

# Are You Ready?

**Emergency Preparedness Guide  
for Persons with Disabilities  
and Older Adults in Nova Scotia**



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## RESOURCES

**\*\*If your life or safety is in immediate danger, call 911\*\***

### **211**

Information about supportive organizations and services in your community

### **411**

For help finding community, or business phone numbers

### **511**

Updates on provincial road conditions

### **711**

Message Relay Service for persons with a hearing or speech disability

### **811**

To talk to a registered nurse (24 hours a day, seven days a week) about non-urgent health issues, including advice on when you should go to the emergency room

### **Disaster Animal Response Team of Nova Scotia**

Works with Canadian Red Cross to set up and run emergency shelters for animals affected by a disaster or an emergency  
information@dartns.org

### **Emergency Management Office (EMO) Nova Scotia**

beta.novascotia.ca/government/emergency-management-office  
1-866-424-5620 (business hours only)

### **Environment Canada**

weather.gc.ca/  
Weather Alerts: weather.gc.ca/warnings/index\_e.html  
Weather Line: 1-902-426-9090

### **Nova Scotia Health Community Mental Health and Addictions Intake Service**

Contact a clinician Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Voicemail only on evenings, weekends, and holidays  
1-855-922-1122 (toll free)

## **Nova Scotia Health Mental Health Crisis Line**

For those in a mental health crisis or anyone concerned about them  
1-888-429-8167 (toll free, 24-hour)

## **Nova Scotia Power**

nspower.ca

## **Critical Customer Communication Program**

1-800-428-6230 (toll free)  
902-428-6230 (HRM)

## **Customer Service**

1-800-428-6230 (toll free)  
1-800-565-6051 (TTY) (toll free)

## **Report a power outage**

1-877-428-6004 (toll free)

## **Nova Scotia SPCA**

1-902-835-4798  
1-844-835-4798 (toll free)  
info@spca.ns.ca

## **RCMP**

1-866-297-7554 (TTY, toll free, 24-hour)

## **VON Vial of Life Program**

902-454-5755  
[getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/yprprdnssgd/yprprdnssgd-eng.pdf](https://getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/yprprdnssgd/yprprdnssgd-eng.pdf)

## **The Weather Network**

theweathernetwork.ca



## GLOSSARY

In this section you will find explanations for key words and phrases used in this guide. You will also find definitions for words you may need to know before, during, or after a disaster or an emergency.

### **Adaptive equipment**

Equipment that helps a person with any task associated with daily living, such as

- mobility aids, such as wheelchairs
- grooming aids, such as zipper pullers
- eating aids, such as easy-grip spoons

### **Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)**

Ways that a person can add to, or augment, their speech, or share ideas and feelings without talking, such as

- unaided systems, such as gestures, body language, facial expressions, and some sign vocabulary
- basic aided systems, such as pointing to letters, words, or pictures on a board
- high-tech aided systems, such as touching letters or pictures on a computer or tablet that then say words out loud

### **Comfort centre**

A facility opened during a disaster or an emergency event for people who plan to stay in their homes or other safe locations but who need temporary access to services such as power, heat, or water. Comfort centres are not set up to accept evacuees or offer overnight shelter. Support may include

- light refreshments
- hot or cold drinks
- information

### **Disaster**

In emergency management, a disaster happens when all emergency resources are overwhelmed in a particular event. For example, the Fort McMurray wildfire in 2016 and Hurricane Juan in Nova Scotia in 2003 were disasters.

## **Emergency**

Any event that is causing or could cause

- many casualties
- widespread damage to property
- major interference in normal activities
- loss of confidence in government

and needs immediate attention and action.

In Nova Scotia, responses to emergencies begin at the municipal government level. The Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office provides provincially coordinated support when more than one municipality or the entire province is affected. It also provides support when asked by one or more emergency management partner.

- This guide covers emergencies that require a coordinated and focused response, such as wildfires or hurricanes.
- This guide does not cover emergencies with a limited impact, such as minor car crashes or housefires.

## **Emergency plan**

A list of needs and the resources to meet those needs in an environment affected by an emergency.

## **Emergency or evacuation shelter**

A facility opened during a disaster or an emergency event for people who must leave their homes or community and have no other safe alternative. These shelters provide a place to sleep overnight. They are also set up to meet other essential needs for evacuees.

## **Evacuate**

To leave, or be removed from, an unsafe building or place, such as a neighbourhood or community, and to go, or be moved to, a safer place.

