

# Emergency Preparedness Guide

for People with Disabilities /  
Special Needs



# Acknowledgements • • • • •

This Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities and/or Special Needs was prepared by the Government of Ontario's Emergency Management Ontario in partnership with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.

In order to produce a guide that promotes the values and protects the integrity, independence and safety of all Ontarians, the following organizations were consulted for their subject matter expertise and special insights, for which we are most appreciative:

- Canadian Diabetes Association
- Canadian MedicAlert® Foundation
- Canadian Paraplegic Association (Ontario)
- Canadian Red Cross
- Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) Inc.
- CNIB
- Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
- Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
- Ministry of Community and Social Services Emergency Management Unit
- Ministry of Government Services
- Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, Toronto Chapter and Ontario Division
- National (USA) Organization on Disability - Headquarters
- Office of the Fire Marshal – Ontario Head Office
- Ontario March of Dimes (Provincial Office)
- Ontario Seniors' Secretariat
- Ontario SPCA (Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals)
- SOS Emergency Response Technologies
- St. Demetrius Development Corporation
- The Canadian Hearing Society
- Toronto Rehabilitation Institute

Special appreciation is also extended to all the people that volunteered their time to pose for the pictures throughout this guide.

## **Emergency Management Ontario**

Ministry of Community Safety  
and Correctional Services  
[www.ontario.ca/emo](http://www.ontario.ca/emo)

## **Accessibility Directorate of Ontario**

Ministry of Community  
and Social Services  
[www.mcscs.gov.on.ca](http://www.mcscs.gov.on.ca)

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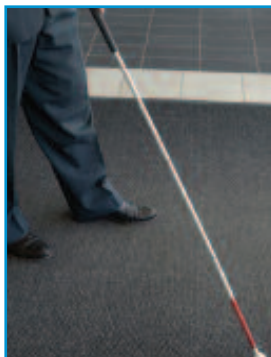
Since not every emergency situation is similar or predictable, every person should rely on and use their best judgement when offering assistance to others in an emergency, without putting their own or other people's safety at risk.

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# Introduction ● ● ● ● ●



Emergencies can occur suddenly and without any advance warning. Although Ontario has effective emergency management legislation and programs, individuals and families play a vital role in preparing for times of crisis when emergency services and other government resources may be strained. It is important that individuals and families prepare to be self-reliant for at least three (3) days

immediately after or during an emergency. This guide provides special emergency preparedness considerations and advice for the estimated 1.5 million Ontarians with disabilities and/or special needs, including seniors with special needs.

## Prepare Now

Emergency preparedness includes developing and practising a family emergency response plan and the preparation of an emergency survival kit.

For those living with a physical, visual, auditory and/or other non-visible disability, emergency preparedness should also involve incorporating special accommodations into their family emergency response plan. To best prepare for an emergency according to one's special needs, please refer to the appropriate category in this guide for a list of suggested emergency survival kit items and contingency planning considerations.

For more information on emergency management arrangements in your area contact your municipal Emergency Management Coordinator through your local government office.

## Using this Guide

This guide covers topics relevant to the emergency preparedness needs of people with visible and/or non-visible disabilities and seniors with special needs.

- Disabilities/special needs are identified as separate categories according to colour and a symbol shown on the top right hand corner of each page.
- Each category provides information on how individuals should prepare for an emergency given their special needs, how the public can best assist a person with a disability and additional suggested survival kit items.
- The last page is an additional contact information resource for the reader.
- Copies of this guide are available in both English and French, and in alternative formats upon request. Please contact:

### Emergency Management Ontario

General Tel: 416-314-3723

Toll-free Phone: 1-877-314-3723

### Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

General Tel: 416-326-0207

Toll-free Phone: 1-888-520-5828

TTY: 416-326-0148

Toll-free TTY: 1-888-335-6611



## Emergency Survival Kit Checklist

This Emergency Survival Kit checklist outlines the basic items every individual should keep in an easy-to-reach place to help them be self-reliant for at least three (3) days immediately after or during an emergency. Since emergency supply requirements vary for individuals with different disabilities, please refer to the appropriate category in this guide for additional suggested survival kit items.

