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Disaster Tips for People who are Hearing Impaired

This checklist will assist people who are deaf or hearing impaired be prepared when disaster strikes.

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 emergency 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.

Maintain advocacy for 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 audible alarms. Ask for them when you check in.