## **Evacuee**

A person who leaves, or is removed, from an unsafe building or place and goes to, or is moved to, a safer place.

## **Personal care assistant**

A person who helps another person meet their daily personal needs, such as bathing, dressing, grooming, cooking, or eating.

## **Personal support network**

A group of people who can help someone at their home, school, workplace, or any other place where they spend a lot of time. The people in this support network should

- be trusted by the person who needs help
- be able to check if that person needs help before, during, or after an emergency
- know that person's capabilities and needs
- be able to offer help within minutes

## **Power-dependent equipment**

Assistive technology and medical devices that need electricity to run, such as

- respirators and ventilators
- power wheelchairs and scooters
- oxygen, suction, or home dialysis equipment
- TTY phones, and smartphones or tablets for video relay service, and visual or text communications
- CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machines

## **Service animal**

An animal that has been trained to help persons with disabilities with their daily living tasks. Service animals are allowed by law to be anywhere their handlers go, including comfort centres and emergency or evacuation shelters, unlike emotional support animals, therapy animals, or pets.

## **Weather alerts**

Environment and Climate Change Canada sends out four types of weather alerts.

- 1. Weather advisory:** This tells you a certain weather or environmental hazard, such as high humidity or poor air quality, is either happening, about to happen, or is expected to happen.
- 2. Special weather statement:** Statements are issued when a weather hazard is not severe enough to require a weather watch or warning. There may also be uncertainty around whether the hazard will happen, or where or when it will
- 3. Weather watch:** This tells you that potentially threatening weather may happen where you are. No immediate action is required.
- 4. Weather warning:** This tells you severe weather is happening now, is going to happen, or has been seen on weather radar. You should act immediately to protect yourself.



## INTRODUCTION

*Are You Ready?* is an emergency preparedness guide created for persons with disabilities and older adults living in Nova Scotia. This guide can help you to be ready in case a disaster or an emergency happens here.

Nova Scotia is usually a safe place to be. But there have been emergencies here before, including

- hurricanes and tropical storms
- severe snowstorms and blizzards
- floods
- forest fires and wildfires
- disease outbreaks and public health emergencies
- industrial accidents

They can happen here again with little warning.

In emergencies, phone, electrical, gas, or water services may be disrupted. Roads and bridges may be blocked. Stores and gas stations may be closed. Essential services may stop. It may be weeks or more before things are back to normal.


Emergencies can affect everyone. They often have a bigger effect on persons with disabilities and older adults. Accessible communication and transportation may not be available. Service animals or guide dogs may become hurt or frightened. Power outages may affect medical devices. People in your support network may not be able to help you right away.

Most emergency preparedness plans say you should be ready to meet your needs on your own for at least three days after the event. They also say you should create an at-home emergency kit and pack a small emergency go-bag to take if you must leave your home. As a person with a disability or as an older adult, you may need to think of extra steps for your plan. You may need extra items for your emergency kit and go-bag.

Part of being prepared for emergencies is deciding ahead of time what you can do for yourself and what help you may need before, during, and after an event. Planning now can help you to be prepared and stay calm when an emergency happens. Planning now can also help you to clearly communicate to others what is best for you during an emergency.

This guide was created to help you start to make your own preparedness plan. If this task feels too big or overwhelming at times, remember that even a basic





plan is better than no plan. Read the advice in the guide. Then think about your personal needs. Plan for what you need to stay safe and to be ready.

Some of the information in this edition of *Are You Ready?* has been gathered from similar disaster and emergency preparedness resources, particularly those created with persons with disabilities and older adults in mind. Local, provincial, and national disability organizations, persons with disabilities, emergency responder organizations, and other stakeholders also helped to develop this guide. We thank everyone for their input.

*Please note:* This guide does not cover every kind of emergency that could happen in Nova Scotia. The tips here are not intended as medical or legal advice. Throughout this guide, we have used person-first language (for example, person with a disability) as it reflects the language used in the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act, 2017. We recognize that there are diverse language preferences across disability communities and by individuals.



## BEFORE AN EMERGENCY

It is important to be prepared for emergencies before they happen. When you are prepared, it is easier to meet your needs during an emergency, and to recover after.

Think about what kinds of emergencies are likely to happen in Nova Scotia. What might your community look like during and after? How will you meet your needs if everyday life is disrupted? As a person with a disability or as an older adult, how will you plan to have your specific needs met during and after? How will you advocate for yourself or ask for support and accommodations when help and resources may be limited?