**Prepare Now,  
Emergency Survival Checklist  
Learn How...**

- Flashlight and batteries
- Radio and batteries or crank radio
- Spare batteries (for radio, flashlight, assistive devices, etc.)
- First-aid kit
- Telephone that can work during a power disruption
- Candles and matches/lighter
- Extra car keys and cash
- Important papers (identification)
- Non-perishable food and bottled water
- Manual can opener
- Clothing and footwear
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Toilet paper and other personal items
- Medication
- MedicAlert® bracelet or identification
- Backpack/duffle bag
- Whistle (to attract attention, if needed)
- Playing cards



# Service Animal Emergency Kit Checklist



This Service Animal Emergency Kit checklist outlines the basic items every person with a service animal should have prepared in advance to keep their service animals comfortable during the stress of an emergency situation. It is advisable to keep all items in a transportable bag that is easy to access should evacuating the home become necessary. Also, remember to check the kit twice a year (an easy way to remember is to do it when you check your smoke alarms bi-annually) to ensure freshness of food, water and medication, and to restock any supplies you may have “borrowed” from the kit.

## Service Animal Emergency Kit Checklist

- ☐ Minimum 3-day supply of bottled water and pet food
- ☐ Portable water and food bowls
- ☐ Paper towels and can opener
- ☐ Medications with a list identifying reason (e.g., medical condition), dosage, frequency and contact information of prescribing veterinarian
- ☐ Medical records including vaccinations
- ☐ Leash/harness
- ☐ Muzzle (if required)
- ☐ Blanket and favourite toy
- ☐ Plastic bags
- ☐ Up-to-date ID tag with your phone number and the name/phone number of your veterinarian (microchipping is also recommended)
- ☐ Current photo of your service animal in case they get lost or separated from you
- ☐ Copy of licence (if required)

### Pet Owners:

While service animals are accepted at shelters in an emergency, family pets are not. Hence, it is advisable for pet owners to prepare a similar emergency kit for each family pet according to the needs of each different animal (e.g., cat, rabbit, bird, etc.). In the case of cats, include a cat carrier, little pan, litter, scooper and plastic bags. It is also recommended for pet owners to have prior arrangements made with family or friends to take care of their animal, should evacuating the home be necessary during an emergency. For additional information on pets and emergencies, please visit the Emergency Management Ontario website at [www.ontario.ca/emo](http://www.ontario.ca/emo).

# • • • • • Important Considerations

## Remember...



The emergency survival kit items listed in this guide are only a suggestion and may or may not apply to every emergency situation and/or a person's special needs. Therefore you should decide which essential items to include for yourself and your family members.



During an emergency you may have no electrical power.



During an emergency you may need to go to an emergency evacuation shelter. It is recommended that you and your family have a designated contact person that resides outside of your immediate community. This way, in the event of an evacuation, family members can easily notify each other by calling their designated contact person.



Pack and store all emergency survival items (including medications, medical supplies and/or assistive devices) in an easy-to-access and easy-to-transport container should you need to evacuate.



Select a network of individuals at work and at home that will be able to assist you during an emergency. (Make sure you inform your network of where you keep your emergency survival kit.)



Prepare a list of any food or drug allergies you might have and all the medications you are taking. You may want to provide this list to your designated network and also keep a copy in your emergency survival kit, on your person, at home, your workplace and in your car (if applicable).



On your list of medications, specify the reason for each medicine that you are taking (e.g., medical condition being treated) including the generic name, dosage, frequency, and the name and contact information of the prescribing physician.



If you have children with a disability or special needs, prepare a similar list for each of your children and provide it to their caregiver, school, emergency contact members, etc.



If you have an allergy, chronic medical condition, or special medical need you may want to consider owning and wearing a MedicAlert® bracelet or identification as part of your emergency preparedness plan.

For more information visit: [www.medicalert.ca](http://www.medicalert.ca).

# Important Considerations ● ● ● ●

## Remember...

-  Regularly check expiration dates on all medications, bottled water, and canned/package food in your emergency survival kit. It is best to replace food and bottled water at least once a year.
-  Prepare a contact information list of all your emergency contact persons and provide a copy to your designated network at work and/or home. Also keep a copy in your survival kit, on your person, at home, at your workplace and in your car (if applicable).
-  Provide written instructions for your network on how best to assist you and your service animal (if applicable) during an emergency.
-  Label all of your special needs equipment and attach laminated instruction cards on how to use, retrieve and/or move each assistive device during an emergency.
-  Since your medications, assistive devices, etc. may change over time, it is advisable for you to regularly assess your needs and incorporate any changes to your emergency survival kit supplies and your family emergency plan.
-  If your personal needs require regular attendant care and/or life sustaining apparatus, arrange with your network to check on you immediately if an emergency occurs or if local officials issue an evacuation order.
-  Carry a personal alarm that emits a loud noise to draw attention to your whereabouts.
-  If you rely on any life sustaining equipment/apparatus, develop an emergency back-up plan that will ensure the equipment/apparatus works in the event of a power outage.
-  Install working smoke alarms on every floor of your home and outside all sleeping areas.
-  Test smoke alarms on a monthly basis by pushing the test button. Replace smoke alarm batteries every six months and whenever the low-battery warning sounds.
-  Develop and practise a home fire escape plan or refer to your building's fire safety plan so that everyone in your home knows what to do in the event of a fire.
-  Practise your emergency plan with your network at least twice a year.
-  If during an emergency your support network cannot assist you for whatever reason, ask other individuals around you to help you. Remember to inform them of your special needs and how they can best offer any assistance to you.



