

Disaster Tips for the Hearing Impaired

HEARING AIDS

- ❖ Store hearing aid(s) in a strategic, consistent and secured location so they can be found and used after a disaster.
- ❖ For example, consider storing them in a container by your bedside, which is attached to a nightstand or bedpost using a string or Velcro. Missing or damaged hearing aids will be difficult to replace or fix immediately after a major disaster.

BATTERIES

- ❖ Store extra batteries for hearing aids and implants. If available, store an extra hearing aid with your emergency supplies.
- ❖ Maintain TTY batteries. Consult your manual for information.
- ❖ Store extra batteries for your TTY and light phone signaler. Check the owner's manual for proper battery maintenance.

COMMUNICATION

- ❖ Determine how you will communicate with emergency personnel if there is no interpreter or if you don't have your hearing aids. Store paper and pens for this purpose.

- ❖ Consider carrying a pre-printed copy of important messages with you, such as: "I speak American Sign Language (ASL) and need an ASL interpreter," "I do not write or read English," and "If you make announcements, I will need to have them written or signed."
- ❖ If possible, obtain a battery-operated television that has a decoder chip for access to signed or captioned emergency reports.
- ❖ Determine which broadcasting systems will be accessible in terms of continuous news that will be captioned and/or signed. Advocate so that television stations have a plan to secure emergency interpreters for on-camera duty.

ALARMS

- ❖ Install both audible alarms and visual smoke alarms. At least one should be battery operated.

ADVOCACY

- ❖ Recruit interpreters to be Red Cross emergency volunteers.
- ❖ Encourage TV stations to broadcast all news and emergency information in open caption format.
- ❖ When you travel, ensure hotels have services for deaf and hearing-impaired persons, including visual alarms. Ask for them when you check in.

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