



# Resources for People with Disabilities



Earthquakes, tsunamis, floods and wildfires are just some of the potential hazards in British Columbia. During a disaster, phone, gas, electrical and water services may be disrupted. Roads could be blocked, stores closed and gas stations out-of-service.

You and your loved ones could be on your own for several days while emergency responders work to save lives and manage the aftermath. It may be weeks before infrastructure, utilities and essential services are restored.

It's important for everyone to be prepared by knowing the risks in their community, having a household plan and having an emergency kit. Having a disability means you likely need to consider preparedness actions above and beyond the "basics". Some things to think about as you go through this resource are:

- My ability to communicate may be restricted
- My surroundings may change and look unfamiliar
- My service animal or guide dog may be hurt or frightened
- My health may be impacted by stress or confusion

Disasters can be overwhelming and stress may make some conditions worse for people. You may even have to ask for assistance in circumstances you usually do not. Be sure to talk to someone about how you are feeling and reach out for help if needed.

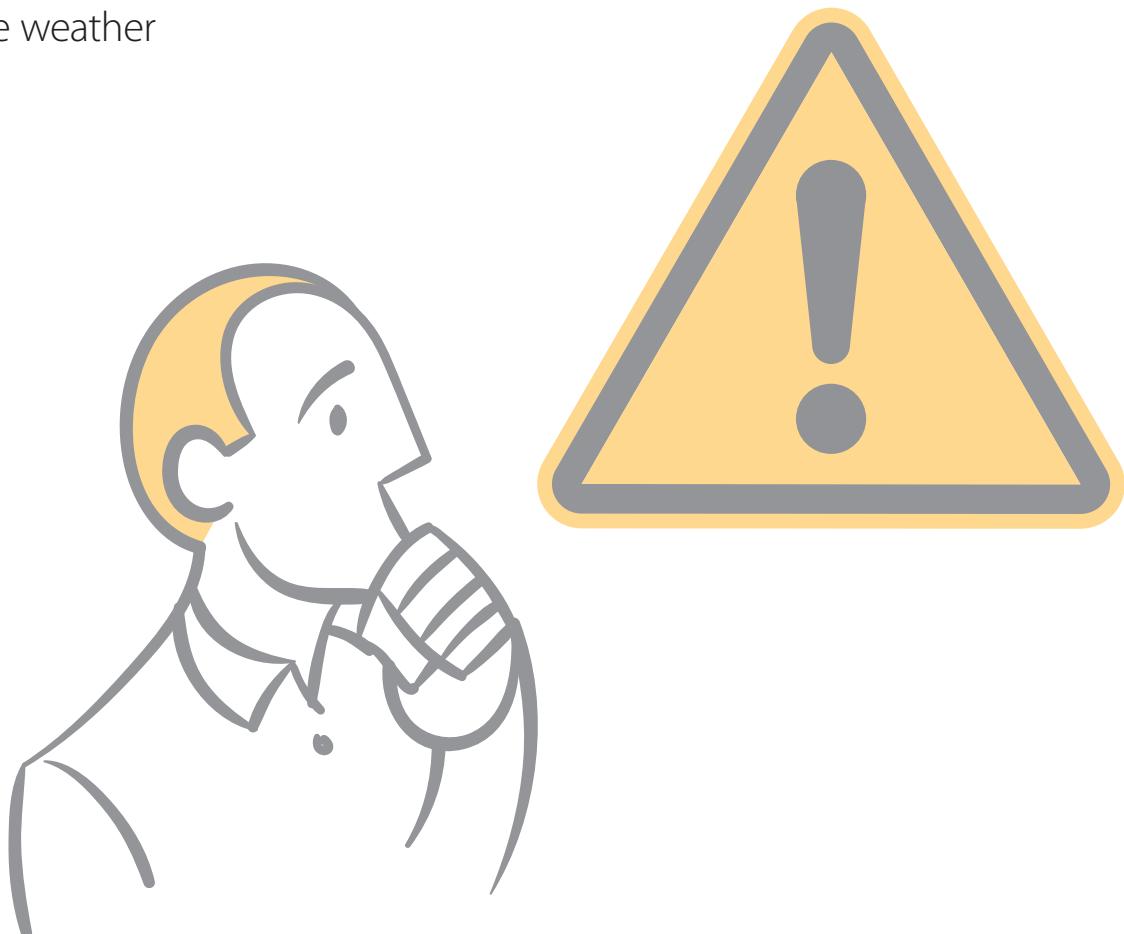
**Take care:** Stress takes a toll on your physical and mental health. Eating well, exercising and getting enough sleep lowers stress and helps us cope.

**Reach out:** Talking helps. Whether it's with family, friends, a doctor or counsellor. Crisis lines are available to listen and help any time. You can contact:  
BC Mental Health Support Line 24 hours a day at 310-6789 (no area code)  
KUU-US Indigenous Crisis Line at 1-800-588-8717

## KNOW THE RISKS

Hazards vary depending on where you live and knowing which ones you face will influence how you prepare. Below is a list of the top 10 risks in B.C. Familiarize yourself with the ones that could occur in your area by contacting your band office, municipality, regional district or local authority.