# • • • • • Important Considerations

## Tips on Helping a Person with a Disability

- ☞ "Ask First" if the person needs or wants your help – do not just assume that they do.
- ☞ Allow the person to identify how best to assist them.
- ☞ Do not touch the person, their service animal and/or their assistive device/equipment without their permission.
- ☞ Follow instructions posted on special needs equipment and/or assistive device during an emergency.
- ☞ Avoid attempts to lift, support or assist in moving someone unless you are familiar with safe techniques.
- ☞ Never administer any food or liquids to an unconscious or unresponsive person.
- ☞ Be aware that some people who have disabilities may request that you use latex-free gloves to reduce spread of viral infection to them.
- ☞ Ask the person with special needs if areas of their body have reduced sensation and if they need you to check those areas for injuries after a disaster.



# Mobility ● ● ● ● ●



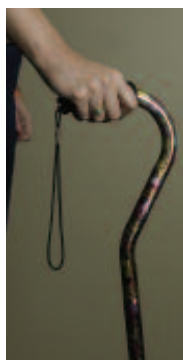
Mobility limitations may make it difficult for a person to use stairs or to move quickly over long distances. These can include reliance on mobility devices such as a wheelchair, scooter, walker, crutches or a walking cane. In addition, people with a heart condition or various respiratory difficulties can experience certain levels of mobility limitations.

## Your Emergency Plan:

- Ask your network to practise moving your special needs equipment during your emergency practice plan.

This will help your network become more comfortable handling or using your special needs equipment during an emergency.

- If you use a wheelchair or scooter, request that an emergency evacuation chair be stored near a stairwell on the same floor that you work or live on, so that your network can readily use it to help you safely evacuate the building.
- In your instruction list for your network, identify areas of your body that have reduced sensation so these areas can be checked for injuries after an emergency, if you cannot check them yourself.
- Check with your local municipal office to find out if emergency evacuation shelters in your area are wheelchair accessible.





## Dos & Don'ts

### Assisting People with Disabilities

- ✓ Use latex-free gloves when providing personal care whenever possible. (People with spinal cord injury have a greater risk of developing an infectious disease during an emergency. Gloves help control secondary medical conditions that can easily arise if personal care is disrupted during an emergency.)
- ✓ Ensure that the person's wheelchair goes with the person.
- ✗ Do not push or pull a person's wheelchair without their permission.

## Additional Items Emergency Survival Kit

- Tire patch kit.
- Can of seal-in-air product (to repair flat tires on your wheelchair or scooter).
- Supply of inner tubes.
- Pair of heavy gloves (to protect your hands while wheeling or making way over glass or other sharp debris).
- Latex-free gloves (for anyone providing personal care to you).
- Spare deep-cycle battery for motorized wheelchair or scooter.
- A lightweight manual wheelchair for backup to a motorized wheelchair (if feasible).
- Spare catheters (if applicable).
- An emergency back-up plan that will ensure any life sustaining equipment/apparatus is operable in the event of a power outage.
- Any other contingency supplies unique to your special needs.





# Vision ● ● ● ● ●



## Your Emergency Plan:

- Have a long cane available to readily manoeuvre around debris on the floor or furniture that may have shifted after an emergency.
- Mark all emergency supplies in advance with fluorescent tape, large print or in braille.
- Mark gas, water and electric shutoff valves in advance with fluorescent tape, large print or in braille.
- Familiarize yourself in advance with all escape routes and locations of emergency doors/exits on each floor of any building where you work, live and/or visit.

Vision loss can include a broad range of conditions ranging from complete blindness to partial or low vision that cannot be corrected with lenses or surgery. A person's ability to read signs or move through unfamiliar environments during an emergency may be challenged, creating a feeling of being lost and/or being dependent on others for guidance.



