Disaster Preparedness

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Introduction to Disaster Preparedness Module

Emergencies are unexpected, sudden, and often dangerous situations. Natural disasters can cause emergencies, affect a large number of people, and cause great property damage, bodily harm, or even death. In North Dakota, examples of common emergencies and disasters include fires, floods, snowstorms and blizzards, tornadoes, and train derailments.

It is important to teach individuals with disabilities what to do before, during, and after an emergency. Emergency or disaster preparedness involves four main action steps: understanding the emergency or disaster, planning and preparing, responding, and following-up. Regardless of the specific emergency or disaster, these four action steps can be applied.

Based on content from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Ready.Gov, and the American Red Cross, this module includes chapters that cover a variety of emergencies or disasters specific to North Dakota. In addition to national resources, these modules were developed in consultation with North Dakota’s Chapter of the American Red Cross. Each chapter of this module is formatted based on the four main action steps that make up emergency or disaster preparedness:

I. Understanding the emergency or disaster

It is important to teach individuals with disabilities what emergencies are likely to occur in their area and specific ways to respond to each one. To teach individuals with disabilities about emergencies or disasters, this section of the chapter includes the following components: a pre/post-test (Appendix K), pictures, and content.

II. Planning and preparing

Emergencies and disasters often come without much advance notice. By the time individuals are aware of an approaching emergency or disaster, they may have little to no time to prepare for it. If an emergency or disaster occurs unexpectedly, the risk of injury and death increases. Furthermore, for the individuals with disabilities whom you support, emergencies and disasters can cause a disruption in the services and supports they need to stay safe and healthy. It is important to teach people with disabilities about emergency preparedness before a disaster occurs to increase their level of preparedness.
Because people with disabilities best know their abilities and needs before, during, and after an emergency or disaster, they are in the ideal position to participate in planning for their own safety. Using a variety of checklists and templates, this section of the chapter will assist family members or disability professionals in supporting individuals with disabilities to plan and prepare for emergencies or disasters.

III. Responding

During the response phase, actions are taken to minimize an emergency or disaster once it has occurred. In this section of the chapter, individuals with disabilities will be taught steps to follow if an emergency or disaster actually occurs. People with disabilities will be taught how to implement the plan they created in the previous section.

IV. Following-Up

Going through an emergency or disaster may be traumatic for some individuals with disabilities. This section will provide resources that can be used by people with disabilities, family members, or disability support professionals to follow-up after an emergency or disaster.
Chapter 1: Home Fires

Did you know?
Home fires sometimes happen in North Dakota. Some of the people you support may not know what a fire is or what to do if there is a fire in their home. Individuals with disabilities may not know that they may have just two minutes to escape once a fire starts in their home. It is important for individuals with disabilities to understand what a home fire is, what causes home fires, how to plan and prepare for a home fire, and what to do if there is a fire in their home.

Objectives

After completing this chapter, direct support professionals will be able to teach the following concepts to individuals with disabilities:

- The definition of a fire.
- How to prevent a fire.
- How to make a plan for a fire.
- How to get out quickly when there is a fire.
- What to include in a fire safety kit.
- What to do if there is a fire (how to implement the plan).

Step 1: Understanding Fires

Some of the individuals whom you support may not know what a fire is, or they may not know what to do if there is a fire in their home. At the beginning of the session, show the participants pictures of a fire (Appendix A). Ask the participants if they know what a fire is. Give the participants a few minutes to discuss what a fire is.

There are several facts about fires that should be taught to people with disabilities. These include:

- Fires can occur in a person’s home.
- Fires can have many causes.
- Fires can happen at any time during the day or night.
- Fires can damage or destroy homes.
- Fires can hurt or kill people.
To help the individuals you support to understand fires, show one of the videos listed in Appendix A.

**Definition of a Fire**

A fire is defined as a chemical reaction that gives off light and heat in the form of flames. A fire is hot. A fire can burn people, animals, houses, buildings, and possessions. A fire can kill animals and people.

