



STATEWIDE DISABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

A GUIDE TO CREATING EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES INCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



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Acknowledgements

With sincere gratitude, the Statewide Disability Advisory Council (SDAC) thanks past Council members and the California Highway Patrol (CHP) for their dedication and foresight in the initial development of the State's first edition of *Guide to Emergency Evacuation Procedures for Employees with Disabilities* in 1999. SDAC also thanks past and present Council members for their assistance in developing this 2010 edition. Additionally, a special "Thank You" goes to the State Personnel Board (SPB) for their ongoing support.

This Guide is a compilation of a variety of resources including information obtained from Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.

Executive Summary

The SDAC, as an advisory body to the State Personnel Board, developed this guide to assist California State Departments in providing for the needs and considerations of persons with disabilities in emergency situations. Due to the many changes in technology, lifestyles and laws, the previous Guide, became dated. This document replaces the previous Guide in its entirety.

The Need for an Emergency Evacuation Guide

Thirty-two percent of people with disabilities say plans have not been made to evacuate them from their workplace¹.

The purpose of this Guide is to provide a safe work environment and establish a continuing state of emergency preparedness plan for the protection of all employees, clients, and visitors, including persons with disabilities, in the event of any type of emergency. This Guide can be used as a tool to help customize individual emergency plans (Plan) before, during, and after an emergency to maximize safety for all employees and visitors. Please note that the information

¹ 2003 N.O.D./Harris Poll Survey

presented in this Guide may not be applicable, in part, to every State department.

In creating an effective emergency plan each department should consider all possible contingencies, including but not limited to: protecting lives and property, preserving organizational structure and ensuring the continuity and/or resuming essential services after an emergency. A Plan should be viewed as a living document. The Plan must be continually revised and updated to reflect changes in technology and procedures. Both research and practice drills play an important role in having an *effective Plan*.

Legal Considerations

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 specifically requires equal access for people with Disabilities. This includes, but is not limited to, the benefits and privileges of employment, the programs and activities conducted or funded by the federal government or State and local governments, as well as the goods and services made available by places of public accommodation, and considerations in emergency preparedness plans. Additionally, Title II of the ADA require emergency evacuation procedures for people with disabilities be evaluated for its operational effectiveness.

Plan Development

Developing an inclusive, broad and effective Plan provides for a wide array of actions to be taken before, during, and after all possible types of emergency scenarios. Considerations in this Guide can be used in developing Department specific plans.

Privacy

The ADA and the Rehabilitation Act strictly limits how, when and what type of information can be gathered about an employee's medical condition, even for purposes of emergency preparedness. Additionally, the Rehabilitation Act, Federal Privacy Act and the Information Practices Act of 1977 require that medical information be kept in a file separate from the employee's personnel file.

CONSIDERATIONS

It is important to communicate the reasons for gathering any medical information and to reassure employees of confidentiality. Information collected will be shared only with those responsible for safety and emergency preparedness, and providing the information is voluntary.

Collection of information may include the following:

After a job offer has been made, but before employment commences, all entering employees in the same category may be asked disability related questions, including whether they would require assistance in the event of an emergency and what type of assistance may be necessary.

After employment begins, all employees may be asked to voluntarily self identify if they have impairments that would require assistance in the event of an emergency. For employees responding affirmatively, employers may ask what type of assistance is needed.

Even if an employer decides not to ask all employees to voluntarily self identify as needing assistance in an emergency, employees with known disabilities may be asked whether and what type of assistance they may need in an emergency. An employer should not assume employees with obvious disabilities would always need assistance during an evacuation. Keep in mind that people with cognitive or developmental disabilities may not have the judgment and cognitive skills to articulate their needs.

Disclosure

The Rehabilitation Act allows disclosure of medical information to first aide and safety personnel, as well as individuals responsible for implementing the Plan. However, only medical information necessary to implement the Plan may be disclosed.

Involving Key Personnel

While planning for every situation that may occur in an emergency is impossible, being as prepared as possible is important. One way of accomplishing this is to consider the perspectives of various individuals and entities—from senior staff and employees with disabilities to first responders. Involving key groups early on in the Plan development phase helps to ensure a common Plan understanding and the challenges stakeholder groups face, whether it is related to physical, sensory, or cognitive ability, or personnel, budget, or resources.

CONSIDERATIONS

The following is a partial list of key personnel considerations:

- **Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) and/or Disability Advisory Review Team (DART)**—serves in an advisory capacity to the director/department on disability employment and accessibility issues. The DAC/DART is a good source of knowledge and resources.
- **Departmental Personnel**—key department staff who are familiar with issues related to assisting employees with disabilities are also a great resource, including, but not limited to, the Health and Safety Officer/Emergency Coordinator, ADA Coordinator and Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator.
- **Building Manager**—throughout the course of daily business, most office buildings and facilities have clients and visitors who may need assistance during an emergency. A building manager can provide valuable information about visiting patterns, potential evacuation routes and other facility considerations.
- **First Responders (CHP and local Fire department)**—The CHP provides information on individual state or leased department buildings and the surrounding areas. First responders and service providers can provide input on the

feasibility of the Plan as well as coordinate response efforts with an agency.

