

# Seniors and People with Special Needs

If you are a senior, or have special needs, you should take additional steps to plan for disasters and protect yourself in an emergency. If you have friends or neighbors with special needs, help them with these extra precautions:

- † Create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends and co-workers to aid you in an emergency. Discuss your needs and make sure they know how to operate necessary equipment.
- † If you have a hearing impairment, you should make special arrangements to receive a warning, either with equipment or through a family/friend notification system.
- † Those with mobility impairments may need assistance in getting to a shelter and should make arrangements prior to a disaster. In addition, you should have an escape chair if you live or work in a high rise building.
- † Discuss any special needs you have with your employer.
- † Households headed by a single working parent may need help to plan for disasters and assistance during an emergency.
- † Those who are non-English speaking may need assistance planning for and responding to emergencies and may need the services of interpreters or community groups.
- † If you do not have a vehicle or cannot drive, you should make arrangements for transportation in the event of evacuation.
- † Ensure that your emergency supply kit is stocked correctly if you have special dietary needs. (see “Emergency Supply Kits” section)

- † Be aware of special assistance that may be available in your community. Check with the Office of Emergency Management or Senior Services
- † If you live in an apartment building, ensure that management marks accessible exits clearly and assists you in making arrangements to help you evacuate the building.
- † If you do not have special needs yourself, identify those who do in your neighborhood or building so that you can assist them during emergencies.

## **Special Notes for Those with Medical Needs**

- † Store extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, food for guide or hearing-ear dogs, and other items you might need. Keep a list of the type and serial numbers of medical devices you need.
- † Ensure that you have life-sustaining medications, equipment and oxygen (i.e., seizure, blood pressure, and heart medications, insulin, colostomy dressings, battery backup for machines or a generator, etc.) that will last through at least the disaster and recovery period (at least three days).
- † Since there may be no phone service and pharmacies may close, plan in advance with your physician for a way to obtain emergency prescription refills.
- † Have all medical and medically related records in order, including health care proxy, DNR orders, etc.
- † If you are a care-giver for a person with special needs, be sure to have a plan to communicate if an emergency occurs.