

Functional Needs Populations & Emergency Preparedness Education

Questions & Answers

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Oklahoma State Department of Health

Emergency Preparedness and Response Services

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Oklahoma State
Department of Health

Creating a State of Health

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Introduction

This guide has been prepared for the general public and is based on the most current emergency preparedness information. The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) has designed this guide to help the citizens of Oklahoma learn how to prepare and respond to emergencies. The content focuses on general information for emergency preparedness and the functional needs populations.

Functional Needs Populations

Functional Needs Populations are defined as children and adults with access and functional needs such as physical, sensory, mental health, cognitive and/or intellectual disabilities affecting the ability to function independently without assistance. Others who may also have access and functional needs include, but are not limited to, women in late stages of pregnancy, seniors, and individuals needing bariatric equipment or communication assistance.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has provided new emergency sheltering guidelines to help state planners and non-profit organizations ensure people with access and functional needs receive lawful and equitable assistance after disasters. The Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) offers recommendations to state governments to help them provide emergency sheltering services to meet the needs of the communities and is in compliance with existing federal laws designed to prevent discrimination on the basis of disability. The Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) guidelines encourage emergency managers to plan for and meet the access and functional needs of the whole community as part of existing shelter plans for the state.

In all-hazards planning, emergency managers and shelter planners have the responsibility of planning to ensure that sheltering services and facilities are accessible. The decisions made in the planning process determine integration, effective

communication, inclusion, equal access, self-determination, physical access and reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures during emergency responses. The Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) are services that enable individuals to maintain independence in a general population shelter. The Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) includes:

- Reasonable modification to policies, practices, and procedures
- Durable medical equipment (DME)
- Consumable medical supplies (CMS)
- Personal assistance services (PAS)
- Other goods and services as needed

This Q & A document provides information that will give individuals, families, and care givers guidelines in emergency preparedness. This document will also provide general knowledge on the rights of individuals with functional needs in emergency circumstances.

Disability Law: Know Your Rights

While preparing for an emergency, it is important to keep in mind various rights and responsibilities under the law. At the federal level, The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and The Occupation Safety and Health Act (OSHA) play significant roles in requiring accessible emergency planning. In addition, some state and local governments have additional requirements for accessible emergency planning.

Understanding the law applied to emergency preparedness:

- **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, and places of public accommodation (such as restaurants, hotels, convention centers, etc.), transportation, and telecommunications. Thus, if emergency preparedness plans

are put into place in these settings, people with disabilities must be included. To read the full text of The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or obtain further information, the Disability Rights Section of the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice may be reached by calling (800) 514-0301 [voice] or (800) 514-0383. Information may also be readily downloaded online from The Americans with Disabilities Act website at www.ada.gov.

- **The U.S. Department of Justice** publishes a technical assistance guide titled "[An ADA Guide for Local Governments: Making Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs Accessible to People with Disabilities.](#)" The guide assists officials and emergency managers in learning how to include the needs of people with disabilities in every facet of emergency preparedness work. It addresses topics including planning, notification, and evacuation, sheltering, and returning home.
- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** [prohibits discrimination](#) on the basis of disability in programs conducted by federal agencies, in programs receiving federal financial assistance, in federal employment, and in the employment practices of Federal contractors. What does this mean? Recipients of federal funds must factor in the needs of people with disabilities when conducting work related to emergency preparedness.
- The **Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)** [has specific and detailed requirements](#) on emergency preparedness, including requirements for people with disabilities.
- **National Disability Rights Network, Protection and Advocacy Network** describes how advocates may gain access to emergency shelters.
- **Executive Order: Individuals with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness** by President George W. Bush (July 22, 2004) states that the Federal Government should appropriately support the safety and security for individuals with disabilities in situations involving disasters, including earthquakes, tornadoes, fires, floods, hurricanes, and acts of terrorism.

General Information

Question

What is a family emergency plan?

Answer

The family emergency plan is a plan that will have three contact telephone numbers for the family to use in the event of a disaster. This plan will have instructions for Shelter-in-Place, and evacuation information for the family to use for preparedness of natural or human made disasters.

Question

What is a disaster kit or go-bag?

Answer

A disaster kit or go-bag is a bag that a person should prepare for emergencies. This bag is one that is ready for quick movement out of a person's home when an emergency occurs. A go-bag can also stay in a person's car in the event of an emergency that prevents them from going home. The supplies will help an individual with personal needs during the stay away from the home.