### General Tips

- Create a personal ability plan. Think about what you will be able to do on your own and what help you will need. If you need help, ask a friend, family member, or someone from your support network to make this plan with you and write it down.
- Plan ahead for the best ways for you to get emergency messages and instructions. These can include
  - local television and radio announcements
  - first responder and government social media accounts and websites
  - emergency alert apps for mobile phones
  - your support network
- Make sure you or someone in your household knows how and when to turn off the controls to your home's water, electricity, gas, and sewer. Keep any tools you will need near the controls.
- Take a tour of your home or workspace. Check hallways, stairwells, doorways, windows, and other areas for problems that could keep you from safely leaving a building. If possible, move furniture and other items that block escape routes.
- Prepare an emergency kit for your home. (See Appendix 1.)
- Prepare an emergency go-bag that you can take with you if you have to leave your home in a hurry. Store it somewhere easy to find, such as in a closet by the main door. (See Appendix 2.)

- If you use any power-dependent equipment or augmentative or alternative communication (AAC) devices, pack extra batteries, chargers, or power cords.
- Create an emergency contact list so others will know whom to call if you are unable to communicate for yourself. Make at least two copies. Keep one in your emergency go-bag and another in your everyday wallet or purse. (See Appendix 3.)
- Create a support network of people, starting with your emergency contacts, who could help you in emergencies. This might include trusted family members, friends, neighbours, roommates, personal care assistants, or co-workers. (See Appendix 3.)
- Reach out to those people in your neighbourhood who have strengths, skills, and resources that can help reduce the impact of an emergency. Find out who knows first aid or who has access to a generator, for example.
- Consider giving those in your support network an extra set of keys to your home and teaching them how to use any assistive equipment.
- Create a backup plan for how you will get groceries and other essential items if the people in your support network are unable to reach you.
- If you take any medications, make a list of them with the names and phone numbers of your doctors, your medications and doses, and your medical conditions. Note any allergies. Keep copies in your emergency kit, emergency go-bag, and wallet or purse.
- If your medication needs to be kept in the refrigerator, have a back-up plan to keep it cool, such as using a portable cooler with ice packs.
- If you use power-dependent equipment that is needed to sustain life or avoid serious medical complications, contact Nova Scotia Power to register with their Critical Customer Care Program. (See Resources.)
- Plan backup locations to stay in case you need to leave your home or community. These might include a friend or family member's home, or at a hotel or motel outside of your area.
- Know the best ways for you to receive local evacuation orders and how to confirm if nearby comfort centres and emergency or evacuation shelters are open and accessible.
- Contact your municipal emergency management coordinator to discuss your specific needs during an emergency or evacuation. They may be able to arrange check-ins or other help before and during emergencies.

- Practise how to explain to people the best way to guide you, move your equipment, or otherwise help you safely and quickly. Be ready to give brief, clear, and specific information in ways that work best for you.

## **Disability-specific Tips**

### **Deaf, hard of hearing, late deafened, and deaf-blind**

- Keep extra batteries in your emergency kit and go-bag for devices that help you communicate. If possible, have access to a mobile smartphone charger and make sure it is fully charged.
- Check that your local emergency system can interact with TTY or internet-based relay services.
- If you use hearing aids, keep them in a place you can easily find them in an emergency.
- Set up different kinds of alarms (flashing or vibrating) in your home or workspace to help you notice if an emergency is happening.
- Prepare cards that you can present to first responders or other helpers during or after a disaster. These might say things such as
  - “I need announcements written or signed.”
  - “I use American Sign Language and need an ASL interpreter.”
- Check which broadcasting systems, websites, or social media livestreams use closed captioning or interpreters.
- Make sure you are registered with Text 911.
- If needed, make sure you have a pen and paper.

### **Blind, low vision, and deaf-blind**

- If you use a white cane, keep extras at work, home, and anywhere you spend a lot of time. Keep a spare white cane in your emergency kit.
- If you have some vision, think about installing security lighting in each room to help you move around safely. Pack high-powered flashlights with wide beams in your emergency kit. Pack extra glasses or contact lenses.
- Keep the lights in your home in working order so emergency responders can find their way around.

- Some local TV stations may only broadcast warnings as a text scroll at the bottom of the screen. Pack a battery-operated radio in your emergency kit so you or someone in your household can hear updates and instructions.