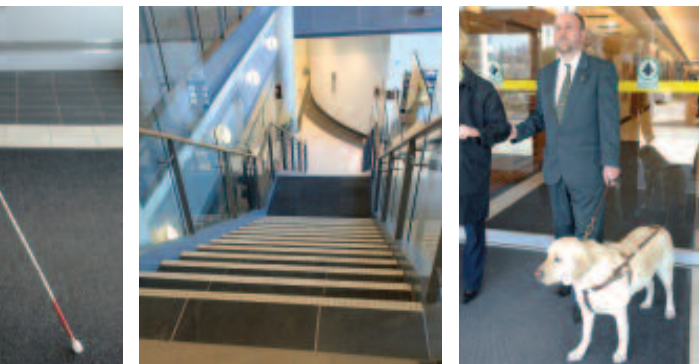




## Dos & Don'ts

### Assisting People with Disabilities

- ✓ Always ask first if you can be of any assistance to them.
- ✓ For people who are deaf-blind, use your finger to draw an "X" on their back to let them know you are there to help during an emergency.
- ✓ To communicate with a deaf-blind person, try tracing letters with your finger on the palm of their hand.
- ✓ To guide the person, offer them your arm instead of taking theirs and walk at their pace. Keep half a step ahead of them.
- ✓ If the person has a service dog, ask them where you should walk to avoid distracting the animal.
- ✓ Provide advance warning of upcoming stairs, curbs, major obstacles, or changes in direction.
- ✓ Watch for overhangs or protrusions the person could walk into.



## Additional Items Emergency Survival Kit

- Extra white cane, preferably a cane that is longer in length.
- Talking or braille clock.
- Large-print timepiece with extra batteries.
- Extra vision aids such as an electronic travel aid, monocular, binocular or magnifier.
- Extra pair of prescription glasses – if you wear them.
- Any reading devices/assistive technology to access information/ portable CCTV devices.
- Any other contingency supplies unique to your special needs.

- ✗ Do not assume the person cannot see you, or that they need your help.
- ✗ Never grab or touch a person with vision loss.
- ✗ Do not touch, make eye contact or distract the person's service dog as this can seriously endanger the owner.
- ✗ Do not shout at a person with vision loss. Speak clearly and provide specific and precise directions.
- ✗ Avoid the term "over there". Instead, describe locating positions such as, "to your right/left/straight ahead/ behind you", or by relaying clock face positions. (For example: 12 o'clock)

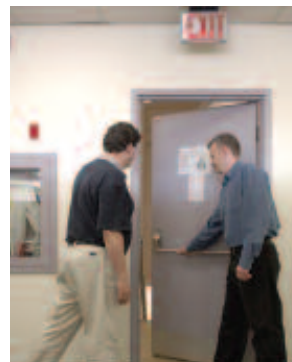
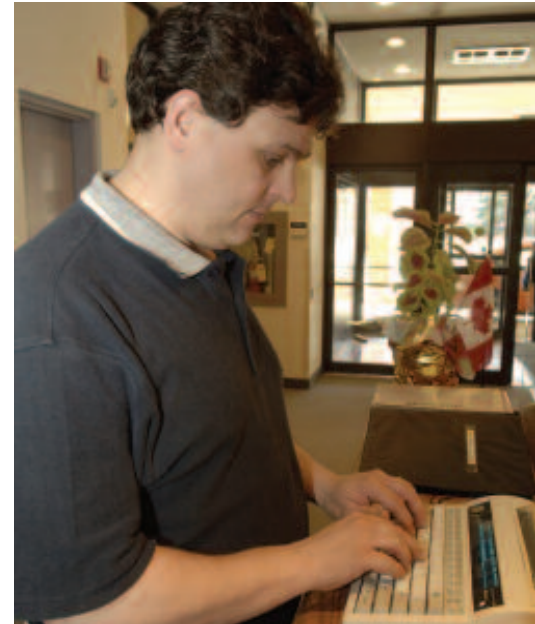
# Hearing ● ● ● ● ●

A person can be deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. The distinction between these terms is based on the individual's language and means of communicating rather than the degree of hearing loss.

In an emergency, the method in which emergency warnings are issued becomes critical to how a person with hearing loss is able to respond and follow instructions to safety.

