

Disaster Preparation: a Dozen Tips For Those With Hearing Loss

How would you or your loved one function in an emergency? If the power went out in your home, could you “hear in the dark?” We know that the vital supplies you need in a disaster are water, food, light, and communication. When you or a family member has a hearing loss, you need to make special preparations to communicate and to stay informed during an emergency.

1. **Place a sign near your front and back doors to alert emergency** personnel that there is a person with hearing loss in the house and the location of their bedroom.
2. Use a medic alert bracelet or have a little card in your pocket or wallet that says "**I'm hard of hearing, I need....**" Laminate it. Clip one to your car visor.
3. **Make sure friends and close neighbors know that you need to be alerted** in an emergency. A neighbor might be willing to wake you in case of a fire or storm in the middle of the night.
4. Find out if your neighborhood has a **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)**. Make sure that team, and the local police and fire departments, know that you need to be alerted in an emergency.
5. **Can you hear your smoke alarm** and telephone without your hearing aids? There are products available with extra loud signals and vibrators, some can even connect to your hearing aids!
6. **Prepare an emergency kit** with extra hearing aid batteries and a pad of paper and pen. If you have old “spare” back up hearing aids add them to the kit. Since most people with a hearing loss hear with their eyes too, consider flashlights, extra batteries, and camping lanterns in your emergency kit.
7. A battery operated radio and battery operated **TV with closed captions** is helpful to stay informed during an emergency.
8. **Keep your cell phone charged**, have a car charger. Put an emergency contact in your phone contacts under ICE (in case of emergency).
9. Consider text messaging service for your phone.
10. Sign up for a **FREE text messaging service** that will alert you to an emergency on your mobile phone. **EmergencyEmail.org** will send text messages to your Sidekick, Blackberry, mobile phone or computer. You can choose the counties to receive alerts about.
11. **NOAA Weather/All Hazard Alert Radio with Text Messages**. The radios have an alarm feature that will alert you to an emergency and can be connected to strobe lights, bed shakers, etc. Some radios can be used with an induction loop and the t-coil on hearing aids or cochlear implant speech processors. Learn more at: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/special_need.htm
12. **Reverse 911** is available in some communities. This service will call YOU in an emergency. Check with your local emergency management office to find out if Reverse 911 is available.

