

Why Don't We Prepare?

Citizens must be aware of what steps to take to protect themselves and their families. People should get trained in basic skills they can use to help themselves and others in an emergency.

"We are experiencing many independently significant incidents. However, if we choose to harness the experience gained as a result of these incidents collectively, we are in an ideal position to create the Preparedness Revolution. If we harness the incidents affecting the disability community collectively as well, we can ensure this community is completely enveloped within the Preparedness Revolution."

George W. Foresman
Under Secretary for Preparedness
U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2006

Four States of Denial:

- It won't happen
- If it does happen, it won't happen to me
- If it happens to me, it won't be that bad
- If it happens to me and it's bad, there is nothing I can do about it anyway

Hurricanes and other major incidents in the recent years graphically demonstrate that there are not enough emergency responders during the first critical 72 hours of a disaster to take care of everyone, in every location.



Accommodating a Person with a Disability in an Emergency

Think Broadly.
Plan specifically.

The most effective emergency planning considers the variety of functional needs of the community. Plans should address individuals who, because of a functional limitation during an emergency, need assistance with one or more of the following: communication, medication, independent living, supervision, or transportation.

Communication

- Rescue Communication – Accessible and reliable communication technology
- Using a combination of notification methods will be more effective than relying on one method alone.

For instance, combining visual and audible alerts will reach a greater audience than either method would alone.

Transportation

- Ability of public transportation system accommodate increased numbers of individuals with disabilities and their caretakers accessing the system at once.
- Emergency plans should identify accessible forms of transportation available to help evacuate people with disabilities.

Accessible Shelters , Areas of Refuge

- Physical accessibility
- Availability of TTY lines
- Allow assistance animals to seek shelter with their owners.
- Provide/allow use of durable medical equipment (wheelchair, cane, walker, etc.)
- Provide special diets and necessary medication.
- Establish connections with disability advocacy and service organizations who can assist shelter and recovery workers.

Health Services

- Establish systems to identify health-related needs of individuals.
- Stockpile sufficient quantities of medical supplies and medications.
- Determine ongoing needs for care and service.
- Identify vendors for replacement of assistive technology.
- Recognize and treat wide spread traumatic stress syndrome.
- Recognize and support existing medical and societal conditions exacerbated by the disaster.

Sign Language Interpreter

- Get a qualified/certified sign language interpreter to assist in an emergency (do not rely on someone who is not, like a family member or someone who knows sign).

How to Work with Personal Assistants and Devices that Accompany a Person with a Disability

Personal Assistant

- The personal assistant will stay with the person with the disability (it might not be a family member).

Durable Medical Equipment

- People that uses durable medical equipment know their equipment and are great resources on how to assist with durable medical equipment.

Service Animals

- The service animal stays with the person at all times.

Understanding People with Disabilities

Approximately 54 million people in the United States, a nation of 311 million, have some type of disability.

Whether a disability comes about from birth or by accident not all disabilities can be seen with the naked eye.

Some people may feel uneasy being around a person with a disability, however people with disabilities are simply people and need to be treated as such.

Focus on the person, not on his or her disability .

An individual is considered to have a "disability":

- He/she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- Has a record of such an impairment
- Being regarded as having such an impairment

Major Life Activities include:

- Caring for one's self
- Performing manual tasks
- Walking
- Seeing
- Hearing
- Speaking
- Breathing
- Learning
- Working

To be substantially limited means

that such activities are restricted in the manner, conditions, or duration in which they are performed in comparison with most people.

Key Principles

- Self-Determination – People with disabilities are the most knowledgeable about their own needs
- No "One Size Fits All" – People with disabilities do not all require the same assistance and do not all have the same needs
- Equal Opportunity – People with disabilities must have the same opportunities to benefit from emergency programs, services, and activities as people without disabilities
- Inclusion – People with disabilities have the right to participate in all emergency programs, services, and activities provided by government, private businesses, and nonprofit organizations

