

Preparing for Emergencies

A Checklist for People with Neuromuscular Diseases

For the millions of Americans with limited mobility, emergencies such as fires and floods present a special challenge. Protecting yourself and your family when disaster strikes requires planning ahead.

This checklist will help you get started. Discuss these ideas with your family, friends or a personal care attendant, and prepare an emergency plan. Post the plan where everyone will see it.

Emergency Checklist

Ask Questions

Call your local Federal Emergency Management Agency office or American Red Cross chapter.

- Ask what kinds of disasters could occur in your area and how to prepare for each.
- Ask how you would be warned of an emergency.
- Ask about special assistance that may be available to you in an emergency. Many communities ask people with disabilities to register, usually with the local fire department or emergency management office, so needed help can be provided quickly in an emergency.
- Ask your supervisor about emergency plans at your workplace.
- Ask your children's teachers and caregivers about emergency plans for schools and day care centers.
- If you currently use a personal care attendant obtained from an agency, check to see if the agency has special provisions for emergencies (e.g., providing services at another location should an evacuation be ordered).

Create a Plan

Meet with household members or your personal care attendant. Discuss the dangers of fire, severe weather, earthquakes and other emergencies that might occur in your community.

- Determine what you'll need to do for each type of emergency. For example, most people head for a basement when there is a tornado warning, but most basements aren't wheelchair-accessible. Determine in advance what your alternative shelter will be and how you will get there.
- Visit Quest Magazine Online (quest.mda.org) and search keyword Emergencies for related articles. (For additional assistance and copies of articles, call your local MDA office at 800-572-1717.)
- Post emergency telephone numbers near telephones, and teach your children how and when to call for help.
- Learn what to do in case of power outages and personal injuries. Know how to connect or start a backup power supply for essential medical equipment.
- If you or someone in your household uses a wheelchair, make more than one exit from your home wheelchair-accessible in case the primary exit is blocked in a disaster.
- Teach those who may need to assist you in an emergency how to operate necessary equipment.
- Arrange for a friend or neighbor to check on you in an emergency.
- Learn how to turn off the water, gas and electricity at main valves or switches.
- Plan and practice how to escape from your home in an emergency.
- Consider getting a medical alert system that will allow you to call for help if you are immobilized in an emergency.
- If you live in an apartment, ask the management to identify and mark accessible exits.
- Learn your community's evacuation routes.
- Obtain a battery-operated radio for emergency information.
- Pick one out-of-state and one local friend or relative for family members to call if separated by disaster.
- Pick two meeting places:
 - 1) A place near your home in case of fire.
 - 2) A place outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home after a disaster.

- Keep family records in a water-tight, fire-proof container.

Prepare a Disaster Supplies Kit

Assemble supplies you might need in an evacuation. Store them in easy-to-carry containers such as a backpack or duffel bag. **Include:**

- A battery-powered radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries for them
 - A first aid kit, prescription medications and an extra pair of glasses
 - A supply of water (one gallon per person per day); store water in sealed, unbreakable containers; identify the storage date, and replace every six months
 - A supply of nonperishable food and a nonelectric can opener, plus any special foods you require
 - If you have a baby, include extra diapers and other infant care items
 - Extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, medication, catheters, food for guide or service dogs, or other special equipment you might need
 - A change of clothing, rain gear and sturdy shoes
 - Blankets or sleeping bags
 - A list of family physicians and the relative or friend who should be notified if you are injured
 - A list of the styles and serial numbers of medical devices such as pacemakers
 - An extra set of car keys
- Also ...**
- Store backup equipment, such as a manual wheelchair, at a neighbor's home, school or your workplace.

Home Hazard Hunt

In a disaster, anything that can move, fall, break or cause a fire is a potential hazard.

