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Since joining FEMA in 2011 I have been deployed 10 times to assist in response and recovery efforts after a disaster. Working with people who have been impacted by disasters and need help, I learned important aspects to preparedness for people with disabilities.



**1) Make a plan and rehearse it often!** Know ahead of time what you will do.

- Use your support network; do not expect that emergency workers or first responders will always be available.
- If you need help to evacuate, plan to leave early!
- If you use public or assisted transportation, talk with the provider about plans in an emergency. Find out what you will need to do.
- Know how you will take your most important personal equipment with you.

- 2) **Have contact information with you:** Names and numbers of friends and family outside of your area to call in case of a disaster.
  - Communication and support are very important.
  
- 3) **Connect with emergency managers:** Contact local emergency officials to make sure they know about your needs so first responders can support you.
  - Find out about other local resources that may be able to help.
  
- 4) **Have supplies for a minimum of 3 days:** Your medications, food, water, other personal need items, alternative electricity source (charging wheelchairs, medical devices, etc.)
  - If you have health-related electricity needs, find out if there is a generator in your home or if you are allowed to have one.
  - Don't forget pets or service animal needs.
  
- 5) **Have a GO kit:** Food, water, clothing, identification, cash, medications, etc.

<http://www.ready.gov/basic-disaster-supplies-kit>

- Remember supplies for pets and/or service animals.
- If using durable medical equipment or assistive technology, think about power needs and extra batteries or chords.
- Have copies of important medical records in your GO kit.
- IF you apply for FEMA help after a disaster, records will be needed - it takes time to replace them.
- Create your own communication book for your GO kit. List important personal contacts and local resources that may be helpful.

Video: <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/videos/83008>

Annmarie Buraczeski (New Jersey Association of the Deaf, Community Emergency Response Team – CERT). Annemarie shares her experience with Superstorm Sandy and what steps to take in preparation for a storm.