**Causes of Fires**

Individuals with disabilities need to know what causes fires. The most common causes of fires include:

- Smoking materials
- Cooking
- Candles
- Electrical (e.g., faulty wiring)
- Appliances (e.g., clothes dryers, heating equipment, etc.)
- Household items (e.g., mattresses, bedding, furniture, etc.)

**Different Types of Fires**

There are five main types of fires.

I. Class A Fires

Class A fires consist of ordinary combustibles such as wood, paper, trash or anything else that leaves an ash. Water works best to extinguish a Class A fire.
II. Class B Fires

Class B fires are fueled by flammable or combustible liquids, which include oil, gasoline, and other similar materials. To extinguish Class B fires, the oxygen supply should be smothered.

III. Class C Fires

Class C fires are electrical fires. They are usually caused by overloaded electrical outlets, incorrectly wired plugs, outlets, or switches, and short circuits. Carbon dioxide fire extinguishers are effective for extinguishing an electrical fire.

IV. Class D Fires

Class D Fires are combustible metal fires. For metal fires, a dry powder extinguishing agent should be used for smothering and heat absorption.
V. Class K Fires

Class K Fires involve cooking oils, grease or animal fat and can be extinguished using Purple K, the typical agent found in kitchen extinguishers.

Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

True or False.

_____1. Fires are most likely to occur during the night.

_____2. Cooking is a common cause of fires.

_____3. There are eight main types of fires.

_____4. Fires can kill people.

5. List three of the most common causes of fires.

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

Matching.

_____6. Electrical fires caused by overloaded outlets or short circuits

a. Class A

_____7. Cooking fires involving cooking oil or grease

b. Class B

_____8. Metal fires

c. Class C

_____9. Burning of wood, paper, or trash

d. Class D
Preventing Fires

Unlike natural disasters such as tornadoes, floods, and severe winter weather, fires are one type of emergency that can be prevented. The best way to practice fire safety is to make sure that a fire doesn’t start in the first place. People with disabilities should be taught that there are some steps that they can take to prevent fires. These steps include:

- Removing fire hazards.
- Limiting distractions while cooking.
- Never leaving hot ovens or stoves unattended.
- Keeping fabrics (clothing, bedspreads, curtains, etc.) away from lights and heating sources.
- Keeping electrical appliances in good condition (without loose or frayed cords or plugs).
- Limiting the number of plugs in outlets to avoid overload.
- Avoiding the overuse of extension cords.
- Running electrical wires on top of rugs instead of under rugs.
- Turning portable heaters off when leaving a room or going to bed.
- Blowing out candles when leaving a room or going to bed.
- Using the correct wattage of light bulbs.
- Storing flammable materials safely.
- Smoking outside (if the person who is being supported is a smoker).

Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

11. Identify five steps that can be taken to prevent fires.

Step 2: Planning and Preparing for a Fire

Individuals with disabilities need to be taught how to plan and prepare for a fire. It is important for people with disabilities to understand that they must get out very quickly if there is a fire in their home (or another building). Ready.Gov estimates
that people may have less than two minutes to get out of a burning home or building once a fire starts and the smoke alarm sounds. To plan for a fire, individuals with disabilities should be supported to complete the following steps:

- Walk through each room of the house to identify exits and escape routes.
- Make an escape plan. Draw a map of the home that shows all doors and windows. Templates for drawing an escape plan are available in the resources provided in Appendix A.
- Know at least two ways out of every room if possible.
- Clear escape routes by removing items that are blocking exits. Make sure that each window and door that goes outside opens easily.
- Identify an outside meeting place that is a safe distance from the house where everyone can meet (e.g., mailbox, tree, light pole, neighbor’s house).
- Practice fire drill with everyone in the house during the day and night at least once a month. Practice different ways out.
- Teach each person in the house how to escape independently in case assistance is not available.

Smoke Alarms

Working smoke alarms reduce the chances of dying in a home fire by approximately 50 percent. Smoke alarms are an important first step for staying safe, but to be effective, they must be working.

