



Visual Impairments

Emergency Planning for Individuals with Visual Impairments

- ❑ **Create a support network of relatives, friends, or co-workers who can assist you in an emergency.** Consider family, neighbors, friends, people who provide services to you, and faith-based and community groups. Make sure they know where you keep your Disaster Supply Kit. Give at least one member of your support network a key to your home.
- ❑ **Arrange to get help with geographic warning information.** Disaster warnings are typically very descriptive, and may be accompanied by a map. It is important that you have an alternate means to receive this geographic warning information. Arrange for someone in your support network to describe the affected areas to you so that you can be aware of the full extent of the emergency situation as it develops.
- ❑ **If you use a cane, keep extras in strategic, consistent, and secured locations** at work, home, school, volunteer sites, etc., even if you use a guide dog. Keep a spare cane in your Disaster Supply Kit.
- ❑ **If you have some vision, place security lights in each room to light paths of travel.** These lights plug into electrical wall outlets and light up automatically if there is a loss of power. They will, depending on type, continue to operate for one to six hours and can be turned off manually to be used as a flashlight.
- ❑ **Store high-powered flashlights** (with wide beams) and extra batteries.
- ❑ **If you wear soft contact lenses, have an alternative available** in the event of a power outage, as you will not be able to operate the cleaning unit without power.
- ❑ **Plan on losing the auditory clues you normally rely on** following a major disaster.
- ❑ **Label emergency supplies** with large print, fluorescent tape, or Braille.
- ❑ **Anchor special equipment you may use, such as computers.** Create a back-up system for important data and store it off site. Even if you do not use a computer yourself, consider asking someone to help you save important information onto a portable thumb drive for easy transport in case of an evacuation.
- ❑ **Wear medical alert tags or bracelets** to identify any disabilities or medical conditions.

If you have a service animal:

- ❑ Be aware that the animal may become disoriented in an emergency. Disasters often mask or confuse scent markers that are part of your service animal's normal means of navigation. Keep them confined or securely leashed or harnessed. A leash (or harness) is an important



tool for managing a nervous or upset animal. Be prepared to use alternative methods to negotiate your environment.

- Trained service animals will be allowed to stay in emergency shelters with their owners. Check with your local emergency management office or American Red Cross officials for more information.
- If you have a guide dog, train the dog to know one or two alternate routes out of your home or office. A guide dog familiar with the building may help you and others find a way out when no one else can see.
- Be sure your service animal has identification and your phone numbers attached to its collar, including emergency contact information through a national pet locator service.
- Have a complete Pet Emergency Kit with food and water, medical records and identification, bowls, extra leash, a favorite toy, and a pet first aid kit.