### **Mobility disabilities**

- Let trusted people who live near you and/or your building manager know your mobility needs and what support you would need to leave your home or building in an emergency.
- Make sure you are listed in the evacuation procedures for the building as someone who needs help.
- If you use an elevator to get in and out of the building where you live or work, plan another way to get out of the building. If you use a mobility device, such as a wheelchair or walker, and can't use it on the stairs, learn how to tell people how to lift and carry you safely. Practise your backup escape plans. You may wish to find out if your building has an evacuation chair. If yes, find out where it is and learn how to use it.
- If you use a ramp to get out of your building, have a backup plan in case the ramp has been damaged or can't be used.
- Keep sturdy gloves in your emergency kit and go-bag. These can protect your hands if you have to wheel over hazards.
- If you use a wheelchair, keep a tire patch kit and a can of seal-in-air product handy. Make sure you know how to fix a tire or have instructions ready to share with someone.
- If you use a specially equipped vehicle or accessible transportation, have a backup plan in case you need to evacuate the area and these options are not available.

### **Communication disabilities**

- Put paper, pencils or pens, and a written statement that describes how you communicate in your emergency kit and go-bag. If you use an AAC device, make sure your written statement includes that detail.
- Prepare an emergency health information card that includes the best way for people to communicate with you.
- If you use a laptop or communication device to communicate, pack a portable USB charger that will let you charge it in a vehicle.


- Prepare laminated communication cards ahead of time that can help first responders or other helpers understand and support your needs in an emergency.
- Always have a laminated paper communication display with you. Include key vocabulary items (basic needs, pain, emotion, medication).

### **Intellectual and cognitive disabilities**

- If needed, ask for help to prepare your emergency kit and go-bag. This can take time to prepare. You may need to purchase items you don't already have. You may find it helpful to do a little bit at a time over a few weeks.
- Prepare, or have someone prepare for you, instructions that will help you focus and stay calm in an emergency.
- Practise what to do during and after an emergency. Practise leaving your home and other places where you spend time until you feel confident you will know what to do in an emergency.
- If you have a service animal, include them in the practice.
- Think about what first responders, such as firefighters or police officers, or other helpers may need to know about you. Practise saying it ahead of time or write it down and keep it with you. For example:
  - "I may have a hard time understanding what you are telling me."
  - "Please speak slowly and use simple words."
  - "I talk to people in a different way. I can point to pictures or key words, which you can find in my wallet or emergency kit."

### **Neurodivergent disabilities**

- Put comfort items and sensory protective equipment (headphones, sunglasses, hand fidgets, and other items) in your emergency kit and go-bag.
- Practise your plan ahead of time as often as you need until it feels familiar. Find out ahead of time what parts of your plan may present the biggest challenges or potential triggers. Adjust your plans so they work best for you.

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- Think about what a first responder or another helper may need to know about you in an emergency. Practise saying it ahead of time. You may want to prepare communication cards to laminate and keep with you. These might say something like
    - “I am autistic and may become overwhelmed in this environment. Please help me find a safe and quiet place as soon as possible.”
    - “My name is... With my consent, or in an emergency, please contact...”
    - “I am non-speaking. Please wait for me to type my responses on my communication device.”



## DURING AN EMERGENCY

It is important to stay informed during an emergency. You or someone in your household should

- follow updates from trusted news and weather sources
- pay attention to instructions from emergency responders, local emergency management officials in your municipality, and the Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office
- be alert for orders to shelter in place or evacuate


When it is safe, check in with your support network. Let them know where you are or where you are going.

It is normal to feel scared or overwhelmed during a disaster or an emergency. Try to focus on the actions you can take and ask for help when you need it.

### General Tips

- If you are safe and have time, take steps to protect your home, or wherever you are staying, from threats like fire or floodwaters.
- Stay away from windows during storms. If floodwaters are rising, go to the highest level of your home.
- If the power is on, charge all battery-operated equipment and devices.
- If the power goes out or you are on the move, check your devices' battery levels once in a while. Ask for help with recharging as needed.
- Only shut off utilities, such as water, gas, and electricity, when authorities instruct you to do so.
- If the power goes out, use battery-operated flashlights and lanterns (candles are a fire hazard). Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed to keep food cold as long as possible.
- Only use a generator outside in a well-ventilated area.
- If you lose power and decide to cook on a barbecue, only use it outside in a well-ventilated area away from any buildings or trees.
- Find your emergency kit and emergency go-bag as soon as possible. Let others sheltering with you know where they are.



