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Those with Special Needs

Infants, the elderly, and those with special needs should not be forgotten while preparing for emergencies. This group for planning purposes is described as those individuals with [Access and Functional Needs](#). Some preparedness tips are described below:

General Preparedness Tips

Before a Disaster

- Eliminate hazards. Make it as easy as possible to quickly get under a sturdy table or desk for protection during an earthquake or explosion.
- Anchor special equipment such as telephones and life support systems.
- Fasten tanks of gas, such as oxygen, to the wall.
- Keep a list of medications, allergies, special equipment, names and numbers of doctors, pharmacists and family members. Make sure you have this list with you at all times.
- Keep an extra pair of eyeglasses and medication with emergency supplies.
- Keep walking aids near you at all times. Have extra walking aids in different rooms of the house.
- Put a security light in each room. These lights plug into any outlet and light up automatically if there is a loss of electricity. They continue operating automatically for four to six hours, and they can be turned off by hand in an emergency.
- Make sure you have a whistle to signal for help.
- Keep extra batteries for hearing aids with your emergency supplies. Remember to replace them annually.
- Find two people you trust who will check on you after an emergency. Tell them your special needs. Show them how to operate any equipment you use. Show them where your emergency supplies are kept. Give them a spare key.

During and After a Disaster

- During an earthquake or explosion, if you are in bed or sitting down, do not get up.
- If you are standing, duck and cover or sit down. You could be thrown to the floor if you are standing.
- During a fire, make sure you are ready to Stop, Drop and Roll to protect yourself.
- Practice emergency exit drills in the house (EDITH) regularly.
- Prepare to be self-sufficient for at least three days.
- Turn on your portable radio for instructions and news reports.
- For your own safety, cooperate fully with public safety officials and instructions.
- Prepare for aftershocks after an earthquake.
- If you evacuate, leave a message at your home telling family members and others where you can be found.

Additional Resource Information

[FEMA- "Individuals with Special Needs" Disability.gov "Emergency Preparedness" Ready.gov "People with Special Needs" Disability Preparedness.gov](#)
[Cal EMA Office of Access and Functional Needs](#)
[FEMA-Comprehensive Preparedness Guide for the Special Needs Population](#)