

PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS DURING AN EMERGENCY

If you are a person with a disability or other special needs, you may face unique challenges in an emergency situation. By evaluating your personal needs and making an emergency plan that fits those needs, you can be better prepared should a disaster or emergency situation arise. This section will provide additional common sense measures that you can take to help prepare you for emergency situations before they happen.

Develop a Personal Support Network

If you have a disability that may prevent you from properly following the procedures outlined in this handbook then you are encouraged to use the “buddy system” and to build a personal support network. Talking about your unique situation with a roommate or co-worker will help ensure that during an emergency your needs are not overlooked. Together you should review emergency procedures and devise a plan specifically for how you can get the extra help that you might need in an emergency. If you use tools or aids specific to a disability, plan how your support network can help you cope without them, if needed. Teach them how to use any lifesaving equipment you may be dependent on or to administer medicine in case of an emergency. If you use a wheelchair, oxygen, or other medical equipment, show friends or co-workers how to use these devices so they can help you move them, or help you evacuate without them. Practice your plan(s) with those who have agreed to be a part of your personal support network.

Inform the Residence Life staff, or your supervisor, about your specific plans and needs

This is particularly important if you need to be lifted or carried. Talk about communication difficulties, physical limitations, equipment instructions, and medication procedures. If you have a learning or sensory disability, discuss the best ways to alert you in an emergency. If you have a cognitive disability, be sure to work with Notre Dame officials to determine how to best notify you of an emergency and what instruction methods are easiest for you to follow. Always participate in exercises, trainings, and emergency drills offered by Notre Dame College, the Department of Residence Life (if you are a student), or your department (if a member of the faculty or staff).

Include an extra supply of medication and medical supplies in your 72 hour emergency kit

If you take medicine or use a medical treatment on a daily basis, you need to be sure you have what you need on hand for a minimum of 72 hours. You should also keep a copy of your prescriptions as well as dosage or treatment information in case you need to stay in a shelter. If it is not possible to have a 72 hour supply of medicines and supplies, keep as much as possible on hand and talk to your pharmacist or doctor about what else you can do to prepare..

In addition, there may be other things specific to your personal needs that you should also have on hand. If you have glasses, hearing aids and hearing aid batteries, wheelchair batteries, and oxygen, be sure you have extras in your emergency kit. Also have copies of your medical insurance, Medicaid, or Medicare card(s) readily available. If you have a service animal, be sure to include food, water, a collar

with an ID tag, medical records, and other emergency pet supplies in your emergency kit to support your service animal.

For assistance with planning for your special needs during an emergency on campus, please contact the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for the Notre Dame College Department of Safety and Security at (216) 373-7145. You may also coordinate, as needed, with the Office of Residence Life and the Academic Support Center, if you are a student utilizing ASC services.