## Your Emergency Plan:

- If your network is unavailable during an emergency, seek the assistance of others to whom you can communicate your hearing loss by spoken language, moving your lips without making a sound, pointing to your ear, using a gesture, or if applicable, pointing to your hearing aid.
- Keep a pencil and paper handy for written communication.
- Obtain a pager that is connected to an emergency paging system at your workplace and/or the building that you live in.
- Install a smoke-detection system that includes smoke alarms and accessory flashing strobe lights or vibrators to gain your attention if the alarms sound.
- Test smoke alarms on a monthly basis by pushing the test button.
- Replace batteries in battery-operated smoke alarms every six months and whenever the low-battery warning sounds.
- Keep a laminated card on your person and in your survival kit that identifies you as deaf or hard of hearing and explains how to communicate with you.





## Dos & Don'ts

### Assisting People with Disabilities

- ✓ Get the person's attention via a visual cue or a gentle touch on their arm before speaking to them.
- ✓ Face the person and make eye contact when speaking to them as they may rely on speechreading.
- ✓ Communicate in close proximity.
- ✓ Speak clearly and naturally.
- ✓ Use gestures to help explain the meaning of what you are trying to communicate to the person.
- ✓ Write a message if there is time and keep a pencil and paper handy.
- ✗ Avoid approaching the person from behind.
- ✗ Refrain from shouting or speaking unnaturally slowly.
- ✗ Do not make loud noises as hearing aids amplify sounds and can create a physical shock to the user.



## Additional Items Emergency Survival Kit

- Extra writing pads and pencils for communication.
- Flashlight, whistle or noisemaker.
- Pre-printed key phrases you would use during an emergency.
- Assistive devices - unique to your needs (e.g., hearing aid, pager, personal amplifier, etc.).
- Portable visual notification devices that allow you to know if a person is knocking on the door, ringing the doorbell, or calling on the telephone.
- Extra batteries for assistive devices.
- A CommuniCard (produced by The Canadian Hearing Society) that explains your hearing loss and also helps identify how rescuers or assistants can communicate with you during an emergency.
- Any other contingency supplies unique to your special needs.

**Note:** Typically people who are deafened or hard of hearing will need information presented in a text format.

# Non-Visible Disabilities ● ● ● ● ●



Non-visible disabilities can include communication, cognitive, sensory, mental health, learning or intellectual disabilities in which an individual's ability to respond to an emergency is restricted. They can also range from allergies, epilepsy, hemophilia, diabetes, thyroid condition, multiple sclerosis, pulmonary or heart disease and/or dependency on dialysis, sanitary or urinary supplies. Individuals with non-visible disabilities may have difficulty performing some tasks without appearing to have a disability.

## Your Emergency Plan:

- Prepare an easy-to-understand list of instructions or information for yourself that you think you may need in an emergency.
- Keep an emergency contact list on your person of key people that are aware of your special needs.
- Inform your designated support network of where you store your medication.
- Keep a pencil and paper or portable electronic recording device handy to write down or record any new instructions provided to you in an emergency.
- Consider owning and wearing a MedicAlert® bracelet or identification because it will help notify emergency responders about your non-visible disabilities. For more information visit: [www.medicalert.ca](http://www.medicalert.ca).
- Request a panic push-button to be installed in the building you work and/or live in, so that in the event of an emergency you can notify others of your whereabouts and that you need special assistance.
- **People with Multiple Sclerosis:** Symptoms are often made worse by heat and humidity. Be prepared to keep cool and dry.
- **People with Diabetes:** Keep frozen water bottles or ice packs in your freezer. Have an insulated bag or cooled thermos ready to store your insulin, should there be a power outage or you need to evacuate.





## Dos & Don'ts

### Assisting People with Disabilities

- ✓ Allow the person to describe what help they need from you.
- ✓ Find effective means of communication (e.g., provide drawn or written instructions. When giving directions use landmarks instead of terms "go left" or "turn right").
- ✓ Be patient, flexible and maintain eye contact when speaking to the person.
- ✓ Repeat instructions (if needed).
- ✓ Ask the person about their medication and if they need any help taking it. (Never offer medicines not prescribed by their physician.)
- ✓ Keep people with multiple sclerosis cool and dry to avoid making their symptoms worse.
- ✗ Avoid shouting or speaking quickly. Instead, speak clearly but not so slowly as to offend the person.
- ✗ Do not restrain a person having a convulsion. Instead, roll them on their side to keep their airway clear and place something soft (e.g., your jacket) under their head to protect it from injury. Once the convulsion passes and they become conscious, help them into a resting position.

## Additional Items Emergency Survival Kit

- Supply of food items appropriate to your disability or dietary restrictions.
- List of instructions that you can easily follow in an emergency.
- Personal list and minimum three days supply of all needed medications, medical supplies and special equipment (e.g., ventilator for asthma, nitrolingual spray for heart condition, Epinephrine pen against allergic reaction/anaphylactic shock, etc.).
- Detailed list of all prescription medications.
- MedicAlert® identification.
- Any other contingency supplies unique to your special needs.

