



THE PARTNERSHIP
FOR INCLUSIVE DISASTER STRATEGIES

Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities

www.disasterstrategies.org

Accessibility

- American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters in-person and available on Zoom
- Zoom auto captions enabled

Who We Are and What We Do

Your Disability & Disaster Hub



Support Disabled Disaster Survivors and Organizations



Strengthen Community Resilience



Increase Education and Awareness



Influencing Advocacy, Policy, and Systems Change

What You Will Learn

By the end of today, you will start to understand:

- How to create an emergency plan
- When to shelter-in-place and when to evacuate
- What to put in your emergency kits

This Space

This is a space to:

- Feel safe
- Ask questions
- Have fun!

Question for You

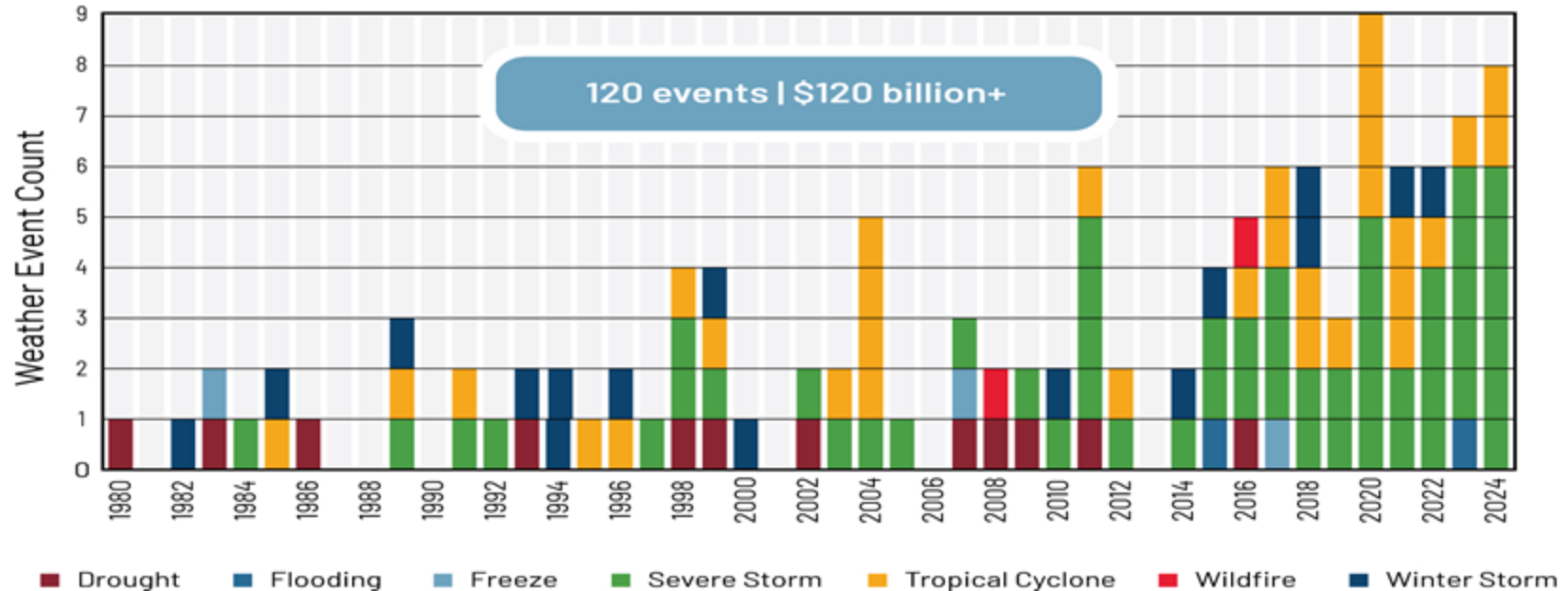
How ready do you feel for disasters?

1. Very ready
2. Kinda ready
3. Not ready at all

Why Planning for Disasters Is Important

Disasters are Increasing

NORTH CAROLINA BILLION-DOLLAR DISASTER EVENTS 1980–2024



Disasters are Increasing

“The City of Asheville’s Climate Resilience Assessment identified three primary climate stressors impacting our region:

- Heavy precipitation, which causes flooding and landslides
- Drought, which leads to wildfires and water shortages
- Extreme temperature variability.

As Tropical Storm Helene demonstrated, extreme weather events can lead to extended outages of power, communications, infrastructure, and water.”

