ADULTS

Older adults may face particular safety and health challenges during a disaster, including dealing with medical issues, weathering power outages, receiving notifications and staying mobile. If you are an older adult please consider following these recommendations. If you care for an older adult, please assist them with the recommended steps in this Guide.

EMERGENCY PLAN - Develop a written emergency plan that is easy to follow and accessible (refer to OCP&R Guide #03 – Personal & Family Preparedness Before a Disaster and Guide #05 – Evacuation Planning). The plan should include:



- Any special assistance needed
- Routine treatments provided at a clinic or hospital and back-up service providers in case that facility is unavailable
- Any communications-related challenges such as hearing or language and how best to effectively communicate

If there are pets or service animals note that not all shelters accept pets, so plan for alternatives.

SUPPORT NETWORK - If you are an older adult living at home, having a local support network of trusted neighbors, friends, caregivers and/or relatives is extremely important. **Make arrangements for your support network to immediately check on you during or after a disaster, and to help as needed – especially if you have to evacuate!** With your support network you should also:



- Exchange house and other important keys
- Indicate where emergency supplies and any medical equipment are kept
- Share copies of your emergency plan, medical records, important documents, contact lists (including an out-of-area contact) and health insurance information
- Agree on and practice methods for reaching each other in an emergency (**do not count on the telephones working!**) and determine where to meet afterwards, including a backup location
- Notify each other when you are going out of town and when you will return

GO-BAG / MEDICAL KIT - Build your Go-Bag (refer to OCP&R Guide #07 – Evacuation and Go-Bag Checklists). In addition to the recommended items, your Go-Bag may also include:



- A 5-day supply of medications and an up-to-date medication list that includes the names (brand and generic) of drugs and their doses, as well as any allergies you have



- An insulated bag big enough to hold a two-week supply of medications that require refrigeration, such as insulin (keep ice packs handy in the freezer for this)



- Medical equipment and necessities including items such as monitoring equipment, hearing aids/extra hearing aid batteries, vision magnifiers, etc.



- Copies of your medical records, lists of all active medical problems you have and how they're being treated, and extra copies of Medicare/Medicaid, Medi-Cal or other insurance information



POWER SHUTOFFS - Losing power can be a very serious situation if you rely on life-support equipment or refrigerated medications. Refer to OCP&R Guide #08 – Public Safety Power Shutoffs for information on how to prepare. Contact PG&E (www.pge.com or **1-800-743-5000**) if you are a Medical Baseline customer so that they can support your medical needs.



COMMUNICATIONS - Communications and notifications are critical during an emergency. Refer to OCP&R Guide #02 – Notifications Warnings. Keep an AM/FM/NOAA Weather Radio tuned to your local emergency station and monitor TV and radio. If you are hearing or vision impaired be sure that you have extra batteries for your assistive devices. Leave windows open if possible to better hear sirens and orders. Have a whistle, air-horn or similar loud device available to signal for help.



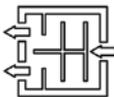
MOBILITY - Relocating and evacuating can be much more difficult for those with mobility issues or in a wheelchair. Plan for alternate means of transport with your support network, such as carpooling with neighbors, as an ambulance or ride service may not be able to reach you. If you use an electric wheelchair be sure to have a backup manual wheelchair available.



FINANCIAL - A disaster can disrupt mail service for days or weeks. If you depend on Social Security or other regular benefits, switch to electronic payments to protect yourself financially before a disaster strikes (this also eliminates the risk of stolen checks). To set up U.S. Department of the Treasury Federal benefits direct deposits, go to www.benefits.gov.



Sadly, some individuals will try to take advantage of others after a disaster. Be cautious of unsolicited offers of help or services – a true Good Samaritan should be understanding of this. Only give out personal information to trusted sources. If you are concerned by anyone or their actions, contact the authorities (i.e. police) immediately.



COMMUNITIES - If you live in a senior community, skilled nursing facility or similar, be sure to understand their emergency preparedness and disaster response plans, including transportation /evacuation, backup power, communications and supplies such as water, food and medicines. Make sure that any family or professional caregivers are also aware of these plans. Participate in emergency drills if at all possible. And form your support network within your community!



MORE INFORMATION - there are many sources of additional information for older adults in preparing for and responding to a disaster, including:

The California Dept. of Aging (www.aging.ca.gov) has tip sheets for emergency situations.

FEMA (www.ready.gov) provides extensive information on planning ahead for disasters. FEMA also offers many resources to help individuals' needs. (www.DisasterAssistance.gov)

The American Red Cross (www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/seniors.html)

Disability Disaster Access (www.disabilitydisasteraccess.org) coalition of service providers

Additional older adult-specific websites offering useful tips and recommendations include:

- **DailyCaring** (www.DailyCaring.com)
- **Institute on Aging** (www.Ioaging.org)
- **SeniorLiving** (www.seniorliving.org/research/disaster-preparedness/)
- **HealthinAging** (www.healthinaging.org/tools-and-tips/emergency-preparedness-older-adults)

OCP&R is a program of the Oakland Firesafe Council.

Contact OCP&R for more information and assistance with preparedness for older adults.

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OAKLAND COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

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