### For Example: People with Diabetes

- Extra supply of insulin or oral agent.
- Extra supply of syringes, needles and insulin pens (if used).
- Small container for storing used syringes/needles (if applicable).
- Blood glucose testing kit, spare batteries and record book.
- Supply of blood glucose and urine ketone testing strips.
- Fast-acting insulin for high blood glucose (if applicable).
- Fast-acting sugar for low blood glucose.
- Extra food to cover delayed meals.
- Ice packs and thermal bag to store insulin (if applicable).

# Seniors with Special Needs • • • • •



Since an emergency situation or an evacuation can be a frightening and confusing time, it is important that seniors, especially those with special needs, know the steps to take in an emergency. This includes seniors contacting their local municipal office to find out about programs and services available in their community that will help them during an emergency and assist them to return to their regular routine.

## Your Emergency Plan:

- Create an emergency contact list with names and telephone numbers of your physicians, case worker, contact for your seniors group, neighbours, building superintendent, etc. Keep a copy of this list in your survival kit and on your person.
- Write down the names and phone numbers of on-site doctors, nurses,

social workers, etc., at your place of residence (if applicable), including the hours they keep.

- Familiarize yourself with all escape routes and location of emergency doors/exits in your home.
- Know the location of emergency buttons. (Many seniors' buildings have emergency buttons located in bedrooms and washrooms that have a direct link to 911 or the building's superintendent.)
- If asked to evacuate, bring with you any equipment or assistive devices you may need immediately.
- Always wear your MedicAlert® identification.



## Dos & Don'ts

### Assisting People with Disabilities

- ✓ Check on neighbours who are seniors with special needs to find out if they need your help during an emergency or evacuation.
- ✓ Allow the person to describe what help they need and how it can be provided to them.
- ✓ Be patient, listen actively.
- ✓ If the person appears anxious or agitated, speak calmly and provide assurance that you are there to help.
- ✓ If evacuation is necessary, offer a ride to seniors who do not have access to a vehicle.
- ✓ If time permits, offer to carry the person's emergency survival kit to your car, along with any equipment or assistive devices they will need.
- ✓ Follow instructions posted on special needs equipment and/or assistive devices during an emergency.



## Additional Items Emergency Survival Kit

- Supply of food items appropriate to your disability or dietary restrictions.
- Assistive devices needed such as canes, walkers, lightweight manual wheelchair, hearing aids, breathing apparatus, blood glucose monitoring device, etc.
- Prescription eyewear and footwear (if required).
- Extra supply of medications and vitamin supplements.
- Personal disability-related list of all your needed medical supplies and special equipment.
- Copies of all medication prescriptions.
- Extra dentures (if required) and cleaner.
- Latex-free gloves (to give to anyone providing personal care to you).
- Any other contingency supplies unique to your special needs.

### For Seniors with Diabetes:

- Please refer to previous "Other Non-Visible Disabilities" category.

- ✗ Refrain from shouting or speaking unnaturally slowly.
- ✗ Avoid being dismissive of the person's concerns or requests.



# Highrise Safety • • • • •

High-rise buildings present unique challenges when evacuation is necessary during an emergency.

## **Residents should make themselves aware of:**

- ✓ Building superintendent's name and phone number.
- ✓ Who sits on the Building Safety Committee.
- ✓ Who the floor monitors are.
- ✓ Who conducts evacuation drills, and how often.
- ✓ Location of fire extinguishers, automated external defibrillator units, and oxygen tank.
- ✓ Location of emergency evacuation device(s).

## **Your Emergency Plan:**

- Advise your building manager/superintendent of your special needs and/or requirements during an emergency.
- Familiarize yourself with your building's evacuation plan.
- Know where all escape routes and location of emergency doors/exits are on each floor.
- Know the location of emergency buttons in the building and exits that are wheelchair-accessible (if applicable).
- Request that an emergency evacuation chair be installed on the floor you live or work on, preferably close to the stairwell (if applicable).
- If you live in a highrise building, create a '**buddy**' system with your neighbours and regularly practise your emergency response plan with them.
- If you rely on any life sustaining equipment/apparatus, develop an emergency back-up plan that will ensure the equipment/apparatus is operable in the event of a power outage.
- Obtain large printed signs from the building manager that you can place in your window in the event of an emergency, indicating that you need assistance.





