

Readiness Builds Resilience for People with Disabilities

Release Date: July 27, 2020

ST. CROIX, U.S. Virgin Islands – All residents should prepare to be self-sufficient in the immediate aftermath of a hurricane and take steps to protect their property. Those with disabilities and others with access and functional needs may have additional considerations.

These may include:

- Create a support network and maintain contact with those who can assist you. Keep a contact list in a watertight container in your emergency kit. Learn more at www.ready.gov/kit.
- Inform your support network where your emergency supplies are kept. You may want to give someone in your support network a key to your home.
- Plan for accessible transportation to evacuate or get to a medical clinic. Work with local services, public transportation or paratransit to identify local or private accessible transportation options.
- If dialysis is part of your health maintenance plan, know where multiple facilities are located.
- Determine how to use medical equipment in the event of a power outage.
- Wear medical alert tags or bracelets.
- If you have a communication disability, make note of the best way to communicate with you in an emergency.
- Plan how to evacuate with assistive devices or how to replace equipment if it is lost or destroyed. Write down model information and note who provided it, such as Medicaid, Medicare or private insurance. Add this to your watertight container with your other important documents.
- If you have a service animal, be sure to include food, water, identification tags and supplies. It is also important to have cash in your kit in case you need to purchase supplies.

Tips for people who are deaf or hard of hearing include having:



FEMA

Page 1 of 2

- A weather radio with text display and a flashing alert along with extra batteries.
- Extra hearing-aid batteries.
- A headlamp to illuminate people with whom you are communicating.
- Pen and paper in case you must communicate with someone who does not know sign language

Tips for people who are blind or have low vision include:

- Marking emergency supplies with Braille labels or large print. Keep a list of your emergency supplies on a portable flash drive or make an audio file that is kept in a safe and is accessible.
- Keep a Braille, or deaf-blind communications device in an emergency supply kit.

Tips for people having a mobility disability include:

- If you are using a power wheelchair, have a lightweight manual chair available as a backup. Show your support network how to operate your wheelchair.
- Know the size and weight of your wheelchair and if it is collapsible for transportation.
- Keep an extra mobility device such as a cane or walker, if you use one.

Now is the time to prepare. Find more information at [ready.gov/disability](https://www.ready.gov/disability).