Communicating with People with Disabilities

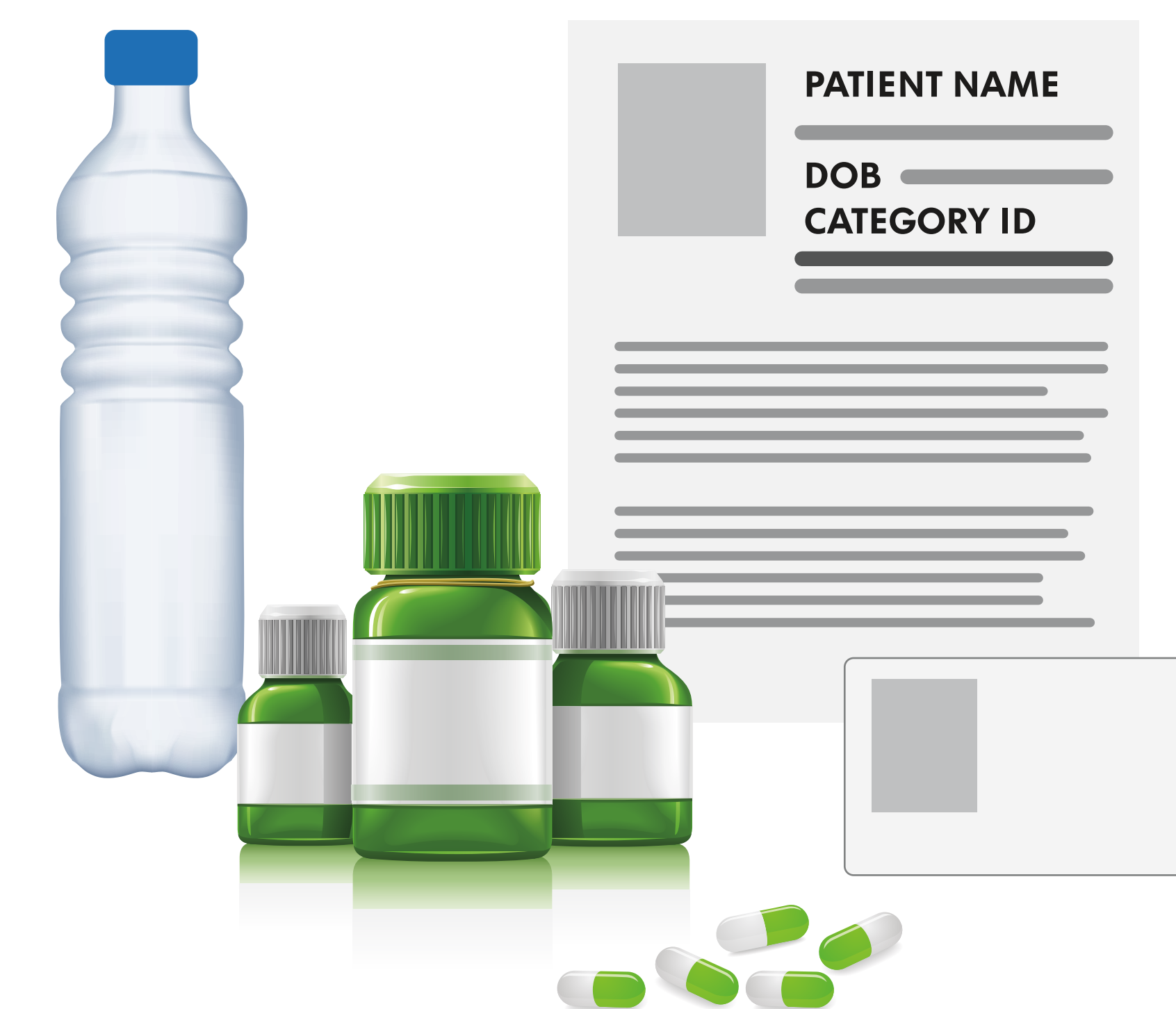
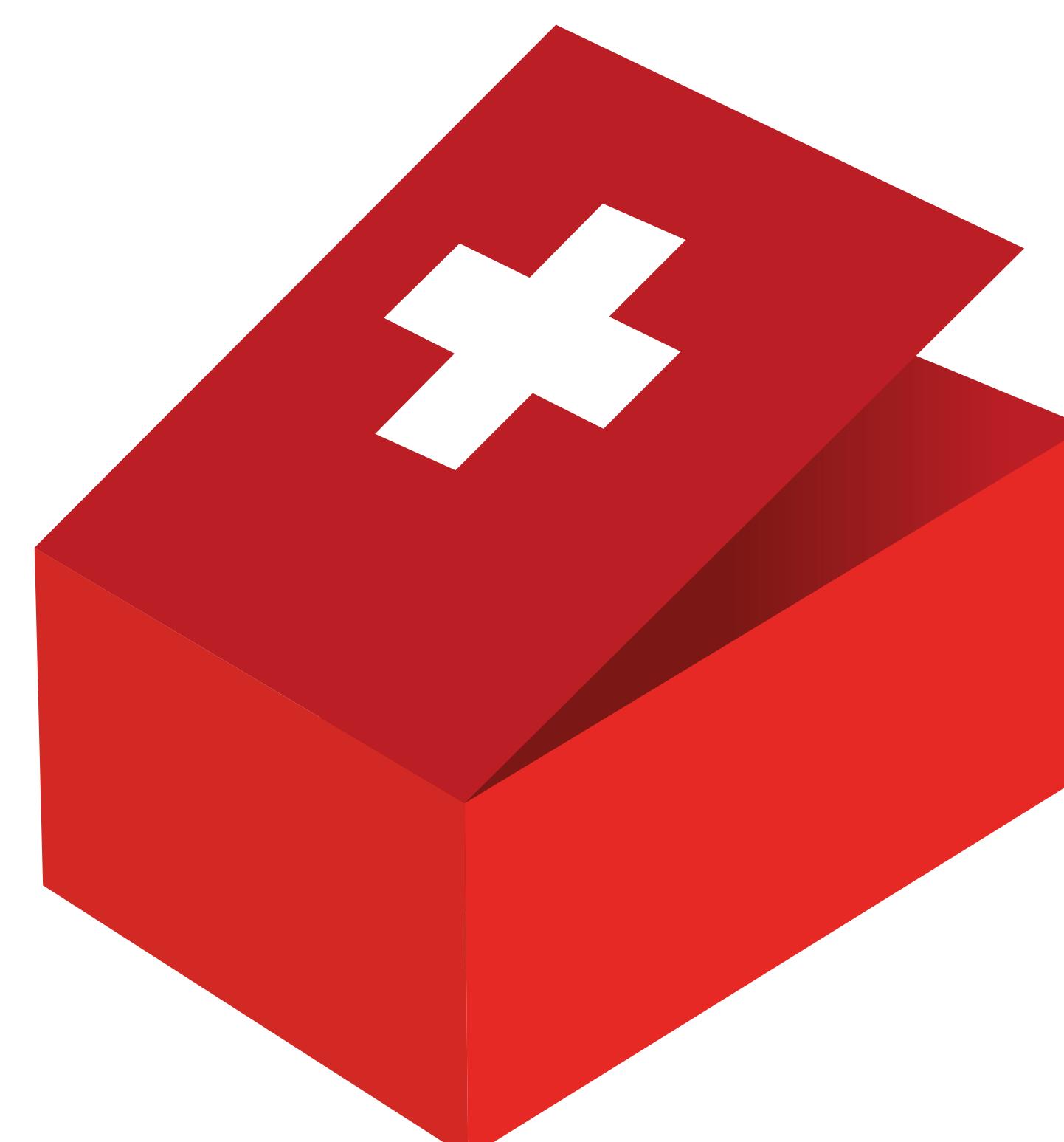
When talking with a person with a disability, speak directly to that person rather than through a companion or sign language interpreter.