- **Local, State and National Disability Organizations**—These organizations can help identify concerns and serve as resources for training or locating emergency evacuation devices and adaptive mobility equipment.
- **Security Guards**—The relationship between the security guards and the individual department may vary depending on the nature of the contractual agreement, however, collaboration early on will ensure continuity with all parties involved during an emergency.
- **Employees with Disabilities**—Employees with disabilities know how best to assist and evacuate during an emergency; convey the preferences of evacuating and handling of a service animal; and can be a good resource in evacuation-equipment decision-making.

Emergency Response Teams

Emergency Response Teams are the first line of defense in emergencies. Before assigning personnel to these teams, the employer must assure that employees are physically capable of performing the duties they are assigned.

Emergency Response Teams can be formed with the assistance of the aforementioned key personnel. Recruitment methods may include informal requests for volunteers or formal assignments. Response Team members include, but are not limited to Emergency Coordinators (Health & Safety Officer), Floor Wardens, Search Monitors, and Emergency Aids and Alternates. Note that roles and responsibilities of these members can vary from department to department.

CONSIDERATIONS

- **Emergency Coordinator**—Emergency Coordinator and Health & Safety Officer may be one in the same.

- Establishes departmental Emergency Response Team;
 - Commands the security staff and all other onsite emergency response team members (Floor Wardens, Search Monitors and Emergency Aids/Alternates);
 - Coordinates emergency evacuation activities with all departments and other service tenants located within a facility;
 - Ensures all emergency materials at the Command Center are in tact, first aid kits located in designated areas throughout the facility are kept fully stocked, and all emergency evacuation devices located in designated areas throughout the facility are in proper working order;
 - Provides annual emergency response and emergency evacuation training to the Emergency Response Team members and all employees;
 - Establishes an “open door” policy to enable all employees to communicate their concerns;
 - Updates the Plan at regular intervals, as necessary, and communicates the changes;
 - Works with Emergency Aides and Alternates to identify all employees, clients and visitors who may need assistance during an emergency evacuation and the type of assistance needed;
 - Determines which individuals with disabilities want to be evacuated to the area of refuge or area of rescue assistance during emergency practice drills and minor emergencies rather than an area of assembly;
 - Conducts Emergency Aide and Alternate refresher training at regular intervals.
- **Floor Warden**—Coordinates all emergency evacuation actions on assigned floor.
 - Maintains a confidential list of employees on their assigned floor who may need assistance during an emergency evacuation, along with the type of assistance needed;
 - Assigns Emergency Aides and Alternates to each employee with a disability who has officially requested assistance (unless the person with a disability chooses his/her own Emergency Aide(s) and Alternate(s) or

- indicates that they do not want an aide);
 - Meets with floor Emergency Response Team members at regular intervals to discuss current emergency preparedness, emergency evacuation procedures, and safety concerns;
 - Communicates important information to all persons via e-mails and other correspondence in a variety of formats as necessary.
- **Search Monitors**—searches all assigned areas to ensure employees are appropriately evacuated.
 - **Emergency Aids/Alternates**—are assigned to assist a person with a disability to safely evacuate the premises

The Buddy System

In a traditional buddy system, people pair up as partners to assist each other. For most people the buddy system is a redundant and additional measure that supplements other means of notifying individuals about and responding to an emergency. A buddy (possibly emergency aid/alternate) can help ensure that an employee with a disability is informed about and appropriately responds to an emergency. It is important that buddies be able to communicate with and assist the employee with a disability.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Reliance on a single buddy can put the employee who needs assistance at risk, especially when the buddy is not present, able, or willing to assist during an emergency. Therefore, flexibility in the Plan is vital. Further, Plans should not be based on the buddy or employee being in his or her own office at the time of an emergency. It is wise to augment the traditional buddy system with additional supports for the employee; in other words, have multiple individuals prepared to assist in an emergency, thus creating support networks.

- Provide persons with disabilities the option of (1) choosing from a list of volunteers and/or, (2) personally selecting and contacting *at least* two buddies plus two alternates (personal support networks).
- Whether a department utilizes the buddy system or personal support network, the U.S. Access Board recommends that participation be voluntary, volunteers should be cross-trained. If the Buddy or the employee is unavailable, a backup system should then be utilized.

Training

Providing effective training to the Emergency Response Team Members is necessary for ensuring members are aware and comfortable with their respective roles and responsibilities.

CONSIDERATIONS

Training curriculum and considerations include:

- Disability etiquette, emergency policies and procedures, such as what evacuation techniques to use, particularly how to carry or assist individuals who use mobility aides, basic sign language to effectively communicate with individuals who are deaf, and instructions for persons who use assistance animals;
- Employees who work after normal business hours;
- One-on-one training or evaluation of evacuation devices for individuals who may be uncomfortable practicing evacuation procedures in a group setting;
- Quarterly verification of information such as changes in work schedules and validation to ascertain if individuals are still willing and able to assist in an emergency.

Assessing Employee and Visitor Needs

Communication is vital and necessary to identify employees and/or visitors who will need assistance in an emergency evacuation. Recognizing that identifying individuals with disabilities and/or a medical condition may not be readily apparent, for example,

employees using wheelchairs or those with other visible disabilities immediately come to mind. Conditions such as asthma, allergies, coronary heart disease, diabetes, or pregnancy can reduce stamina to the point of needing help in an actual emergency.