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- If you can safely stay in your home, stay in your home. It is best for everyone, including emergency responders, if people are not moving from place to place, leaving their personal comfort zones or overwhelming resources like the Red Cross. The key at this time is safety, not comfort.
  - Evacuation and emergency shelters should only be used if you have no other safe option for evacuation. Do not go to a shelter unless local officials have announced it is open.
  - If you must evacuate
    - check local road condition updates as some routes may have become impassable or dangerous
    - try to go to one of the locations you decided on in your planning phase, such as a friend or family member's home or a local hotel or motel
    - take your go-bag and any equipment you will need
  - Advocate for yourself. Use the information you practised sharing in your planning phase to explain to others how to safely and quickly guide or move you and any equipment.
  - Let first responders, shelter volunteers, or other helpers know right away if you need accommodations or support. For example, let them know if standing in a line for a long time is painful or difficult, or if a bright and noisy room is overwhelming.
  - If you are evacuating or at a shelter and will need devices or equipment recharged, ask for help sooner rather than later.
  - Know how to recognize signs of stress. Monitor your physical and emotional well-being. Make sure to take breaks to eat, drink, and rest when it is safe to do so.
  - If you have animals in your care, including service animals, make sure they have access to food, water, and relief breaks when it is safe. Give them reassurance.
  - Let your support network or emergency responders know about any injuries or pain you might have.

## Disability-specific Tips

### Deaf, hard of hearing, late deafened, and deaf-blind

- Make sure your support network knows to update you about announcements or evacuation orders that are not accessible for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing.
- Emergency shelters may be very noisy and could interfere with hearing. Try to find a quiet space when communicating with others.
- Have a written list of your emergency contacts and support network.
- Have a pen and paper and/or a small white board and marker.
- Show prepared cards to share your communication needs with first responders or others who are helping. These cards might say things like
  - “I need announcements written or signed.”
  - “I use American Sign Language and need an ASL interpreter.”

### Blind, low vision, and deaf-blind

- If someone is helping you to exit a building, ask them to
  - tell you about any obstacles
  - give you any instructions out loud
  - tell you when you have reached a safe place
  - describe your new surroundings to you
- Emergency shelters may be disorienting for people who are blind or have low vision. If you feel unsafe moving around a new location, ask someone to go with you.
- If you use a white cane and have to evacuate, use the cane as soon as it is safe to do so.

### Mobility disabilities

- Give yourself as much time as possible to evacuate or otherwise get to safe shelter. The usual routes, elevators, and ramps may be inaccessible.
- If you use a mobility device, keep your emergency go-bag as near to it as possible, ideally in a backpack that can be kept on the back of a wheelchair or worn on your back.
- Put on work gloves to protect your hands before wheeling over hazardous or unfamiliar terrain.

- If you must be lifted and carried out of a building, explain quickly and clearly to first responders or other helpers how to do so safely.
- If you are evacuating in a vehicle, ask first responders or other helpers to make sure your mobility device is safely stowed and not left behind.

### **Communication disabilities**

- Share prepared communication cards with first responders and other helpers if they are having trouble understanding your speech. These might say something like
  - “I have a communication disability. It is OK to ask me yes/no questions. I may want to respond with my communication device.”
  - “I have difficulty speaking because I have a disability. Please listen carefully when I talk.”
- If possible, make sure someone who understands how you communicate can stay with you during an emergency.
- If you have to leave, remember to take any AAC accessories, such as batteries, chargers, switches, and mounts.
- Let your support network know if first responders or other helpers, such as volunteers and staff at an evacuation centre, are having difficulty understanding you.

### **Intellectual and cognitive disabilities**

- Check in often with emergency broadcasts on local television and radio stations, or ask others with you to tune in, to see if you need to evacuate.
- Keep your emergency go-bag near you, as well as items like your keys and wallet or purse, in case you have to leave right away.
- Let others know if they are giving you instructions too quickly for you to understand. It is better to ask again than to not understand or miss important steps.
- If you are away from home when an emergency happens, look for first responders and other helpers. Ask them to help you find a safe place to shelter. Ask them to stay with you until help arrives or your emergency contacts can be reached.
- If you have a mobile phone, call the people in your support network right away. Tell them where you are and if you need help.



