

## EMERGENCY PLANNING FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR HAVE LOW VISION

### Communication

Creating a personal support network is important. Reliable friends, family, and neighbors can provide essential assistance. It's important to communicate your specific needs clearly to them.

- Check-in regularly and update them on any changes in your emergency plan. Building these relationships ensures that you are not alone during crises. A well-informed, strong support network can make a huge difference.

It's helpful to have multiple ways to communicate.

- Portable rechargeable communication devices.
- Pre-recorded messages with essential information.
- Essential information in multiple formats (digital, hardcopy braille and/or print).
- A whistle or similar device to signal for help.
- Backup contact information for emergency contacts.

Make contact with your local fire department. They are most likely to understand the local emergency preparedness plans and remember the needs of their community members.

### Making the decision to stay or leave

Leaving your home environment can be disorienting and make navigation difficult in unfamiliar spaces. You may need additional support when orienting to these new spaces.

Staying may also have different challenges. Your home may receive damage. Your orientation and mobility may be affected due to damage to your home, storm debris, or flood waters.

### Staying

- Can you maintain your health and well-being if there is no electricity, water, or access to supplies, or community activities?
- Do you or your loved one rely on electricity for devices for information, communication, or coping?

### Leaving

Things which may be helpful for people who are blind or have low vision to have in their go kit/stay bag:

- Battery or solar powered radio
- Back up batteries for devices or charging station
- Solar powered generator
- Work gloves and sturdy shoes

- After auditory cues, touch is the most heavily relied upon sense for someone who is blind or has low vision. A pair of heavy work gloves and sturdy shoes can offer safety and security in exploring an unfamiliar environment in addition to the use of a cane.
- Additional white canes and cane tips
- Additional eye glasses
- Additional batteries for hearing aids
- Chargers for any devices
- Supplies for service animal
  - bowls for food and water
  - pet food
  - pet medications
  - bags for waste
  - leashes
  - kennel/cages with animal and owner's names and contact information
  - vet records or contact information for vet

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## Transportation

- Make transportation arrangements before an emergency. If you do not have family or friends you can rely on, call the local Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP) to let them know you will need a ride.
- We have included a QR code for every OEP office in the state. Find your parish.



- Confirm that your transportation will also provide a ride back home after the event.

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## Sheltering

- Practice being direct about your preferred ways to be helped.
  - Well-meaning people may try to help but are unsure of the best ways to do so.
- Practice asking for directions.
- Practice navigating unfamiliar settings.

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## Returning Home

- Talking thermometer to determine if food is a safe temperature to eat. Spoiled food is a cause for hospitalizations post-disaster.
- Have a trusted person check your home and belongings for damage or mold.
- Are you able to navigate your typical route to access your daily routine?
  - Are the sidewalks littered with debris?