CONSIDERATIONS

Develop a form to provide individuals with disabilities the opportunity to voluntarily self-identify individual requirements and can be used to initiate action by emergency personnel. Contact information, work hours, supervisor's name and the type of assistance needed can be used in developing personal support networks, i.e., a buddy system, promoting cross training and planning for evacuations. (See examples located in the Appendix Section of this Guide.)

Areas of Refuge and Rescue Assistance

Consider designating an area of refuge or rescue assistance on each floor because evacuation may place individuals with disabilities at greater risk of harm or injury. An area of refuge may be the preferred method of safely waiting out the emergency. Additionally, individuals who are unable to use the stairs may temporarily remain in this area while awaiting further instructions or assistance during an emergency. This area of refuge is the area of assembly for persons with disabilities.

Areas designated as an "Area of Refuge" or an "Area of Rescue Assistance" must be dedicated solely for that purpose and meet all applicable ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and local building and fire safety codes to protect all occupants for at least three-quarters to one hour from smoke and fire danger. Sections 4.3.11.1 through 4.3.11.5 of the ADAAG specifically addresses location, construction, size, stairway width, two-way communication, and identification for areas of refuge or rescue assistance.

Advance preparation can help ensure that everyone remains as comfortable as possible in an emergency situation. When there is no easy access to a direct escape route, occupants may be instructed to evacuate after an undesirable period of time, as such, the following equipment and supplies could ease the discomfort of the emergency

situation.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Respirators and oxygen masks
- Emergency evacuation device(s)
- Flashlights, emergency lighting or chemical glow devices
- Fire extinguishers
- Fire/thermal blankets
- Portable emergency oxygen canisters
- Fold down seats
- Bottled water
- Powdered drink mixtures
- Medical and First-Aid supplies
- Rechargeable batteries for walkie-talkies and flashlights
- Heavy, protective gloves
- Patch kit to repair flat tires of wheelchairs
- Extra batteries for motorized wheelchairs/scooters
- An operating telephone, cell-phone, TTY, and/or two-way radio/paging system so that emergency services can be contacted
- A closing door that will protect against fire and smoke
- A blanket or towel that will enable individuals to block smoke from entering the room from under the door
- A window and something to write with (such as a marker pen, etc.) or a “help” sign to alert rescuers that people are in this location
- Provide/install dedicated phones, two-way paging systems, wireless communicators, or intercoms with dedicated lines
- Walkie-talkies with large buttons and rocker switches
- Designate Emergency Response Team members for the areas of refuge or areas of rescue assistance
- Use flashlights, paper and pencils
- Provide combination TTY and voice phones that are accessible to people using wheelchairs, hearing aid compatible, equipped with volume amplifiers, and installed at an accessible height
- Cell phone, pagers, and walkie-talkies should not be used in any bomb threat situations

- Test the emergency communication system to make sure it works in each area of refuge or area of rescue assistance
- Include the areas of refuge or areas of rescue assistance on all the emergency evacuation route maps posted on each floor

Assembly Areas

If an evacuation to the outside is appropriate, the nominated assembly areas for personnel shall be far enough away from the building, structure or workplace to ensure that, where practicable, everyone is protected from falling glass and other objects.

Ideally the areas selected should be sheltered from the affected building, structure or workplace by other buildings, structures etc., and should allow for further movement away from any possible source of danger. In some instances, evacuation may be to another nominated area, internal or external, such as another floor.

The following considerations are provided to aid in selecting an assembly area.

CONSIDERATIONS

- The area is available at all times day or night;
- No keys or special access requirements is needed;
- It's within a short walk from your building;
- The area is protected by other buildings or objects;
- Not on a road or area that has vehicle traffic;
- Not requiring evacuees to cross busy roads;
- Enough space to accommodate all evacuees at peak occupancy times;
- Consider several different assembly areas and name them.

Emergency Plan Implementation

Plan Communication/Distribution

Communication is vital in any emergency as it could affect an individual's ability to remain safe before, during, and after the emergency. Communication of the plan involves ensuring that everyone in the Department understands the plan and can easily locate the information. Regardless of the method used, communication must be at the same frequency and level of detail to all employees.

CONSIDERATIONS

Website or Intranet. Documents in PDF and PowerPoint Presentations that are inaccessible need to be made accessible in alternative formats to employees using screen readers and/or speech recognition technology.

Hard copy. Documents can be provided electronically. Similarly, copies must be provided in alternative formats (disk, CD, large print, Braille). Additionally, text descriptions should be provided for graphics, images and charts.

Staff Meetings. Staff meetings are a good forum to communicate the Plan; it's location, and employer/employee responsibilities.

Prominent Locations. Ensure Plan copies are placed in prominent locations throughout the building, such as conference rooms, elevators and cafeteria, and break rooms.

Practice Drills

To emphasize the seriousness and the importance of the emergency evacuation effort, all employee participation should be mandatory and employees found to purposely disregard and/or ignore the drill procedures should be disciplined. The significance of practicing a Plan cannot be overemphasized—practice drills unveil weaknesses in emergency planning. It solidifies employees' grasp of the Plan, and

assists employees in recognizing assistance may be needed in an emergency.

In an effort to replicate a true emergency, employees and visitors should not be forewarned of the drill to flush out any problem areas or concerns. In reality, employees may not have advance notice of an actual emergency.

