

Hurricane Preparation

With hurricane season underway, it is important to get yourself prepared in case a storm is headed toward your area. Preparing for a disaster is never an easy process, but it can be particularly challenging when you have a disability. One important preparation tip for people with disabilities is to create a personal support network for yourself. A personal support network can be an important resource when dealing with a disaster or emergency situation, especially if your needs require increased preparation and consideration.

One of the best ways to form a personal support network is to first identify every place where you spend a significant amount of time, such as home, work, or school. It is best to comprise your network of at least three people from each location so that you have plenty of people to rely on, should a storm hit. You want to include people whom you trust to check on you or assist you if need be.

In addition to identifying the members of your personal support network, you also want to give them the most accurate information about your capabilities and disabilities so that they can help you in the best way possible. It is a good idea to write down not only your current everyday needs, but also any ways that your needs could change during a hurricane. Don't forget to include your service animal or pets in your plan! You can also ask your support network for brainstorming help while figuring out your needs so that you don't forget anything.

It is also strongly suggested that you give the members of your support network copies of your emergency and medical information, a list of all of your special needs, including medication or other equipment, and contact information for both yourself and the other members of your network. The more information that your support network has, the better they will be able to assist you during a hurricane or other disaster.

In addition to working with your support network to be prepared for hurricane season, there are also several smartphone apps that you can download. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has an app for all kinds of emergencies and disasters. <http://www.fema.gov/smartphone-app> It includes safety tips, disaster kit supplies lists, and information on open shelters. The American Red Cross also has a smartphone app that provides information about first aid, which can be useful in many different situations. <http://www.redcross.org/mobile-apps/first-aid-app> A third app that could be helpful for you and your personal support network is called ReUnite, and it allows you to keep track of your friends and family during a disaster. <https://lpf.nlm.nih.gov/ReUnite.html> Apps such as these can be important tools in a disaster environment, although they are not a substitute for proper planning.

Hurricane season can be stressful, but if you are well-prepared and have the support of people who care about you and whom you trust, you will find that you can weather any storm.