Question

What is in a disaster kit or go-bag?

Answer

Basic supplies are recommended as the following:

- Water, one gallon of water per person/ per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food and a can opener if kit contains canned food
- Medication for each family member
- List of medication for each family member
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both

- Flashlight and extra batteries. (also consider buying the crank flashlight which does not need batteries)
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Local maps
- Pet food, extra water, and supplies for a person's pet or service animal

Question

What information does a person need to include about durable medical equipment (DME) in a disaster go-bag?

Answer

Have the manufacturer name of the equipment and the serial number of the equipment. It would also be good to have the manufacture's telephone number for questions concerning the handling of the equipment in case it breaks down during the emergency situation.

Question

What is a support network in a disaster?

Answer

Support networks consist of contact names and telephone numbers of persons that an individual can call for assistance during emergency situations. (Family, friends, neighbors, co-workers)

Question

Why does an individual need at least one contact person outside of the state that they live in during a disaster?

Answer

Many times the telephone communications network will be overloaded with local calls but not for out of state telephone calls. Having a telephone contact outside of the state maybe easier to utilize than inside the state where the disaster occurs.

Question

Does a person need to have multiple contact telephones numbers for each contact person?

Answer

Yes. Specific contacts may be at work or shopping during emergencies. Always have home telephone numbers, work telephone numbers (if possible), and cellular telephone numbers for emergency contacts. This will increase the chance of contacting these individuals during emergency situations.

Question

Does a person need a meeting place during disasters?

Answer

Yes. It is very important to have a meeting place so a person's emergency contacts will know where to find them during emergencies. This simple procedure will acknowledge who is missing or who is safe during emergency situations.

Question

Does a person need an out-of-neighborhood meeting place for emergencies?

Answer

Yes. It is very important to have a meeting place out of an individual's neighborhood. This is important in the event that an individual cannot enter into the neighborhood because of hazardous conditions.

Question

Does a person need an out-of-town meeting place for emergencies?

Answer

Yes. It is very important to have a meeting place out of town for safety. In the event that individuals are traveling, the family members or contacts can reach the individual(s) for emergencies.

Question

How does a person know the emergency route(s) used in the community?

Answer

Contact the county emergency manager for emergency routes used in the community. Also, practice usage of these routes for familiarity of the escape route.

Question

What is a family communication plan?

Answer

A family communication plan is a plan where each family member calls, or emails the same friend or relative in the event of an emergency. Be sure every member of the family knows the telephone number(s) of each other for emergency contact.

Question

Can a person receive emergency information in different languages?

Answer

Yes. Many different web sites carry emergency information in different languages for the public. www.fema.gov and www.cdc.gov

Question

What about money during disasters?

Answer

Automatic Teller Machine(s) (ATM's) may not work during emergencies. Always keep coins and cash for buying items because banks may not be open during an emergency. Automatic Teller Machines (ATM's) will not work during electrical outages.

Question

What medical information does a person need to have on hand for emergencies?

Answer

All medical information is important for any emergency situation. Keep a copy of the doctor's name, telephone number, and all prescription medication names, dosage, and the frequency of each medication for emergency medical conditions.

Question

How does a person prepare a Simple Medication List?

Answer

Remove the extra labels from prescription medication sheets and place the labels on a sheet of paper. All of the medications labels will have the important information needed during an emergency.

Question

Does the state have a registry of senior persons or people with disabilities for emergency responses?

Answer

No. The state does not have a registry, but utility companies maintain registers of seniors or people who need electricity for medical equipment. Contact the utility company for more information or to have the individual's family added to this list.

Question

How does a person plan for in-home health care or meal services during emergencies?

Answer

Work with the individual's in-home services to personalize emergency plans to meet needs during emergencies. Develop back-up plans for personal assistance services, hospice, or other forms of in-home assistance.

Question

How do I prepare for electrical outages affecting my medical equipment?

Answer

Make prior arrangements with a person's physician and/or check with oxygen supplier(s) about emergency plans for respirators or other electrical powered medical equipment.

Question

Where is the safest place for oxygen equipment shut off switch?

Answer

Keep the shut-off switch for oxygen equipment near the individual's bed or chair, so a person can get to it quickly if there is a fire.

Question

What about dialysis treatment during emergencies situations?

Answer

If an individual receives dialysis or other life sustaining medical treatment, identify the location and availability of more than one facility and work with providers to develop personal emergency plan.