## Neurodivergent disabilities

- Share prepared communication cards with first responders and other helpers if you are having difficulty speaking or are non-speaking. These might say something like
  - “I am autistic and may become overwhelmed in this environment. Please help me find a safe and quiet place as soon as possible.”
  - “I am non-speaking. Please wait for me to type my responses on my communication device.”
- Use your comfort items and sensory protective equipment (headphones, sunglasses, hand fidgets, and other items). They can help you to stay focused and calm in uncertain situations and unfamiliar environments.



## AFTER AN EMERGENCY

An emergency can happen quickly. Sometimes the event only lasts a few hours or even minutes. The after-effects, however, can last a long time. Your home may be damaged. Your neighbourhood or community may be without essential services or utilities for a long time. People may have been hurt. Lives may have been lost.

Your independence may also be affected. Changes to your usual environment or routines may change your ability to complete tasks. You may need to ask for help with things you can usually do on your own.


After a disaster or an emergency, you may need to

- replace damaged items
- repair your home
- find new ways to get around or get essential items
- fill out forms and gather information for provincial disaster financial assistance programs or insurance companies

Getting back to normal after an emergency can be stressful. Reaching out to your personal support network can make your recovery easier and less stressful.

### General Tips

- If instructed by authorities, shut off any damaged utilities in your home.
- Be sure to reach out to your emergency contacts as soon as you can. Let them know where you are. Tell them if you need help accessing your home or getting groceries and other essential items.
- Be sure to let your municipal emergency management coordinator know if you cannot stay in your home because of damage. They can help with temporary shelter and other immediate needs you may have.
- Stay away from downed power lines and flooded roads.
- Check broadcasts on local television and radio stations, government websites, and other trusted sources for information about disaster financial assistance programs that may be offered. You can also ask your support network to help you get this information.
- You may have been injured or may experience new or worsening symptoms after a disaster or an emergency. Seek medical attention as soon as you are able.

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- You may also experience a lot of emotions once the immediate danger has passed. If you feel overwhelmed, seek mental health support as soon as you can.
  - Service animals may experience emotional trauma. Get them back to their usual routine as soon as possible.
  - After the disaster or emergency is over, review your preparedness plan. Ask your support network to help you with this review. Use what you have learned to help improve your plan for the next disaster or emergency.
  - The layout of your home or office may have changed after a disaster or an emergency. Review your exit routes and make changes if needed.
  - Replace any emergency kit or go-bag supplies you used during this disaster. Restock prescriptions and medical supplies.
  - Check to see if any of your devices or equipment need recharging, repairing, or replacing.



## APPENDIX 1: Emergency Kit Checklist

The items in this emergency kit checklist are a starting point. They may not be exactly what you need. Think about your needs and those of your household and prepare your kit according to them.

It's a good idea to check your emergency kit twice a year—spring and fall. Even non-perishable food items have best-before or expiry dates. Medication, batteries, or other supplies may need replacing.

### Basic Emergency Kit Supplies

**Water**

- enough for at least three days
  - three litres for each person for each day for drinking
  - two litres for each person for each day for food preparation and sanitation
- store in plastic containers, not glass

**Food and Kitchen Supplies**

- at least three days' worth of food for each person
- food that won't go bad
  - packaged food: instant oatmeal or soup mixes
  - canned food: baked beans, tuna, fruit
  - dried fruit, nuts, granola bars
  - crackers, cookies
- manual can opener, scissors (if you are unable to use a manual can opener or scissors, include food that is packaged with pull tabs or other options that are accessible for you)
- plastic plates, cups, utensils (fork, knife, spoon)

**First Aid Kit**

Basic first aid supplies such as

- bandages
- antiseptic or moistened towelettes
- gauze pads and adhesive tape
- thermometer
- tweezers
- medicine dropper

Non-prescription medications for

- headache or pain (acetaminophen, ibuprofen)
- upset stomach (antacid)
- other common symptoms (throat lozenge, allergy pills)



**Personal Hygiene and Cleaning Supplies**

- bathroom and facial tissue
- wet wipes, soap, hand sanitizer
- hair grooming items
- toothbrush, toothpaste
- menstrual products
- disposable gloves, face masks
- plastic garbage bags
- disinfectant cleaning wipes

**Clothing**

- at least one complete change of clothes per person
  - suitable for the time of year and typical local weather
- raincoat or waterproof poncho
- hat, gloves
- sunglasses

**Service Animal Supplies**

Note that service animals, such as guide dogs, may go everywhere with their handler, including emergency shelters.