CONSIDERATIONS

When conducting standard drills, it is important to pose a variety of challenges such as closed off hallways, stairwells, blocked doors or unconscious individuals along designated evacuation routes to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken.

Additionally, consider the following responsibilities of the Response Team Members during a drill:

Emergency Coordinator

- Communicates emergency status to employees and tenants within the facility by all necessary and appropriate means;
- Immediately notifies the Emergency Response Command Center, communicates and coordinates with local Fire Department and notifies the CHP regarding emergency status;
- Informs the local fire department of the names and numbers of individuals waiting in an area of refuge or rescue assistance, their exact location, and the nature of limitations and types of assistance needed.

Floor Warden

- Notifies, establishes and maintains constant contact with the Emergency Coordinator;
- Locates alternate Emergency Response Team members in place of any absent team members;
- Identifies any visitors or other staff that have disabilities or

mobility limitations who are present on their floor, including doing a careful search of all work areas, meeting rooms, conference rooms, and public restrooms;

- Reports to the Emergency Coordinator the names and numbers of individuals waiting in an areas of refuge or rescue assistance, their exact location, nature of limitations and types of assistance needed;
- Collaborates with Emergency Aides and Alternates to provide additional assistance as needed;
- Remains in place until all Search Monitors have reported that all people in their assigned areas of responsibility have been contacted and that all their areas have been searched and cleared.

Search Monitor

- Determines if Emergency Aides, Alternates and other Search Monitors near their assigned areas are at their posts;
- Alerts the Floor Warden if additional Emergency Aides and Alternates are needed to assist visitors or other individuals in their assigned areas;
- Keeps the Floor Warden informed of any situation that needs attention, including injured staff, by location.

Emergency Aid/Alternate

- Contacts the employee with a disability and informs him/her about the pending situation;
- Assists the employee with a disability to the nearest stairwell and/or to the area of refuge or area of rescue assistance;
- Remains with the employee with a disability until contact with the Emergency Coordinator has been established or local fire rescue personnel or emergency evacuation assistance have arrived;

- Assists, if requested, the employee with a disability into an emergency evacuation device;
- If absolutely necessary, will assist the employee with a disability down the stairwell to the outside area of assembly;
- Remains with the employee with a disability until the “all clear” signal has been given;
- Assists the employee with a disability to return to the workplace.

Evaluation

Debriefing after each practice drill provides a forum to identify lessons learned and discuss plan changes. As previously discussed, the Plan is a living document, employee participation and feedback regarding the successes and failures of the drill will help to improve the Plan.

CONSIDERATIONS

- The Emergency Coordinator and Floor Wardens should regularly assess the effectiveness of the Team’s response and how they carried out their responsibilities.
- While maintaining confidentiality of all the people involved, provide the emergency team members with written results of the drill performance to continually improve the evacuation process.
- Solicit feedback from the Disability Advisory Committee on the written results for further training and/or emergency evacuation improvement.

Additional Tips for Individuals with Disabilities

- Create emergency supply kits containing disability specific items including extra medication, food, water, batteries and

battery chargers for assistive technology devices. This kit should be sustainable for at least seven (7) days. Keep a kit in any place that is often frequented, including, but not limited to home, workplace, and/or automobile.

- Create an emergency preparedness buddy plan that incorporates a personal assistant such as attendants, readers, interpreters as well as family, friends, and/or neighbors. These individuals should be familiar with any medications currently being taken and be able to operate any assistive technology devices being used.
- Practice the plan with the identified individuals and ensure the individuals are aware of the location of the emergency supply kits.
- Carry emergency health information on your person that includes information regarding the disability, health conditions, medications, allergies, communication needs, assistive technology devices, durable medical equipment and any assistance that is projected to be needed in an event of an emergency.
- Maintain a list of out of town or state contacts that can provide assistance in the event of an emergency. Keep this list accessible at all times.
- Eliminate hazards in the workplace. Ensure that large furniture, special equipment, and other items that could pose a hazard are appropriately secured and/or anchored to the wall.
- Practice providing personal pertinent information quickly to others on how best to be assisted. Be clear, specific, and concise with the directions. Think about how much detail is necessary be ready with additional instructions.
- Tell these people where emergency supplies are kept.
- Give a member of your support network a key to your house or

apartment.

- Contact your city or county government's emergency information management office. Many local offices keep lists of people with disabilities so they can be located quickly in a sudden emergency.
- Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to help identify your disability.
- If dependent on dialysis or other life sustaining treatment, know the location and availability of more than one facility.
- Show others how to operate assistive devices that are used.
- Know the size and weight of your wheelchair, in addition to whether or not it is collapsible, in case it has to be transported.
- Keep a supply of hearing-aid batteries, wheel chair batteries or oxygen.
- Maintain a list of the style and serial number of medical devices.
- Medical insurance and Medicare cards.
- Keep a list of doctors, relatives or friends who should be notified if case of injury.

Resources

Disability Preparedness Resource Center,
<http://www.disabilitypreparedness.gov/>

This disability preparedness web site provides practical information on how people with and without disabilities can prepare for an emergency. It also provides information for family members of, and service providers to, people with disabilities. In addition, this site includes information for emergency planners and first responders to

help them to better prepare for serving persons with disabilities.