Question

Should I shut off my utilities during a disaster?

Answer

Yes. If there is damage to an individual's home or they are instructed to turn off utilities during the emergency conditions.

Question

What other safe water sources in a home, can be utilized in emergency situations?

Answer

Safe water sources include:

- melted ice cubes
- water drained from the water heater (if the water heater has not been damaged)
- liquids from canned goods such as fruit or vegetable juices
- water drained from pipes

Fire Safety

Question

Does a person need to have a fire extinguisher in a home?

Answer

Yes. Everyone should know how to use a fire extinguisher and where the fire extinguishers are located in the home or place of business.

Question

What type of fire extinguisher should a person have in a home??

Answer

The best type of fire extinguisher for the home is called ABC.

Question

Do they really have smoke alarms for people with disabilities?

Answer

Yes. Bed shakers, light strobes, and voice alarms are available for people with disabilities.

Question

Where can a person receive free fire alarms?

Answer

Oklahoma Able Tech

1-888-885-5588 (V/TDD) or (405) 744-9748

Fax (405) 744-2487 or visit <http://ok.gov/abletech>

Question

What is the free fire alarm program for people with disabilities?

Answer

The program is called Fire Safety Solutions for People with Disabilities. The program is designed to distribute and install free smoke alarms, as well as provide Fire Safety messages to Oklahomans with disabilities. Fire Protection Publications and Oklahoma ABLE Tech, both at Oklahoma State University; have created a partnership to provide specific fire safety messages to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind/low vision, or have mobility disabilities.

Question

Who is eligible to participate in this program?

Answer

A person must be an Oklahoma resident who has documented proof of a hearing, visual, or mobility disability.

Question

What must a person do to participate in this program?

Answer

- 1) Complete an application form.
- 2) Provide proof of the disability (proof of disability may include a letter from a doctor, therapist, or other medical provider, or a copy of a person's driver's license with indication of disability).

Question

What happens after a person applies for the program?

Answer

After completing the application and providing proof of disability, the eligibility will be determined by Oklahoma ABLE Tech. This information will be passed along to Fire Protection Publications, and they will contact the person to set up an appointment for installation.

Question

Can a person receive a free fire alarm if they do not have a disability?

Answer

Yes. Call the local fire department and they will provide and install free fire alarms in the home.

Question

How many exits should a person have in a family emergency plan?

Answer

In a family emergency plan, each room should have two exits for escapes. Practicing the exit routes in a person's home is a good idea for emergency preparedness.

Shelter Information

Question

Does a person have the right to choose where they will shelter in emergencies?

Answer

Yes. An individual has the right to choose where they shelter in an emergency situation. All emergency shelters should be accessible to everyone during emergency situations.

Question

Can emergency disaster personnel force a person to go to a Long Term Care (LTC) Facility or Assisted Living Facility (ALF)?

Answer

No. No one can make a person(s) go to a Long Term Care (LTC) Facility or Assisted Living Facility (ALF) because of age, medical condition, or disability. To do so is against the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.

Question

Can the emergency disaster personnel force a person to go to a hospital?

Answer

Yes. The emergency disaster personnel can force a person to go to a hospital, if the individual is showing signs of an acute medical condition that is life threatening.

Question

Can an individual stay in the shelter without personal care aides?

Answer

Yes. Shelter operators should provide support services in mass care shelters to accommodate people with disabilities who are not medically fragile but need some assistance with daily living activities. Such assistance can be provided by medical personnel or trained volunteers in the shelter.

Question

Can an individual stay with a family member in the shelter or if they choose to go to a Long Term Care (LTC) or Assisted Living Facility (ALF)?

Answer

Yes. Family members provide each other the support and assistance necessary to cope with emergencies and disasters. Large groups of family members may not be able to stay with each other but should be housed close by the other family members. Couples or a

senior person and a family member can be placed together in a Long Term Care (LTC) or Assisted Living Facility (ALF). Keeping families members together is helpful for everyone.

Question

What is a service animal?

Answer

The ADA defines a service animal as any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. If they meet this definition, animals are considered service animals under The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regardless of whether they have been licensed or certified by a state or local government.

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that the individual with a disability cannot perform independently. Guide dogs are one type of service animal, used by some individuals who are blind. This is the type of service animal with which most people are familiar. But there are service animals that assist persons with other kinds of disabilities in day-to-day activities. Some examples include:

- Alerting persons with hearing disabilities to sounds.
- Pulling wheelchairs, carrying, and picking up things for persons with mobility disabilities.
- Assisting persons with mobility disabilities with balance while walking or standing.