– [Climate Reality in Asheville](#)



Disasters' Impact on Disabled People

“People with disabilities are 2-to-4 times more likely to die or be injured in a disaster than non-disabled people.”

– [United Nations](#)

During Helene in North Carolina, 15.9% of people in disaster-affected counties had a disability, compared to 13.5% in non-disaster counties.

– [Census Bureau](#)

Disasters' Impact on At-Risk Communities

“One in four or 138,000 mobile homes in North Carolina were in counties under a major disaster declaration.”

– [Census Bureau](#)

In North Carolina, “...volunteers poured into the region with tons of food, clothes, water, and other supplies, it still took days for aid to reach some people — particularly Black low-income people, the elderly, and those living with disabilities.

– [Capital B](#)

What is a Disaster?

According to FEMA, a disaster:

- Causes a lot of people to die or get hurt.
- Damages or destroys buildings and homes.
- Makes it really hard for local and state governments to respond to people's needs.
- Negatively affects the economy for a long time.
- Makes it very difficult for local governments and businesses to help out right away.

Types of Emergencies and Disasters

There are:

- Minor Emergencies
- Limited and Potential Emergencies
- Major Disasters

Know Your Risks: Common Disasters in Your Areas

- Severe storms (all seasons)
- Flooding
- Landslides
- Extreme weather (heat/cold)
- Drought
- Wildfires

Create a Culture of Preparedness

- Know that a disaster can happen at any time
- Update your plan regularly
- Make preparedness a part of your routine

A yellow starburst graphic with a black outline and a drop shadow, containing the text "Practice your plan often!".

**Practice
your plan often!**

How to Get Ready for Disasters or Emergencies

Disability Rights in Disasters: Overview

Whenever disaster-related programs and services are provided to the general public, they must be accessible to and inclusive of people with disabilities.

- Shelters cannot deny you entry because you're disabled.
- You have the right to physically accessible and otherwise ADA compliant shelters.
- You have the right to equally effective communication.
 - Examples: ASL interpreters, large print, Braille, assistive technology

Disability Rights in Disasters: Overview

- You have the right to request reasonable modifications of policies or practices.
- You have the right to bring your service animal with you in a shelter, disaster recovery center, or other public places providing disaster-related programs and services.
- You have the right to not go into a facility if you don't want.

Disability rights are NEVER suspended in disasters!

What to Do to Be Ready

✓ Know your risks

⇒ Stay informed

✓ Know your rights

⇒ Make a plan

Make Plans

Plans start with having conversations with:



Family



Friends



Support Networks



Faith community



Coworkers

Make sure you have a plan for:



Sheltering in place



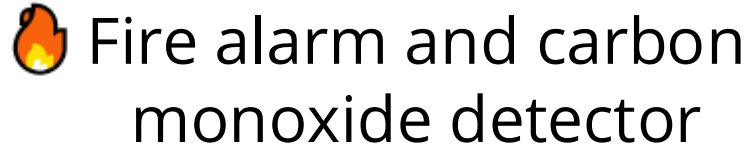
Evacuating

How to Make a Plan

- ✓ Who are the people that can help me?
- ✓ What is my plan for sheltering?
- ✓ What is my plan for evacuating?
- ✓ What is my plan if power is out for a long time?
- ✓ What is my communication plan?
- ✓ Do I have what I need?

Stay Informed: Follow Emergency Alerts

Types of alerts:



Starting to Plan: First Steps

First steps in developing your disaster plan can include:

- Deciding how often you want to plan for disasters, emergencies, and extreme weather and note this in your calendar.
- Beginning to create a social network to assist you, if you want one.
- Exchanging updated contact information with your social network if you already have one.

Starting to Plan: First Steps

First steps in developing your disaster plan can include:

- Setting times to review your plan and rotate items so that your emergency kit does not contain expired items.
- Setting priorities: Decide what is most important or most manageable to you.
 - If you can't complete some of these steps, consider modifying them to meet your needs.

Building Your Emergency Kits

When getting your kits ready, remember:

- Make your kits to meet your needs
- Get ready a go-bag that will last for at least 3 days
- Get ready a shelter-in-place kit that will last for at least 2 weeks

Preparing with Few Resources

Not everyone may be able to have the time, money, or space to gather all items suggested for an emergency kit.

This is okay!

Any planning is better than no planning.

Preparing with Few Resources

If you have any amount of money available, buy essentials like:

- water,
- shelf-stable food,
- flashlights and batteries,
- solar-powered battery charger for phones or other devices, and
- a hand crank radio or a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio.