- Earthquakes
- Tsunamis
- Floods
- Landslides
- Avalanches
- Severe weather
- Power outages
- Hazardous materials spills
- Wildfires
- Disease outbreaks



### PREPARE YOUR HOME

Visit PreparedBC.ca/EmergencyPlans and download the Home Preparedness Guide. Following these steps will help you along the road to recovery after a disaster.

- Identify the risks for your region.
- Make an emergency phone list with at least one out-of-area contact.
- Pick a meeting spot if you're separated from friends and family.
- Assign someone to collect your children from school or daycare if you can't.
- Identify what sources you'll get official information from.
- Learn how to turn off utilities.
- Store enough emergency water for those you live with.
- Store enough food to support those you live with for three days to two weeks.
- Identify any special needs, such as medications, and make sure a proper supply is on hand.
- Secure your space.
- Create grab-and-go bags.

## RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

### MAKE A PLAN

Also download the companion Prepared BC: Home Emergency Plan. Fill in the blanks, talk to those you live with and your neighbours about it and keep a copy with your emergency kit. Don't forget to review it on a regular basis.

Knowing the risks, practicing your emergency plan, having an emergency kit with specific supplies and building a trusted support network means the best chance for recovery.

**Knowing the risks,  
practicing your  
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### Protect Yourself During Earthquakes!

**IF  
POSSIBLE**



**USING  
CANE**



**USING  
WALKER**



**USING  
WHEELCHAIR**



*Graphic courtesy of the Earthquake Country Alliance*

### GATHER EMERGENCY SUPPLIES



First Aid kit and medications



Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger



Battery-powered or hand crank radio



Local maps (identify a family meeting place) and some cash in small bills



Battery-powered or hand crank flashlight with extra batteries



Water, four litres per person per day for at least three days to two weeks, for drinking and sanitation



At least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Manual can opener for cans



Dust mask to help filter contaminated air



Garbage bags, moist towelettes and plastic ties for personal sanitation



Seasonal clothing and footwear



Whistle to signal for help

## RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Have enough non-perishable food and water to support you and those you live with for at least three days to two weeks. If the power is out, use the food from your fridge and freezer first, followed by your pantry.

Water is the most important item to store—you will need at least four litres (one gallon) of water per person, per day.

Ensure you have a suitable food and water supply for babies, toddlers, pets and service animals and check expiry dates every six months. Replenish or renew as needed.

If you take restricted medications or those administered by a health professional, talk to your doctor about how you should prepare for a disruption caused by a disaster.



### PERSONAL SUPPORT NETWORK

Consider building a trusted support network of at least three people to assist you during an emergency. Some things to discuss and implement prior to an emergency:

- Make arrangements for your support network to immediately check on you after a disaster and, if needed, offer assistance
- Exchange important keys and any relevant medical information
- Discuss any health conditions or medications and show them how to operate specialized medical or mobility equipment, such as lifts, wheelchairs or scooters
- Decide on and practice methods for contacting each other in an emergency—do not count on telephones working
- Show them where you keep emergency supplies
- Share copies of and discuss your emergency plan
- Agree to always notify each other when you are going out of town and when you will return

**Plan multiple ways to get and give information, such as a corded landline/TTY, mobile phone/text messaging, two-way radio, portable radio and extra batteries, pager or pencil and paper.**





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## HEALTH INFORMATION CARD

This card will provide first responders/rescuers with information they need to know, if you are unconscious or incoherent, or if they need to quickly evacuate you. Keep a copy of this information at your work, in your wallet or purse, and at home.

**Name**

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**Address**

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**Phone number**

**Blood type**

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**Conditions and/or disability**

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**Medications (prescriptions, dosage, times taken, etc.)**

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**Equipment you use (communication, mobility devices)**

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**Where your equipment is kept**

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Note if you have extra equipment that could be used in an emergency, such as a manual wheelchair

## Allergies and sensitivities

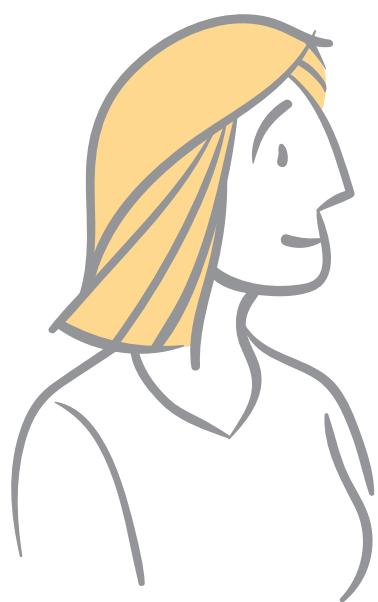
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**Communication disabilities you may have and the best ways to communicate with you**