A service animal is **not** a pet.

Question

Can an individual bring a service animal to the shelter?

Answer

Yes. Under The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) a person is allowed to bring the service animal to the shelter. The emergency personnel can only ask a person two questions about **the service animal: (1) “Do they need this animal because of a**

disability?” (2) “What tasks or work has the animal been trained to perform?” Service animals can be a dog or trained miniature horse.

Question

Does a service animal need a go-bag?

Answer

Yes. Prepare a disaster go-bag for a service animal. Items included in the service animal’s go bag include food, water, medication, favorite toy, crate, leash, service animal shot records, and name of the veterinarian. It is important to remember that these items will be available in a shelter in case of emergencies conditions.

Question

Will the shelter provide food and water for a service animal?

Answer

Yes. Many times a person is not able to bring everything to a shelter that is needed for the service animal. Do not allow this to keep a person home during an emergency. Evacuate to the nearest shelter with a person’s service animal anytime a hazardous conditions occurs.

Question

Does the owner of the service animal have to pay for its care in the shelter?

Answer

No. No payment is involved in the care of a person’s service animal during the emergency circumstances.

Question

Can a person bring a pet(s) into the shelter?

Answer

No. The owner cannot bring pets inside the shelter. The shelter will have animal services in close proximity to the emergency shelter. The services for a person’s animal/pets are provided as long as the emergency shelter is in operation. The owner can visit the pets during these emergency circumstances. All food, water, medication, and sheltering of pets will be provided during the stay in the shelter.

Question

Does a person have to pay for the services provided for a pet?

Answer

No. The care and services provided for a pets are free during the time of the shelter operations.

Question

Does my pet need a disaster kit or go-bag?

Answer

Yes. The pets will need a disaster kit or go-bag for emergencies. Items included in the pets go-bag include food, water, medication, favorite toy, crate, leash, animal shot records, and name of the veterinarian. The most important fact to remember is the basic items will be available in a shelter in case of emergencies.

Question

What if someone needs information in another format, will the information be provided in the shelter?

Answer

Yes. Large print, different languages, readers, audiotape, and American Sign Language (ASL) should be provided throughout the stay in the shelter. Accurate communication is important in all emergency conditions. This is a mandate from The Americans with Disability Act (ADA). Ask for this accommodation if it is not immediately provided.

Question

Can an individual request a language interpreter for Spanish or other languages besides English?

Answer

Yes. Under The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) the shelter personnel must provide communication of rules, services, and activities to everyone in the shelter.

Question

Can a person request an American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter in the shelter?

Answer

Yes. Communication is important and access to communication is mandated by The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) laws. Request this service as soon as the person arrives in the shelter.

Question

Will the emergency personnel provide an orientation and way finding assistance to people who are blind or who have low vision?

Answer

Yes. Under The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) the emergency shelter personnel should provide these services to people who seek awareness of shelter environment.

Question

Will the shelter provide a low-stimulation “stress-relief zone”?

Answer

Yes. This type of space will be provided on a priority basis to anyone in a shelter.

Question

Can an individual request a special placement of cots in the shelter? The example is a person needing to have a cot close to the bathroom in the shelter.

Answer

Yes. Due to disabilities or other health issues, placement of an individual’s cot is flexible in the shelter.

Question

Can an individual receive durable medical equipment (DME) and medication in the shelter?

Answer

Yes. Walkers, wheelchairs, canes, crutches, and medication can be provided in the shelter. Ask the shelter’s medical personnel for such equipment or medication when the individual enrolls into the shelter.

Question

Can a person ask for durable heavy gloves, to assist in wheelchair usage in the shelter?

Answer

Yes. Contact the emergency personnel for this item for wheelchair usage.

Question

Will there be a refrigerator for a person's medication in the shelter?

Answer

Yes. The shelter will have a refrigerator for medication. If an individual is bringing medication to the shelter, please tell the medical emergency personnel to ensure correct medication storage.

Question

Will an individual have access to electricity for oxygen, or other life sustaining equipment in the shelter?

Answer

Yes. Electricity will be provided in the shelter. Inform the shelter personnel about the individual's need for electricity.

Question

Can an individual have a different diet provided in the shelter?