If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions.

Treat adults as adults.

Ask how you can assist. Listen for response and then assist.

- Watch body language.
- Be patient and repeat phrases.
- Relax and treat a person as a person.
- Write down any information the person needs to know in a disaster
- Make sure the person understands information
- Write information down
- Speak more slowly and in a quiet location
- Be patient and repeat phrases
- Watch body language
- When sheltering have a quiet and low-light area to go to



Preparing for an Emergency

Preparing Makes Sense!

Be Informed | Make a Plan | Create a Kit

Be informed

- Know about risks in your community
- Adapt this information to your personal circumstances
- Follow instructions received from authorities

Identify your resources

(consider how a disaster might affect use of them):

- Do you use communication devices?
- Do you depend on accessible transportation to get to work, doctor's appointment, or to other places in your community?
- Do you receive medical treatment (e.g. dialysis) on a regular basis?
- Do you need assistance with personal care?
- Do you rely on electrically dependent equipment?
- Do you use mobility aids such as a walker, cane, or a wheelchair?
- Do you use a services animals?

Make a plan

- Create a personal support network
- Develop a family communications plan
- Decide to stay or go
- Consider your service animal or pets
- Shelter in place
- Evacuation
- Contact your local emergency management office

Build a kit

- Basic supplies - three days minimum (e.g., food, water, first aid kit, battery powered radio, pet supplies, sanitary supplies)
- Medication and medical supplies
- Additional items (e.g. durable medical goods)
- Emergency documents (e.g., family records, bank accounts, personal contact information, medical records, and insurance information)

Join the Preparedness Revolution

- Be informed, make a plan, build a kit
- Proactively engage emergency managers
- Change lessons documented into lessons learned