California Emergency Management Agency

<http://www.calema.ca.gov/>

EMERGENCY SCENARIOS

The following Emergency Scenarios provided are intended to assist with the safety and security in the home as well as place of business. Please note that the information provided herewith is not all-inclusive and is for informational purposes.

Before an Earthquake

The following are things you can do to protect yourself, your family, and your property in the event of an earthquake:

- Repair defective electrical wiring, leaky gas lines, and inflexible utility connections. Get appropriate professional help. Do not work with gas or electrical lines yourself.
- Bolt down and secure to the wall studs, your water heater, refrigerator, files, furnace, and gas appliances. If recommended by your gas company, have an automatic gas shut-off valve installed that is triggered by strong vibrations.
- Place large or heavy objects on lower shelves. Fasten shelves, mirrors, and large picture frames to walls. Brace high and top-heavy objects.
- Anchor overhead lighting fixtures.
- Install flexible pipe fittings to avoid gas or water leaks. Flexible fittings are more resistant to breakage.
- Locate area of refuge or safe spots in each room/office under a sturdy table or against an inside wall. Reinforce this information by moving to these places during each drill.
- Hold earthquake drills with your department: Drop, cover, and hold on!

During an Earthquake

Minimize movements during an earthquake to a few steps to a nearby safe place. Stay indoors until the shaking has stopped and it is safe to exit.

If Indoors:

- Take cover under a sturdy desk, table, or bench or against an inside wall, and hold on. If there isn't a table or desk near, cover face and head with arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as lighting fixtures or furniture.
- Stay in bed - if already there when the earthquake strikes and protect head with a pillow, unless under a heavy light fixture that could potentially fall. In that case, move to the nearest safe place.
- Use a doorway for shelter only if it is in close proximity to you and if you know it is a strongly supported, load-bearing doorway.
- Stay inside until shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. Most injuries during earthquakes occur when people are hit by falling objects when entering into or exiting from buildings.
- Be aware that the electricity may go out or the sprinkler systems or fire alarms may turn on.
- DO NOT use the elevators.

If Outdoors:

- Stay there.
- Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires.

If in a Moving Vehicle:

- Stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and utility wires.
- Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped, watching for road and bridge damage.

If Trapped Under Debris:

- Do not light a match.
- Do not move about or kick up dust.
- Cover mouth with a handkerchief or clothing. Tap on a pipe or wall to be located by rescuers. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort - shouting can cause inhalation of dangerous dust particles.

After an Earthquake

Be prepared for aftershocks. These secondary shockwaves are usually less violent than the main quake but can be strong enough to do additional damage to weakened structures.

- Open cabinets cautiously. Beware of objects that can fall off shelves.
- Stay away from damaged areas unless your assistance has been specifically requested by police, fire, or relief

organizations.

- Be aware of possible tsunamis if you live in coastal areas. These are also known as seismic sea waves (mistakenly called “tidal waves”). When local authorities issue a tsunami warning, assume that a series of dangerous waves is on the way. Stay away from the beach.

Additional Resources

The following resources may be helpful:

Red Cross website had highlights on how to prepare and get trained for home, family, workplace and employees.

www.redcross.org/

National Weather Service provides lead time in watches and warnings of weather.

www.nws.noaa.gov/

Before a Flood

To prepare for a flood, you should:

- Listen to the radio or television for information.
- Avoid leasing or owning a building in a floodplain unless it's elevated and reinforced.
- Elevate the furnace, water heater, and electric panel if susceptible to flooding.
- Install "check valves" in sewer traps to prevent floodwater from backing up into the drains of your home or business.
- Construct barriers (levees, beams, floodwalls) to stop floodwater from entering the building.
- Seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds to avoid seepage.
- Be aware that flash flooding can occur. If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait for instructions to move.
- Be aware of streams, drainage channels, canyons, and other areas known to flood suddenly. Flash floods can occur in these areas with or without such typical warnings as rain clouds or heavy rain.

During a Flood

- Listen to the radio or television for information.

Prior to evacuating, do the following:

- Secure your home or business. If you have time, bring in outdoor furniture and equipment and move essential items to an upper floor.
- Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so.
- Disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.
- If you have to leave your office, remember these evacuation tips:
 - Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
 - Do not drive into flooded areas. If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground if you can do so safely. You and the vehicle can be quickly swept away.

After a Flood

The following are guidelines for the period following a flood:

- Listen for news reports to learn whether the community's water supply is safe to drink.
- Avoid floodwaters; water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline, or raw sewage. Water may also be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Avoid moving water.
- Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded. Roads may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.
- Stay away from downed power lines, and report them to the power company.
- Return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.
- Stay out of any building if it is surrounded by floodwaters.
- Use extreme caution when entering buildings; there may be hidden damage, particularly in foundations.
- Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwater can contain sewage and chemicals.

Before a Hurricane

To prepare for a hurricane, take the following measures:

- Make plans to secure property. Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection for windows. A second option is to board up windows with 5/8" marine plywood, cut to fit and ready to install. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking.
- Install straps or additional clips to securely fasten your roof to the frame structure. This will reduce roof damage.
- Be sure trees and shrubs around your home or business are well trimmed.
- Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
- Determine how and where to secure boats.
- Consider building a safe room or area of refuge.