Answer

Yes. People with dietary regulations will be accommodated in the shelter.

Question

If a person forgot specific prescription medication during evacuation, will the shelter personnel provide replacement medication?

Answer

Yes. Medication will be provided to individuals upon examination from a doctor in the shelter.

Question

Can relatives stay with family members in the same area of the shelter?

Answer

Yes. Separation of family members is not recommended in shelter operations. Self-determination of persons in the shelter is a part of The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Question

Can an individual ask for shower or bathroom transferring assistance while in the shelter?

Answer

Yes. Accessibility to all services is a part of The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Assistance in daily living activities is a part of the shelter operations. Ask the shelter personnel for the location of these individuals in the shelter.

Question

Will the emergency personnel provide people with disabilities a reasonable amount of time and assistance to locate appropriate housing?

Answer

Yes. The emergency personnel will not close the shelter without everyone being placed in a safe environment. The emergency personnel and other social agencies will provide assistance in sheltering of individuals whose homes or places to stay are destroyed due to the disaster.

Shelter-In-Place

Question

What is Shelter-in-Place?

Answer

Shelter in-Place is when a person stays in a building and avoids any outside travel or movement.

Question

How does a person Shelter-in-Place during emergencies?

Answer

To Shelter-in-Place and Seal the Room performs the following activities:

- Bring the family and pets **inside**.
- **Lock** doors, **close** windows, air vents and fireplace dampers.
- **Turn off** fans, air conditioning and forced air heating systems.
- **Take the emergency supply kit** unless the individual have reason to believe it has been contaminated, into the selected room.
- **Go into an interior room** with few windows, if possible.
- **Seal** all windows, doors, and air vents with plastic sheeting and duct tape. Consider measuring and cutting the sheeting in advance to save time.
- Be prepared to **improvise** and use what is on hand to **seal gaps** so that the person can create a barrier between themselves and any contamination.
- Local authorities may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what a person should do. However, a person should **watch television, listen to the radio or check the Internet often for official news** and instructions as they become available.

Question

How will I know when I need to Shelter-in-Place?

Answer

Fire or police department warning procedures may include:

- All call telephoning- an automated system for sending recording messages, sometimes called reverse 9-1-1.
- Outdoor warning sirens or horns.
- News media sources-radio, television and cable.
- National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio Alerts.
- Residential route alerting- messages announced to neighborhoods from vehicles equipped with public address systems.

Question

How do I Shelter-in-Place with my pets?

Answer

The pets will need to have extra supplies while they shelter-in-place. The disaster kit or go-bag will assist in surplus supplies for a person's pets needs during the shelter-in-place timeframe.

Question

Can a person use a grill to cook food inside the home?

Answer

No. Never use a charcoal grill or gas grill inside a home. The use of the grills inside a home will cause carbon monoxide fumes inside the home. These fumes are very dangerous and can kill a person and pets.

How to file a Complaint

The United States Department of Justice
www.justice.gov/actioncenter/complaint.html

Americans with Disabilities Act

800-514-0301 (voice)

800-514-0383 (TTY) (also Spanish)

How to file an ADA complaint

Section 508

202-305-8304 (voice)

202-353-8944 (TTY)

Discrimination

202-514-0301 (voice)

202-514-0716 (TDD)

References

Administration on Aging www.aoa.gov

American Red Cross www.redcross.org

Americans with Disabilities Act www.ada.gov

Centers for Disaster Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov

Disability Preparedness www.disabilitypreparedness.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency www.fema.gov

National Oceanic and Administration www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr

National Organization on Disability www.nod.org

Oklahoma Able Tech www.ok.gov/abletech/Fire_Safety/

Ready Gov. www.ready.gov

United State Department of Justice www.justice.gov/actioncenter/complaint.html

Acronyms

ABC- Multipurpose dry chemical extinguisher

ADA-The Americans with Disabilities Act

ALF-Assisted Living Facility

ASL-American Sign Language

ATM-Automatic Teller Machine

CDC- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CMS-Centers for Medicare & Medicaid

DME-Durable Medical Equipment

FCC-Federal Communications Commission

FEMA-Federal Emergency Management Agency

FNSS- Functional Needs Support Services

LTC-Long Term Care

NOAA-National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

OSDH-Oklahoma State Department of Health

OSHA-Occupational Safety and Health Administration

PAS- Personal Assistance Services

Q & A-Question and Answer

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