- Repair defective electrical wiring. Smell for leaky gas connections. If you smell gas, turn the gas off, and call a professional to repair it.
- Keep the shut-off switch for oxygen equipment near your bed or chair, so you can get to it quickly if there's a fire.
- Fasten shelves securely to the wall. Place large, heavy objects on lower shelves or floor.
- Hang pictures and mirrors away from beds. Bolt large pictures or mirrors to the wall.
- Secure water heater by strapping it to a nearby wall.
- Repair cracks in ceilings or foundations. Brace overhead light fixtures.
- Store weed killers, pesticides and flammable products away from heat sources.
- Have chimneys, flue pipes, vent connectors and gas vents cleaned and repaired by a professional.

If You Need to Evacuate

- Listen to a battery-powered radio for the location of emergency shelters. Know in advance the location of wheelchair-accessible shelters. Follow instructions of local officials.
- Wear appropriate clothing and sturdy shoes.

- Take your Disaster Supplies Kit.
- Lock your house.
- Use the travel routes specified or special assistance provided by local officials.

If you're sure you have time ...

- Shut off water, gas and electricity if instructed to do so.
- Let others know when you left and where you are going.
- Make arrangements for pets. Animals other than service animals may not be allowed in public shelters.

Prepare a Car Kit

Include:

- Battery-powered radio, flashlight, extra batteries and maps
- Blanket and first aid kit
- Shovel
- Tire repair kit, booster cables, pump and flares

- Fire extinguisher (5-lb., A-B-C type)
- Bottled water and nonperishable foods such as granola bars, raisins and cookies

Fire Safety

- Plan two escape routes out of each room. If you can't use the stairways, make special arrangements for help in advance. Never use the elevators.
- Install smoke detectors. Clean and test smoke detectors once a month. Change batteries at least once a year.
- Consider installing home sprinklers.
- If there's a fire, don't try to fight the fire. Get out fast. Do not stop for pets or possessions. Call the fire department after you're outside. Never go back into a burning building.
- Feel the bottom of a door with the palm of your hand. If it's hot, find another way out.

This publication originally was prepared with the help of the American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Your local emergency medical services contact is:

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TORNADO • FLASH FLOOD • EARTHQUAKE • WINTER STORM

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A Checklist

for People with Neuromuscular Diseases



MDA
Muscular
Dystrophy
Association
Fighting Muscle Disease

HURRICANE • FIRE • HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SPILL

Emergency Plan

Family Cell Phone Numbers

Father _____ Mother _____

Other _____

Out-of-State Contact

Name _____

City _____

Telephone (Day) _____ (Evening) _____

Email _____ Cell phone _____

Local Contact

Name _____

Telephone (Day) _____ (Evening) _____

Email _____ Cell phone _____

Nearest Relative

Name _____

City _____

Telephone (Day) _____ (Evening) _____

Email _____ Cell phone _____

Family Work Numbers

Father _____ Mother _____

Other _____

Emails _____

Emergency Telephone Numbers

In a life-threatening emergency, dial 911 or the local emergency medical services system number.

Police Department _____

Fire Department _____

Hospital _____

Family Physicians

Name _____ Telephone _____

Name _____ Telephone _____

Name _____ Telephone _____

Reunion Locations

1. Right outside your home _____

2. Away from the neighborhood, in case you can't return home _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Route to try first _____

Escape Plan

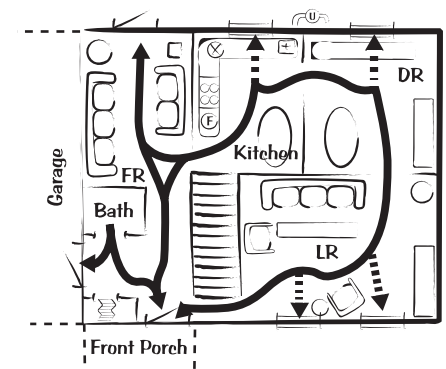
In a fire or other emergency, you may need to evacuate on a moment's notice. Be ready to get out fast.

Develop an escape plan by drawing a floor plan of your residence. Show the location of doors, windows, stairways, large furniture, emergency supplies (Disaster Supplies Kit), fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, collapsible ladders, first aid kits and utility shut-off points. Indicate at least two escape routes from each room, and mark a place outside the home where household members and/or your personal care attendant should meet in case of fire. If you or someone in your household uses a wheelchair, make more than one exit from your home wheelchair-accessible in case the primary exit is blocked in a disaster.