During a Hurricane

- Listen to the radio or TV for information.
- Secure home or business, close storm shutters, and secure outdoor objects or bring them indoors.
- Turn off utilities if instructed to do so. Otherwise, turn the refrigerator thermostat to its coldest setting and keep its doors closed.
- Avoid using the phone, except for serious emergencies.
- Ensure a supply of water for sanitary purposes such as cleaning and flushing toilets. Fill the bathtub and other large containers with water.

Evacuate under the following conditions:

- If directed by local authorities to do so.
- If living or working in a high-rise building—hurricane winds are stronger at higher elevations.
- If living or working on the coast, on a floodplain, near a river, or on an inland waterway.
- If at anytime in danger.

If unable to evacuate, go to the area of refuge or rescuer. If an area of refuge or rescuer is not designated, follow these guidelines:

- Stay indoors during the hurricane and away from windows and glass doors.
- Close all interior doors—secure and brace external doors.
- Keep curtains and blinds closed. Do not be fooled if there is a lull; it could be the eye of the storm - winds will pick up again.
- Take refuge in a small interior room or area of refuge, closet, or hallway on the lowest level.
- Lie on the floor under a table, desk or another sturdy object.

After a Hurricane

Follow the same guidelines for the period following a flood.

Additional Resources

The following resources may be helpful:

FEMA publications available online at
www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/how_to/index.shtm

- Protect your business from all natural hazards
- Protect your property from an earthquake
- Protect your property from fire
- Protect your property from flooding
- Protect your property from high winds

Thunderstorms

The following guidelines are provided if a thunderstorm is likely in the area:

- Postpone outdoor activities.
- Get inside a home, building, or hard top automobile (not a convertible). Although injury may occur if lightning strikes while in a vehicle. Being inside the vehicle is safer than outdoors.
- Remember, rubber-soled shoes and rubber tires provide **NO** protection from lightning. However, the steel frame of a hard-topped vehicle provides increased protection if not touching metal.
- Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage.
- Shutter windows and secure outside doors. If shutters are not available, close window blinds, shades, or curtains.
- Avoid showering or bathing. Plumbing and bathroom fixtures can conduct electricity.
- Use a corded telephone only for emergencies. Cordless and cellular telephones are safe to use.

- Unplug appliances and other electrical items such as computers and turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can cause serious damage.
- Use your battery-operated Weather Radio for updates from local officials.

Avoid the following:

- Natural lightning rods such as a tall, isolated tree in an open area
- Hilltops, open fields, the beach, or a boat on the water
- Isolated sheds or other small structures in open areas
- Anything metal—tractors, farm equipment, motorcycles, golf carts, golf clubs, and bicycles

Before Thunderstorms and Lightning

To prepare for a thunderstorm, do the following:

- Remove dead or rotting trees and branches that could fall and cause injury or damage during a severe thunderstorm.
- Remember the 30/30 lightning safety rule: Go indoors if, after seeing lightning, you cannot count to 30 before hearing thunder. Stay indoors for 30 minutes after hearing the last clap of thunder.

During a Thunderstorm

If:	Then:
In a forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small trees.
In an open area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go to a low place such as a ravine or valley. Be alert for flash floods.
On open water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get to land and find shelter immediately.
Anywhere you feel your hair stand on end (which indicates that lightning is about to strike)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground. DO NOT lie flat on the ground.

After a Thunderstorm

- Call 9-1-1 for medical assistance as soon as possible if necessary.

Check the following before attempting to give aid to a victim of lightning:

- Breathing - if breathing has stopped, begin mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
- Heartbeat - if the heart has stopped, administer CPR.
- Pulse - if the victim has a pulse and is breathing, look for other possible injuries. Check for burns where the lightning entered and left the body. Also be alert for nervous system damage, broken bones, and loss of hearing and eyesight.

Additional Resources

The following resources may be helpful at the National Weather Service website, where the Office of Services produces outreach materials to increase the public's awareness of weather safety and emergency preparedness.

Available online at: <http://www.weather.gov/os/brochures.shtml>

Before a Tornado

- Be alert to changing weather conditions
- Listen to Weather Radio or to commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information
- Look for approaching storms or danger signs—take shelter immediately if spotted.
 - Dark, often greenish sky
 - Large hail
 - A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating)
 - Loud roar, similar to a freight train

During a Tornado

If under a tornado WARNING, **seek shelter immediately!**

If in:	Then:
A structure (e.g. residence, small building, school, nursing home, hospital, factory, shopping center, high-rise building)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to a pre-designated shelter area such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck. Do not open windows.
A vehicle, trailer, or mobile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get out immediately and go to

home

the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building or a storm shelter. Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes.

The outside with no shelter

- Lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands. Be aware of the potential for flooding.
- Do not get under an overpass or bridge. It's safer in a low, flat location.
- Never try to outrun a tornado in urban or congested areas in a car or truck. Instead, leave the vehicle immediately for safe shelter.
- Watch out for flying debris. Flying debris from tornadoes causes most fatalities and injuries.

After a Tornado

- Continue listening to local radio or television stations or a Weather Radio for updated information and instructions. Access may be limited to some parts of the community, or roads may be blocked.
- Watch out for fallen power lines or broken gas lines and report them to the utility company immediately. Reporting potential hazards will get the utilities turned off as quickly as possible, preventing further hazard and injury.
- Avoid disaster areas. Your presence might hamper rescue and other emergency operations, and put you at further risk from the residual effects of tornadoes.
- Stay out of damaged buildings. Tornadoes can cause great damage, creating further hazards. If you are away from home, return only when authorities say it is safe.

