

# Preparedness for people with a physical disability



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Emergencies can strike at any time. They can damage and destroy homes and valuables, affect health, upset routines, and in many cases cause significant financial burden. The impacts are complex, long term, and often hidden.

Depending on your circumstances, you might be more at risk to the impacts of an emergency due to limited mobility, a chronic health condition, a lack of access – even temporarily – to health, support and essential services, loss or destruction of any aids, as well as financial hardship.

To reduce the impacts on your life, use this guide to work through Red Cross' emergency preparedness guide, RediPlan, with a partner, carer or family member.

You don't have to do it all at once. Every little bit counts. Most of it is easy, and won't take long.

## Prepare your mind

It's important to think about how to prepare both practically and psychologically for an emergency. Disruption to routines can increase anxiety and impact how you might respond. RediPlan (p. 6) has some great tips on how to anticipate what might be stressful, identify your reactions, and put in place some strategies to manage the situation. There is also a worksheet on p. 24 to help you plan how to manage your stress.

## Step 1: Get in the know (p.8)

You need to know the risks you face, how your life might be disrupted and who can help. Work through the personal assessment sheet on p. 12 to assess your strengths and where you might need help in dealing with the impacts of an emergency. Think about how hazards in your local area (both home and workplace) might affect you and your circumstances.

## Step 2: Get connected (p. 16)

Being connected to your community means you can help each other during and after an emergency.

If you face challenges with mobility and managing daily living routines, or live alone, having a personal support network is important. These are people who live close to you who can help with information, check in on you, or with preparing, evacuating, returning or cleaning up your home before during and after an emergency.

Equally you can be of great reassurance to someone else who lives locally. RediPlan (p. 17) will help you develop a personal support network.

## Step 3: Get organised (p. 18)

Organising the things that will help you gain a sense of control after an emergency is the next step to being prepared.

Having a record of your medical conditions, the medications you take and aids you use, your care plan, doctors/specialists, nursing, and home care support agency contact details will make things easier during and after the emergency for you and your carers.

If you use a smart phone, use the Medical ID function to record details on your iPhone or download an ICE app for Android phones. If you are a social media user, 'like' the Facebook and Twitter feeds of Police, Fire Services, SES, Bureau of Meteorology, ABC Emergency and Red Cross.

RediPlan (p. 19) will give you more advice on the above. It will also help you to identify and protect your irreplaceable items. A lifetime of memorabilia can have a great meaning not only for you, but also your family. There is space at the back of the booklet to write down all these details.

## Step 4: Get packing (p. 20)

Work through the activities on p. 21. The plan section at the back of the booklet will help with preparing a kit with your medical, sensory and mobility needs. Make sure you have spare batteries or parts for any aids. If you have spare glasses also put them in your kit.

## Congratulations!

You are now part of the millions of people who have taken steps to become more disaster resilient. Encourage family and friends, and particularly those in your personal support network to also download RediPlan and become prepared.