## Dos & Don'ts

### Assisting People with Disabilities

- ✓ Check on neighbours and/or co-workers with special needs to find out if they need your help during an emergency or evacuation.
- ✓ Listen actively to what the individual with special needs is saying.
- ✓ During an emergency evacuation (if time permits), offer to carry the person's emergency survival kit for them along with any special equipment or assistive devices they will need.
- ✓ Review previous categories in this guide on how to assist people with specific disabilities and/or special needs.
- ✗ In general, avoid attempts to lift, support or assist in moving a person down the stairs, unless you are familiar with safe techniques.

## Additional Items Emergency Survival Kit

- Personal alarm that emits a loud noise to draw attention to your whereabouts.
- Supply of food items appropriate to your dietary restrictions.
- Supply of medications and assistive devices appropriate to your disability.
- Supply of plastic bags for storing garbage/personal waste.
- Names and contact information of your neighbours, superintendent and property/building manager.
- Laminated copy of your building's evacuation plan and diagram of escape routes and location of emergency doors/exits on each floor.
- Any other contingency supplies unique to your special needs.



# Travel Considerations • • • • •



Whether travelling locally or internationally, people with disabilities and seniors with special needs should take extra time to research and plan their trip to make their travel experience safe and enjoyable. This includes preparing in advance, an emergency plan and "Ready-Go-Bag" with emergency survival items.

## Your Emergency Plan:

- Before travelling, visit the **Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada** website at [www.voyage.gc.ca](http://www.voyage.gc.ca) where you can register and find other helpful travel information safety tips.
- Discuss your particular accommodation needs with your travel agent.
- Discuss your trip with your doctor to prepare contingency plans in case of illness.
- Obtain necessary travel medical insurance.
- Carry a copy of the booklet **Bon Voyage, But...**, that contains contact information for your destination's Canadian office and Emergency Operations Centre. You can order it free of charge at [www.voyage.gc.ca](http://www.voyage.gc.ca).
- Divide your medications and medical supplies between your carry-on and check-in baggage, keeping them in their original labelled containers. Bring copies of your prescriptions with you.
- Always wear your MedicAlert® bracelet.
- Inform your travel companion(s) on how to assist you in an emergency.
- If travelling alone, establish a network (e.g., hotel staff) that can assist you during an emergency.
- If you have difficulty using stairs request a room on a lower floor.
- Review the hotel emergency exit plan.
- If needing to evacuate, bring your emergency "Ready-Go-Bag" and any assistive devices you may need.

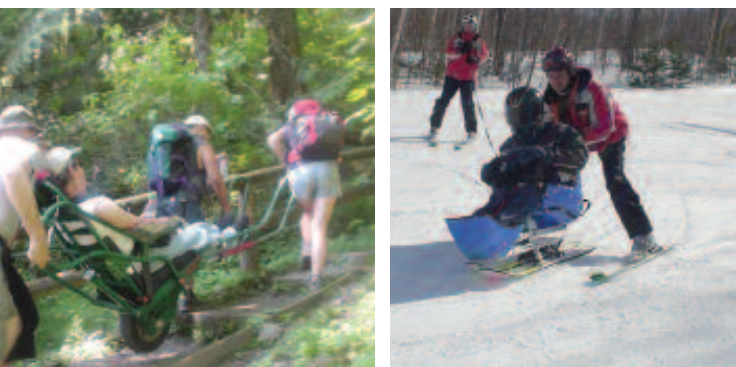




## Dos & Don'ts

### Assisting People with Disabilities

- ✓ Check on fellow travellers with visible disabilities or special needs to find out if they need your help during an emergency or evacuation.
- ✓ Listen actively to what the individual with special needs is saying and how they might need your help.
- ✓ If they speak in a foreign language that you do not understand, try to communicate using gestures.
- ✓ During an emergency evacuation (if time permits), offer to carry the person's emergency survival kit for them along with any special equipment or assistive devices they will need.
- ✓ Review previous categories in this guide on how to assist people with specific disabilities or special needs.
- ✗ Do not let the person be separated from their wheelchair or mobility aids.