- food and water, feeding dishes
- leash, harness, vest
- identification tags, registration
- medications
- blanket, toy, or comfort item

**Emotional Support Animal, Therapy Animal, and Pet Supplies**

Note that although emotional support animals and therapy animals have a role in helping persons with disabilities, they are not allowed in emergency shelters. Pets are not allowed in emergency shelters either. Your emergency plan should include backup sheltering plans for these companion animals.

- food and water, feeding dishes
- leash and harness
- identification tags
- medications
- blanket, toy, or comfort item



- Additional Supplies**
  - flashlight, extra batteries
  - pocketknife
  - work gloves
  - battery-operated or crank radio
  - paper, pencil
  - whistle
  - reading material, games
  - baby supplies
    - diapers, wipes
    - baby food, spoons
    - extra clothing, blanket
    - bottles, formula

### **Disability-specific Emergency Kit Supplies**

It's important to plan ahead for any disability-specific equipment, medication, devices, or supplies you may need.

Check off the supplies you use on the list below. You may want to add notes to describe the items and where they can be found in your home. Add extra items that you need.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> diabetes supplies (lancets, blood sugar meter, insulin syringes, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> crutches  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dialysis equipment   | <input type="checkbox"/> walking cane  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> prescription medications   | <input type="checkbox"/> white cane  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sensory comfort items (headphones, fidget items)                       | <input type="checkbox"/> MedicAlert identification   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AAC devices and chargers   | <input type="checkbox"/> information cards (for example, ones that state "I am Deaf and use ASL" or "I have a communication disability. Please speak slowly when you talk.") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> assistive devices and chargers or batteries                            | <input type="checkbox"/> pen and paper   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> extension cord   | <input type="checkbox"/> smartphone chargers   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> prescription glasses, contact lenses, and supplies                     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hearing devices  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dentures   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dressing devices   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> suction equipment  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> oxygen equipment   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> incontinence supplies  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> urinary supplies   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ostomy supplies  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> monitors   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wheelchair, tire repair kit  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> walker   |  |



## APPENDIX 2: Emergency Go-bag Checklist

You may have to leave in a hurry. Prepare a smaller version of your emergency kit in a small bag, such as a backpack.

The items in this go-bag checklist are a starting point. They may not be exactly what you need. Think about your needs and those of your household and prepare your go-bag according to them.

It's a good idea to check your emergency go-bag twice a year—spring and fall. Even non-perishable food items have best-before or expiry dates. Medication, batteries, or other supplies may need replacing.

### Basic Supplies

- food that won't spoil, is ready to eat, easy to open, and easy to carry
- small plastic bottles of water
- extra phone charger and battery bank
- battery-powered or hand-crank flashlight
- battery-powered or hand-crank radio
- extra batteries for flashlight and radio
- small first aid kit
- basic medications for pain or other minor discomforts
- basic toiletries (toothbrush, wipes, sanitizer, menstrual products)
- disposable gloves and masks
- pen and notepad
- whistle
- extra clothing for the season and local weather
- emergency blanket
- pocketknife
- work gloves
- paperback book, puzzle book, cards to pass the time
- utensils (fork, knife, spoon)

## Disability-specific Emergency Go-bag Supplies

In addition to the items suggested for a basic emergency go-bag, it's important to plan ahead for extra equipment, medications, devices, or other accommodations you may need.

Check off the supplies on the list below that you use. Add extra items that you need.

- diabetes supplies (lancets, blood sugar meter, insulin syringes, etc.)
- dialysis equipment
- work gloves
- wheelchair tire-repair kit
- prescription medications
- sensory comfort items (headphones, fidget items)
- AAC devices and chargers
- assistive devices and chargers or batteries
- extension cord
- prescription glasses, contact lenses, and supplies
- hearing devices
- dentures
- incontinence supplies
- urinary supplies
- ostomy supplies
- emergency medication (your pharmacist may be able to provide additional doses specifically for an emergency kit or emergency go-bag)



## **APPENDIX 3: Emergency Contacts: Building Your SUPPORT NETWORK**

Ask at least three people you trust to be your emergency contacts. They should be willing and able to check on you before, during, and after a disaster or an emergency, especially if you need life-sustaining equipment or regular care. They should also know how you communicate and what assistive devices you may use.

Your emergency contacts should be the people you would want first responders or other helpers to contact before, during, and after a disaster or an emergency if you are unable to communicate for yourself or need additional support.