Include important points outside, such as garages, patios, stairways, elevators, driveways and porches. If your home has more than two floors, use an additional sheet of paper. Practice emergency evacuation drills at least twice each year.

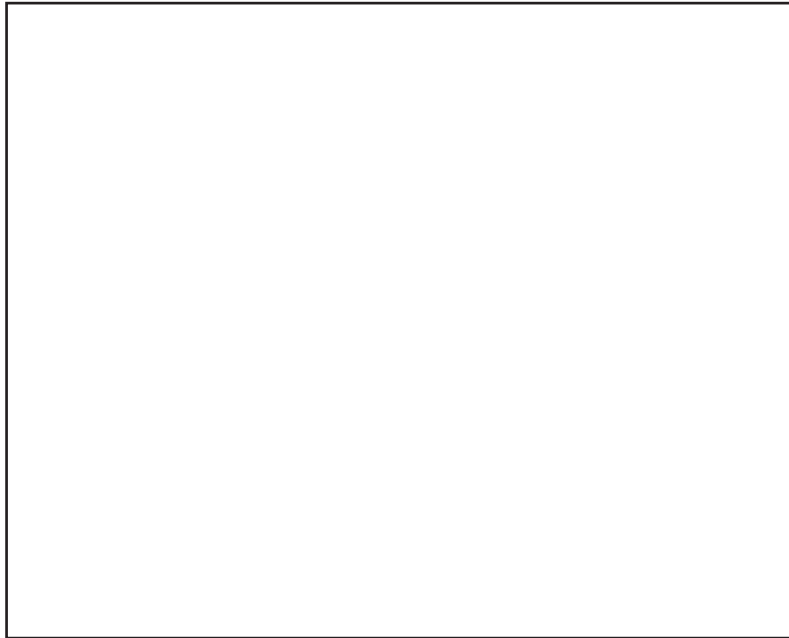
Example:

Floor one

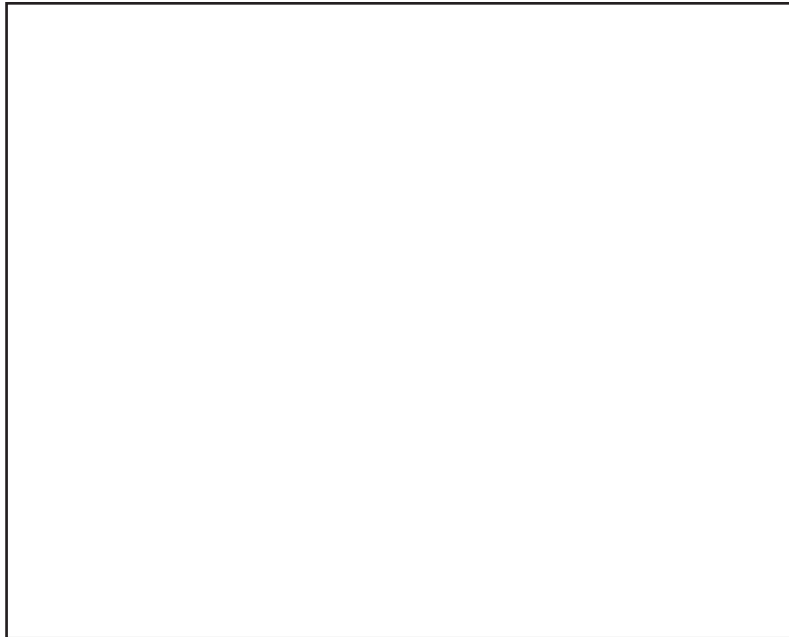


Floor Plan

Floor One



Floor Two



 Normal Exit Route

 Emergency Exit Route

 Fire Extinguisher

 Smoke Detectors

 Disaster Supplies Kit

 Doors

 Collapsible Ladder

 Reunion Location (Outside)

 Stairs

 Utility Shut-Off

 Windows

 First Aid Kit