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**Assistance you will need (be specific)**

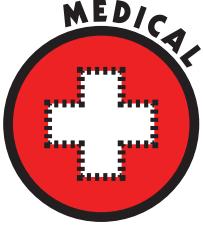
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**Advocate for yourself during a disaster. Practice how to quickly explain to people the best way to safely guide or move you or your equipment.**

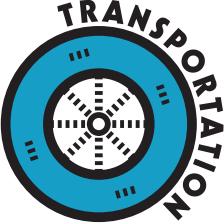
## THE C-MIST FRAMEWORK FOR EMERGENCY PLANNING

Disability Alliance BC recommends beginning your personal emergency planning process using the five categories of the functional needs, or C-MIST (Communication, Medical, Independence, Supervision and Transportation), framework.

	<b>Functional Need</b>	<b>Possible Planning Considerations</b>
	<p><b>Communication needs</b> include people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have reduced or no ability to speak, see or hear</li> <li>• have limitations in learning and understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store communication aids, such as hearing aids, in all emergency kits</li> <li>• Store batteries or chargers for communication equipment</li> <li>• Label emergency supplies with Braille, large print or fluorescent tape</li> <li>• Have a pencil and paper with you to communicate with emergency responders</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Medical needs</b> include people who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• managing chronic, terminal or contagious health conditions</li> <li>• using dialysis, oxygen, suction</li> <li>• managing medications, IV therapy, tube feeds</li> <li>• managing wounds, catheters, ostomies</li> <li>• operating power dependent equipment to sustain life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a list of your medications with details from your pharmacist</li> <li>• Store extra medications and/or supplies</li> <li>• Supply of food items appropriate to dietary restrictions</li> <li>• Keep a list of instructions that someone can easily follow</li> <li>• Plan for a backup power source (if needed)</li> <li>• Practice how to tell someone about what you need</li> <li>• Keep a written emergency plan with you</li> </ul>

	<b>Functional Need</b>	<b>Possible Planning Considerations</b>
	<p><b>Independence needs</b> include people who use assistive equipment and devices to function independently, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mobility aids</li> <li>• communication aids</li> <li>• medical equipment</li> <li>• service animals</li> <li>• medications to function independently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store extra canes</li> <li>• Keep alternate mobility cues in each room</li> <li>• Arrange and secure furniture and other items to provide multiple barrier-free passages</li> <li>• Keep extra batteries, gloves to protect hands when wheeling over debris, tire patch kit etc.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Supervision needs</b> includes people who have the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developmental disabilities</li> <li>• dementia, Alzheimer's</li> <li>• depression</li> <li>• schizophrenia</li> <li>• intensive anxiety</li> <li>• transfer trauma</li> <li>• brain injury</li> <li>• severe mental illness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a personal network of family, friends and neighbours</li> <li>• Have ways and tools to help you remember</li> <li>• Keep a written emergency plan with you</li> <li>• Provide copies of your emergency plan to family and/or friends</li> </ul>

## RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

	<b>Functional Need</b>	<b>Possible Planning Considerations</b>
	<b>Transportation needs</b> includes people who cannot drive due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• disability</li><li>• age</li><li>• temporary injury</li><li>• poverty</li><li>• addiction</li><li>• no access to vehicle</li><li>• legal restrictions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Map out potential evacuation routes and how you could access them without a vehicle</li><li>• Identify meeting places that are close to your home or place of work</li></ul>

*C-MIST icons courtesy of the Disability Alliance BC*

**Practice is an important part of your emergency planning. For example, practice how to tell someone what you need during an emergency or practice alternate methods of evacuation, ideally with the members of your personal support network.**

### SERVICE ANIMAL PREPAREDNESS TIPS AND CHECKLIST

The following are basic items you should have on hand to keep your pet or service animal comfortable during an emergency. Make sure the kit is accessible and easy to transport in case you are required to evacuate.

- Minimum 72-hour supply of bottled water and pet food, including pet dishes
- Manual can opener (if storing canned food)
- Leash and collar/harness
- Recent photo of your service animal in case they get separated from you
- Blanket and toy
- Plastic bags and paper towels
- First aid kit for treating minor wounds on paws
- Medical/vaccination records and list of medications identifying any medical condition, dosage, frequency and contact information of prescribing veterinarian
- Up-to-date ID tag with your phone number and the name/phone number of your veterinarian
- Copy of licence (if required)

Pets and service animals may become confused, frightened or injured during or after a disaster. You may have to keep them confined, securely leashed or harnessed.

**Also be prepared to function without assistance from your service animal. Identifying alternate mobility cues and practicing alternate routes in advance of a disaster is an important part of your planning.**

## RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

PreparedBC: *PreparedBC.ca*

Disability Alliance BC: [www.disabilityalliancebc.org](http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org)





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