Additional Resources

The following resources may be helpful:
FEMA Publications: www.fema.gov

Before Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

Include the following in your disaster supplies kit:

- Rock salt to melt ice on walkways
- Sand to improve traction
- Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment.
- Prepare for possible isolation in your home by having sufficient heating fuel; regular fuel sources may be cut off. For example, store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood for your fireplace or wood-burning stove.
- Winterize your home to extend the life of your fuel supply by insulating walls and attics, caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows, and installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic.

Dress for the Weather

- Wear several layers of loose fitting, lightweight, warm clothing rather than one layer of heavy clothing.
- The outer garments should be tightly woven and water repellent.
- Wear mittens, which are warmer than gloves.
- Wear a hat
- Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs.

During a Winter Storm

The following are guidelines for what can be done during a winter storm or under conditions of extreme cold:

- Listen to the radio, television, or Weather Radio for weather reports and emergency information.
- Eat regularly and drink ample fluids, but avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Overexertion can bring on a heart attack—a major cause of death in the winter. If snow must be shoveled, stretch before going outside.
- Watch for signs of frostbite. These include loss of feeling and white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, ear lobes, and the tip of the nose. If symptoms are detected, get medical help immediately.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia. These include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, and apparent exhaustion. If symptoms of hypothermia are detected, get the victim to a warm location, remove wet clothing, warm the center of the body first, and give warm, non-alcoholic beverages if the victim is conscious. Get medical help as soon as possible.
- Conserve fuel, if necessary, by keeping your residence cooler than normal. Temporarily close off heat to some rooms.
- Maintain ventilation when using kerosene heaters to avoid build-up of toxic fumes. Refuel kerosene heaters outside and keep them at least three feet from flammable objects.

After a Winter Storm

Follow the guidelines for the period following a flood.

Additional Resources

The following resources may be helpful:

National Weather Service

Winter Storms...The Deceptive Killers. Brochure packed with useful information including winter storm facts, how to detect frostbite and hypothermia, what to do in a winter storm, and how to be prepared. Available online at: www.nws.noaa.gov.

Glossary

Accessibility—The ability of all people including those with disabilities to approach, enter and use facilities; participate in programs, services and activities; and be included in the communication therein.

ADA—Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

ADAAG—Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines.

Adaptive Mobility Equipment—Provides mobility for people with disabilities who have been separated from their own equipment during an emergency; also for people who do not ordinarily use such equipment, but due to the stress of the emergency, now need such equipment.

Alternates—Those who are also assigned to assist people with disabilities during an emergency.

Aphasia—Absence or impairment of the ability to communicate through speech, writing or signs.

Area of Assembly—A designated safe area away from the emergency where employees, clients and visitors will gather after an evacuation.

Area of Refuge/Area of Rescue—An area that has direct access to an exit, where people who are unable to use stairs may remain temporarily in safety to await further instructions or assistance during emergency evacuation.

Artificial Barrier—Any non job-related employment consideration which excludes from consideration for employment individuals otherwise capable of doing the work.

Blind/Blindness—Vision impairments ranging from the inability to distinguish light and dark to a loss of part of the visual field or the inability to see detail (see definition, Visually Impaired).

Braille—“Perkins Braille” is an all-purpose Braillewriter.

Buddy System—Preferred Language. See Emergency Aides.

Caduceus Symbol—Insignia used as the symbol of the medical profession.

Cane—As used by the person who is blind, the cane is a natural extension of the arm and hand and is used as an “information gathering” device (to locate familiar landmarks) for the purpose of establishing a clear path of travel. With the conventional low-point touch system the cane is moved from side to side in an arcing motion.

Closed Circuit TV Magnifier (CCTV)—A television camera, which takes a picture of the printed page and a television monitor displaying the image in enlarged form.

DAC—Disability Advisory Committee—Established by the California Legislature to serve in an advisory capacity to the director/department on disability employment and accessibility issues (Government Code sections 19320 and 19795b).

DART—Disability Advisory Review Team. A group of individuals specifically designated by a department (may be the DAC, see above) to assist with the ADA Self-Evaluation, Transition Plan and implementation.

Deaf/Deafness—Range of auditory limitation, from a total lack of sensitivity to sound to reduced sensitivity to certain sound frequencies. The term Deaf also describes a separate cultural group, which shares a common language (American Sign Language), experiences and values.

Developmental Disabilities—People who meet the legal definition have been identified as developmentally disabled. This includes autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, mental retardation and other neurological impairments.

Disability—A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits

one or more major life activities.

Discouraged Language—Terminology that is unacceptable and/or insulting to some others with disabilities. (See Preferred Language List).

Emergency Aides—Those assigned to assist people with disabilities during an emergency.

Emergency Evacuation Equipment—Equipment used to assist employees, clients and visitors with mobility limitations and other employees who may need similar assistance.

Fingerspelling—Information spelled out using the American Manual Alphabet.

Floor Wardens—Term used to identify an assignment made in the Emergency Plan. People are assigned as coordinators of emergency actions by occupants of a single floor.

Handicapped—Derived from cap-in-hand for begging. Its use is discouraged. See Preferred Language List.