## Additional Items Emergency Survival Kit

- Supply of food items appropriate to your dietary restrictions.
- Supply of medications/assistive devices appropriate to your disability (e.g., **Glucagen injection** if you manage your diabetes with insulin and you are travelling to a remote location that does not have ambulance service).
- Laminated personal information card that you keep on your person at all times when travelling. (Card identifies your special needs, lists all medications you are taking, any food/drug allergies you might have, your treating physician's name and contact information, and your next of kin.)
- Copy of your travel medical insurance and other important travel documents.
- A personal alarm that emits a loud noise to draw attention to your whereabouts.
- Small container that can store or disintegrate syringes or needles safely (if applicable).
- Anti-nausea and anti-diarrhea pills and pain medication.
- Sunblock.
- Insect repellent.
- Dictionary to help you communicate in a foreign language.
- Any other contingency supplies unique to your disability or special needs.

# For More Information • • • • •

## Specific Disabilities and Special Needs

### Canadian Diabetes Association

Tel: 416-363-3373  
Toll-free Phone: 1-800-226-8464  
Fax: 416-408-7117  
[www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca)

### Canadian Paraplegic Association Ontario

Tel: 416-422-5644  
Toll-free Phone: 1-877-422-1112  
Fax: 416-422-5943  
Email: [info@cpaont.org](mailto:info@cpaont.org)  
[www.cpaont.org](http://www.cpaont.org)

### Canadian Red Cross

Tel: 905-890-1000  
Fax: 905-890-1008  
[www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca)

### Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) Inc.

Tel: 416-599-2458  
TTY: 416-599-5077  
24hr Newsline: 416-599-4898  
Fax: 416-599-3555  
Email: [cilt@cilt.ca](mailto:cilt@cilt.ca)  
[www.cilt.ca](http://www.cilt.ca)

### CNIB

Tel: 416-486-2500  
Toll-free Phone: 1-800-563-2642  
TTY: 416-480-8645  
Fax: 416-480-7700  
[www.cnib.ca](http://www.cnib.ca)

### Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario

Tel: 416-929-4311  
Fax: 416-929-3905  
[www.ldao.ca](http://www.ldao.ca)

### Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada - Toronto Chapter and Ontario Division

Tel: 416-922-6065  
Toll-free Phone: 1-866-922-6065  
Fax: 416-922-7538  
[www.mssociety.ca](http://www.mssociety.ca)

### Ontario March of Dimes

Tel: 416-425-3463  
Toll-free Phone: 1-800-263-3463  
Fax: 416-425-1920  
[www.dimes.on.ca](http://www.dimes.on.ca)

### Ontario SPCA (Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals)

Tel: 905-898-7122  
Toll-free Phone: 1-888-ONT-SPCA (668-7722)  
Fax: 905-853-8643  
E-mail: [info@ospca.on.ca](mailto:info@ospca.on.ca)  
[www.ontariospca.ca](http://www.ontariospca.ca)

### The Canadian Hearing Society

Tel: 416-928-2500  
Toll-free Phone: 1-877-347-3427  
TTY: 416-964-0023  
Toll-free TTY: 1-877-347-3429  
Fax: 416-928-2523  
[www.chs.ca](http://www.chs.ca)

### Toronto Rehabilitation Institute

Tel: 416-597-3422  
Fax: 416-597-1977  
[www.torontorehab.com](http://www.torontorehab.com)

## Accessibility Initiatives

### Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

Tel: 416-326-0207  
Toll-free Phone: 1-888-520-5828  
TTY: 416-326-0148  
Toll-free TTY: 1-888-335-6611  
Fax: 416-326-9725  
[www.mcass.gov.on.ca](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca)

### Ontario Seniors' Secretariat

Tel: 416-326-7076 (Seniors' INFOLine)  
Toll-free Phone: 1-888-910-1999  
Toll-free TTY: 1-800-387-5559  
Fax: 416-326-7078  
[www.ontarioseniors.ca](http://www.ontarioseniors.ca)

## Emergency Preparedness

### Emergency Management Ontario

Tel: 416-314-3723  
Toll-free Phone: 1-877-314-3723  
Fax: 416-314-3758  
[www.ontario.ca/emo](http://www.ontario.ca/emo)

## For Information on MedigAlert® Bracelets or Identification

### Canadian MedigAlert® Foundation

Tel: 416-696-0142  
Toll-free Phone: 1-800-668-1507  
Toll-free Fax: 1-800-392-8422  
[www.medicalert.ca](http://www.medicalert.ca)

## For Travel Advice and Registration Service when Travelling Abroad

### Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada

Tel: 613-944-6788  
TTY: 613-944-1310  
**In Canada and USA:**  
Toll-free Phone: 1-800-267-6788  
Toll-free TTY: 1-800-394-3472  
[www.voyage.gc.ca](http://www.voyage.gc.ca)

**Local Emergency Management Contact:**

**This guide is courtesy of:**