Preparing with Few Resources

Not having money does not mean that you cannot do any disaster planning.

You can:

- Review our [General No-Cost Preparedness Tips](#).
- Look for free items for your go bag / shelter-in-place kit.
 - Find out if food pantries, faith-based groups, or other nonprofits in your community can help.

Preparing with Few Resources

It is often difficult for disabled people to have enough money for day-to-day survival, let alone extra to prepare for disasters.

This is not your fault.

Building Your Emergency Kit

- ✓ **Water** (one gallon 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 manual **can opener**
- ✓ First aid kit
- ✓ Masks
- ✓ Battery-powered or hand **crank radio** and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert

Building Your Emergency Kit

- ✓ Flashlights and extra batteries
- ✓ Plastic sheeting and duct tape
- ✓ Wrench or pliers (to turn off utilities)
- ✓ Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties
- ✓ Disability-related supplies
- ✓ Important documents
- ✓ Chargers
- ✓ Local maps
- ✓ Whistle

Important Documents

Keep important documents in a waterproof bag *and* saved electronically, if possible.

Consider including:

- ✓ List of emergency contacts
- ✓ House/apartment lease, mortgage or deed
- ✓ Health insurance and primary doctor information
- ✓ Copies of ID, birth certificate, and social security card or green card (if applicable)

Important Documents

Consider including:

- ✓ Prescription medication details
- ✓ Dietary requirements
- ✓ Information on your customized equipment
- ✓ Service animal or pet vet records and/or microchip information

Disability Preparedness

Think about your equipment

- Wheelchair, walker, white cane, hearing aids, speech device, breathing machines

What needs electricity to work?

Disability Preparedness



What other things do you need to be independent?

- Urinary and/or bowel supplies, wound care supplies, gloves, wipes

Disability Preparedness

 **What are your communication needs?**

- American Sign Language (ASL), a communication device, plain language, large print, braille, etc.

Disability Preparedness

-  What is your communication plan if you are unable to communicate during a disaster?
- Communication board, support network, paper and pen

Emergency Kit Reminders

 Check on and update your supplies (as needed) every six months.

- Do this at the start of winter and summer.

 Keep your kit in a cool, dry place, out of direct sunlight

Question for You

How will you communicate with your friends or family that can help you in a disaster?

Question for You

What other things are you thinking about putting in your emergency kits?

Get Ready to Shelter-In-Place

Shelter-in-Place

Shelter-in-place: Stay where you are during a disaster or emergency

- Follow the instructions from local authorities
(Examples: mayor, emergency management)

Shelter-in-Place

Times when you may need to shelter-in-place:



Winter storms



Extreme heat/cold (if you have power)

Think About

- Where are some places you go a lot?
- What do their shelter-in-place plans look like?

Questions?

Evacuations

Evacuation

Evacuate: Leave where you are when your area is not safe

Times when you may need to evacuate:

 Wildfire

 Flooding

 Power outages

What to Take With You

Your Go Bag

- ✓ Easy to grab
- ✓ **Add:** power equipment chargers, consumable medical supplies, communication device, fidget devices, a change of clothes, 3 bottles of water

Places to Evacuate From

Places you go often

 Home

 Work

 Classes

 Friends + Family

Consider:

 Accessible ways to leave

 Evacuation instructions

Where Will You Go?

- Family
- Friends
- Neighbor
- Shelter
- Place of worship
(Examples: church, mosque, synagogue)

How Will You Evacuate?

- Car
- Friends
- Family
- Public bus
- Paratransit

Questions?

Personal Preparedness Checklist

You will receive a checklist that will go over:

- ✓ Disability Rights During Disasters Overview
- ✓ Staying Informed Resources
- ✓ Emergency Kit Checklist
- ✓ Disability-related Preparedness Checklist
- ✓ Your Planning Guide

Resources

- Alerts: [How to Opt in to Wireless Emergency Alerts](#)
- Download the [FEMA App](#)
- Download the [Red Cross App](#)
- Finding a [shelter near you](#)
 - Text SHELTER and your ZIP Code to 43362
(Example Text: "Shelter 98499")
 - Call Red Cross 1-800-733-2767
- [Ready Resources](#)
- [Poison control](#): Call 1-800-222-1222

Resources

- Disability & Disaster Hotline:
 - Call / Text: +1 (800) 626-4959
 - Email: hotline@disasterstrategies.org
- American Red Cross Western North Carolina
- 211 / United Way
- Southeast ADA Center
- Disaster Tips
- Personal Preparedness Planning Checklist



Thank you!

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