Try to include someone who lives very near and can respond quickly. For example, a trusted neighbour or member of your faith community can help you get groceries and other essentials.

Try to also include someone who does not live in your immediate area as they are unlikely to be affected by the disaster or emergency.

Choose several ways to communicate with each other in case one method is not available.

People you may want as emergency contacts include

- family members
- friends
- personal care assistant
- neighbours
- roommates
- co-workers
- members of your faith community

You may also want to reach out to your local emergency management coordinator to discuss your specific needs during an emergency or evacuation. Many municipalities now maintain a list of persons with disabilities and their needs.

**Emergency contact #1**

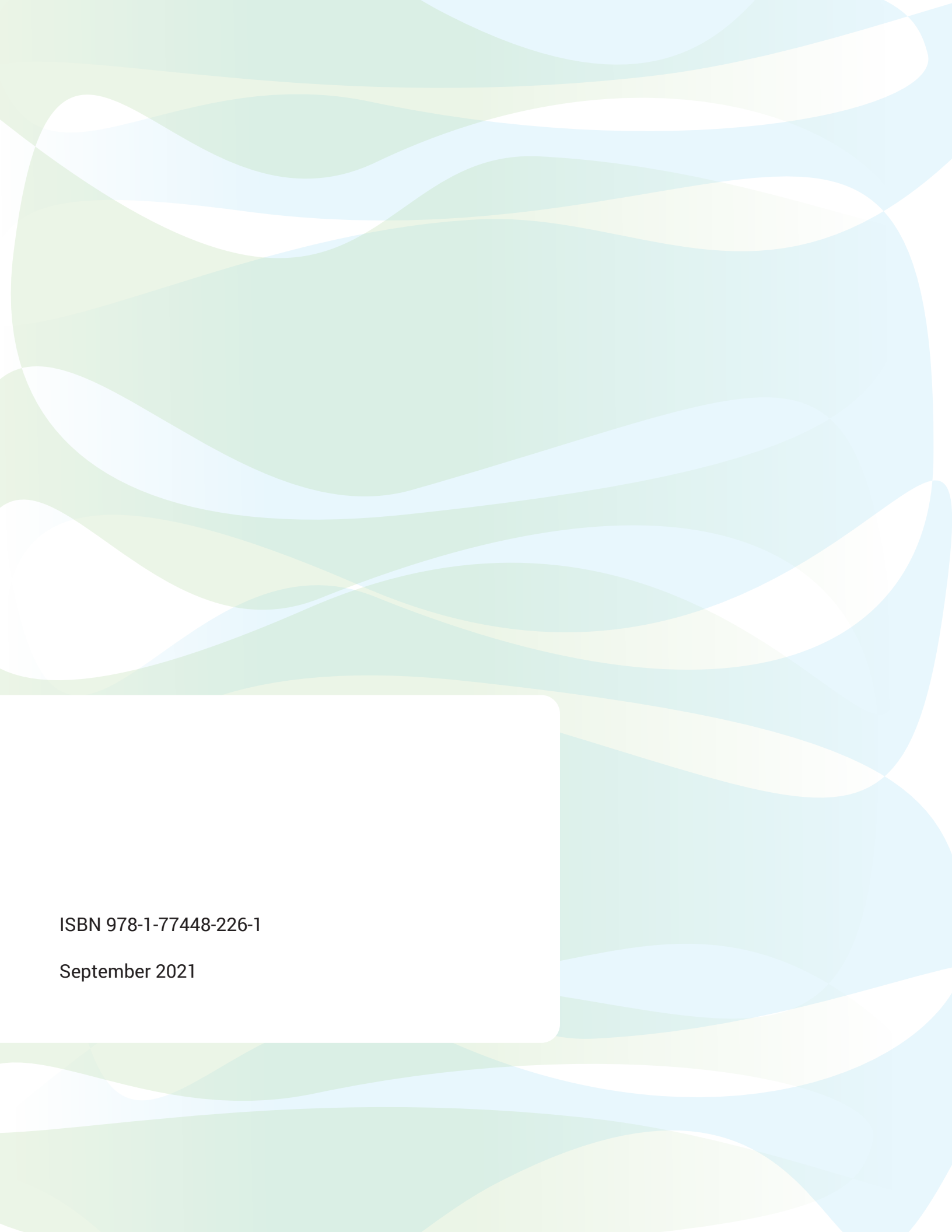
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mobile phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency contact #2**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mobile phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency contact #3**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mobile phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_



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