Hearing Impaired—Scale of hearing impairment ranges from mild hearing loss to profound deafness, the point at which the individual receives no benefit from aural input. Many hard-of-hearing people are able to use residual hearing effectively with the assistance of hearing aids or other sound amplification equipment, often augmented by lip reading. Hearing aids amplify background noises as well as voices; so, noise caused by emergency conditions (alarm bells, people shouting, sirens, etc.) can cause discomfort and further damage hearing ability.

Interpreter—Professionals who provide communication access for deaf, speech/hearing impaired and hearing consumers.

Learning Disability—An individual who may have difficulty recognizing or being motivated to act in an emergency. These individuals may also have difficulty in following anything other than a few simple instructions.

Low level Signage/Floor Proximity Exit Signs—Usually placed between 6" to 8" above the floor. A supplement to the required exit sign. The required exit signs are usually located over the exits or near the ceiling, the first place to become obscured by smoke.

Means of Evacuation—An accessible means of evacuation is one that complies with the following guidelines: a continuous and unobstructed way of exit travel from any point in a building or facility to a public way. A means of evacuation comprises vertical and horizontal travel and may include intervening room spaces, doorways, corridors, passageways, balconies, ramps, stairs, enclosures, lobbies, horizontal exits, courts and yards. Areas of refuge or evacuation elevators MAY BE included as part of accessible means of evacuation. (Contact the authority having jurisdiction or refer to the building codes for the local applications or definition.)

Mobility Impaired—People with mobility impairments can vary in the degree of assistance they require. The degree of impairment ranges from walking with a slow gait to walking with mobility aids such as a cane or crutches or using wheelchairs.

Normal—See Preferred Language.

Optical Character Reader—Device that can be scanned over a printed page, reading the text aloud through a voice synthesis system. This may also have a provision for reading directly from a computer disk containing a word processor file.

Opticon—Device enabling a blind person to “read.” It consists of a camera that converts print into an image of letters that are then produced via vibrations onto the finger.

Physically Disabled—Any individual who has a physical disability which constitutes or results in a substantial barrier to employment.

Preferred Language—See Preferred Language List located at the end of this section.

Reasonable Accommodation—Alterations, adjustments or changes in the job, the workplace and/or term or condition of employment which enable a qualified person with a disability to perform a particular job successfully, as determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the individual circumstances.

Search Monitors—Term used to identify the different assignments made in the Emergency Plan.

Service Animal—An animal, usually a dog, trained to provide assistance to a person who is blind, deaf or mobility impaired. The animal can be identified by the presence of a harness or backpack.

Sign Language—(American) Sign Language is a visual language, distinct from English, created and used by most people who are deaf. Some people with hearing/speech impairments may use this language as well.

Speech Disorder—Limited or difficult speech patterns or without speech.

Tactile Signage—Signs or labels with Braille, raised letters or textured patterns that people with visual impairments can recognize by touch.

Text Typewriter (TTY) (Formerly TDD)—Equipment employing interactive graphic communications through transmission of electronic signals across the standard telephone network.

Victim—See Preferred Language.

Visually Impaired—A person with a visual impairment may be totally or legally blind. Legally blind people may be able to differentiate between light and dark or see very large objects, but may not be able to see anything clearly enough to depend on their vision in an emergency situation. This can also include people with LOW VISION who can see well enough to walk without assistance, but cannot read without magnification.

Preferred Language

People with disabilities are members of a minority community that comprises over 20 percent of the U.S. population. Recognizing that personhood comes first and that we are different, disability or not, we need to emphasize the person first and the disability second. Let our descriptive words emphasize the person’s worth and abilities, not the disabling condition.

As empowered by the ADA, the disability community is seeking to develop new and more suitable terminology about itself. The terms in the left-hand column are preferred and should be used. The terms in the right-hand column are discouraged; many members of the disability community view them as outdated and offensive. Please note that this is not an all-inclusive or unchanging list. We do not presume to speak for each individual in the disability community. This list will evolve as the needs of the disability community become more defined.

Expressions

Preferred	Discouraged
Employees and customers with disabilities	Handicapped employees and customers
Teacher with mobility impairment, who uses a wheelchair	Crippled teach confined to a wheelchair
College seniors with disabilities	Afflicted college seniors
Participants including individuals who had either cerebral palsy, a mental disability or a hearing impairment	Disabled participants

Descriptive Words

Preferred	Discouraged
Non-disabled or without a disability	Able-bodied; normal
Person with a disability	Afflicted; deformed; disabled person; poor unfortunate victim
Person with multiple sclerosis	Afflicted by MS
Person with arthritis	An arthritic
Person with cerebral palsy	Cerebral Palsied; CP victim
Person using a wheel chair	Confined to a wheelchair; wheelchair bound
Person who has a mobility impairment	Crippled; Gimp
Person who is deaf	Deaf; burdened by deafness
Persons who is deaf and is unable to speak	Deaf and Dumb; deaf mute
Emergency Aide	Disabled Person's Monitor
Person with a (disease name)	Diseased
Person with Epilepsy	Epileptic
People with disabilities	The handicapped; physically challenged
Person who is mentally or emotionally impaired	Retard, retardate or retarded

Person who is visually impaired; blind	Sightless
Person who is developmentally disabled	Spastic; "spaz"
Person with seizures	Suffers fits