To maximize protection from smoke alarms, individuals with disabilities should be supported to install smoke alarms on every level of their home and in every sleeping area. People with disabilities should be taught to check the batteries in their smoke alarms once a month. If the batteries are not working, they should be taught how to change them.

Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

True or False.

_____12. Once a fire starts and the smoke alarm sounds, people usually have 10 minutes to get out.
13. Smoke alarm batteries should be checked once a month.

14. It is important to identify at least two ways out of every room.

15. Fire drills should be practiced once a year.

16. An escape plan should include a place to meet once everyone is outside of the house.

17. Smoke alarms only need to be installed in sleeping areas.

**Step 3: Responding During a Fire**

There are several things to teach people with disabilities about responding during a fire. First, individuals should get out as quickly as possible and stay out. Do not take time to gather possessions. Once outside they should call 9-1-1 and go to the designated meeting place. The individual should never go back inside once outside, even for people or pets. If they have to escape through smoke, they should learn to crouch down low and go under the smoke, even crawling if necessary. Doors that are warm or hot to the touch should never be opened and individuals should use their second exit out of the room. If an exit route is blocked with smoke, heat, or flames, the individuals should be taught to stay in the room with the door closed, stuff a wet towel under the door, and call 9-1-1. To signal for help, teach the individual to open a window and wave a brightly colored cloth or flashlight.

**Fire Extinguishers**

A person with a disability should only use a portable fire extinguisher if he or she has been properly trained by a member of the fire department. Fire extinguishers should only be used in the following conditions:

- The fire is confined to a small area and isn’t spreading.
- The room isn’t filled with smoke.
- Everyone has exited the home.
- 9-1-1 has been called.
People with disabilities can be taught the acronym **PASS** when using a fire extinguisher:

- **P** = Pull the pin and hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing toward the fire.
- **A** = Aim low and keep the nozzle pointed at the base of the fire.
- **S** = Squeeze the lever slowly and evenly.
- **S** = Sweep the nozzle from side to side.

**Self-Assessment**

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

*True or False.*

_____18. It is okay to go back into a burning building to get more possessions as long as 9-1-1 has already been called.

_____19. If a person is trapped inside a burning building, he or she can open a window and signal for help by waving a brightly colored cloth or flashlight.

_____20. It is okay to open a door knob that is hot to the touch as long as no smoke is present.

_____21. Unless a person is trapped inside a burning building, he or she should wait to call 9-1-1 until he or she is outside.

_____22. No special training is required to use a fire extinguisher.

**Step 4: Following Up After a Fire**

**General Safety Precautions**

There are some important safety steps that individuals with disabilities should be taught to take following a fire. These tips may help people with disabilities to avoid injury following a fire and include:
• Waiting for permission from emergency personnel to enter a damaged home.
• Using caution when entering a damaged home.
• Wearing sturdy shoes or boots, long sleeve shirts, and gloves when handling or walking near debris.
• Being careful of hazards caused by broken glass and exposed nails.
• Avoiding contact with downed power lines or items touching downed lines.
• Using battery-powered lights.
• Cooperating with public safety officials.

Providing Extra Support

After a fire, individuals with disabilities may be traumatized. People with disabilities will be less likely to experience prolonged fear and anxiety if they know what to expect following a fire. The following suggestions can be used to support individuals with disabilities following a fire:

• Encouraging the individual to express feelings.
• Listening carefully, showing understanding, and offering reassurance.
• Including the individual in cleanup activities to re-establish a sense of normalcy.

It is important to note that symptoms of anxiety may not be evident for weeks or even months after a fire. Because emergency/disaster-related fear and anxiety may have a negative impact on the daily activities of a person with disabilities, professional assistance from a physician, counselor, social worker, or community religious organization may be necessary.

Additional resources from the American Red Cross on emotional support following a disaster can be found in Appendix F. Furthermore, resources for individuals with disabilities who may need communication supports during a disaster or emergency are found in Appendix J.

Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

23. Identify five steps that individuals with disabilities should be taught to take following a fire.
Chapter 2: Floods

Did you know?
Floods sometimes happen in North Dakota. Some of the people you support may not know what a flood is. They may not understand how dangerous and devastating a flood can be. It is important for individuals with disabilities to understand what a flood is, when a flood might happen, how to plan for a flood, and what to do if there is a flood.

Objectives

After completing this chapter, direct support professionals will be able to teach the following concepts to individuals with disabilities:

- The definition of a flood.
- The difference between a flood watch and warning.
- How to make a plan for a flood.
- The difference between evacuating and “sheltering in place”.
- What do include in a flood safety kit.
- What to do if there is a flood (how to implement the plan).

Step 1: Understanding Floods

Some of the individuals whom you support may not know what a flood is. At the beginning of the session, show the participants pictures of a flood (Appendix B). Ask the participants if they know what a flood is. Give the participants a few minutes to discuss what a flood is.

There are several facts about floods that should be taught to people with disabilities. These include:

- Floods are too much water in the wrong place.
- Floods are a natural disaster.
- Floods can happen in North Dakota.
- Floods can happen at any time during the day or night.
- Floods can cause a lot of destruction.
- Floods can damage or destroy homes and other buildings.
- Floods can hurt or kill people.
To help the individuals you support to understand floods show the video about floods found in Appendix B.

**Definition of a Flood**

A flood is when there is too much water someplace where it’s not supposed to be.

**Causes of Floods**

A flood occurs when a river goes over its banks and the water spills onto the floodplain. The main causes of flooding are heavy rain, snow melt, and collapse of man-made flood protection structures.

**Different Types of Floods**

It is important for individuals with disabilities to understand that there are different types of floods. The first type of flood is a slow-developing flood. With this type of flood, there is too much water to fit in the river and water spreads over the land next to it. This usually takes several days. Other times, floods happen very quickly. When lots of heavy rain falls over a very short period of time, water can rise very quickly. When a low-lying area floods in less than six hours, it is called a flash flood. When a flash flood occurs, there may not be time for a warning such as a siren or news alert on the radio or television.

**Difference Between a Flood Watch and Warning**

In addition to knowing *what* a flood is, it is also important for individuals with disabilities to understand *when* a flood may occur. It is important for direct support professionals to teach participants the difference between a flood watch and warning. This can be done by using the information in the following box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flood Watch – Be Aware and Prepared</th>
<th>Flood Warning – Take Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Floods are possible in the area.</td>
<td>• A flood is already happening or is on its way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Listen to the radio or television for alerts and emergency instructions.</td>
<td>• Listen to the radio or television for alerts about flood warnings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Check supplies.</td>
<td>• Listen for flood warning sirens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be ready to follow emergency plan if the watch becomes a warning.</td>
<td>• Follow emergency plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Follow instructions to evacuate or “shelter in place.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Know where to go. It may be necessary to move to higher ground quickly and on foot.

*Adapted from the American Red Cross and National Weather Service.*

### Signs of an Approaching Flood

While flash floods often occur without warning, sometimes there are signs that a flood is coming. Having advance notice that a flood might be approaching can give individuals with disabilities the critical time they need to “shelter-in-place” or to evacuate by moving to a location with better protection. Teach individuals with disabilities the following signs that a flood may be approaching:

- Rising water levels in a river or lake.
- Water that is moving quickly in a river or lake.
- Water that is spilling over the banks of a river or lake.

In addition to watching for signs of a flood, people with disabilities can be taught a variety of ways to stay informed about current weather conditions. These include:

- A battery-operated radio (with extra batteries)
- Local and cable television stations
- A radio from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) which provides alerts from the National Weather Service and has a tone-alert feature that automatically sounds when a weather watch or warning is issued (More information about NOAA weather radios can be found at http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/)

In some cases, there may be enough time for local law enforcement agencies or weather bureaus to send out warnings about a flood that is coming. Because of this, the people you support should be taught a variety of systems that provide alerts when there is a flood warning in a particular area. Several emergency organizations have apps to warn individuals about floods. If you support an individual who has a smart phone, tablet or other device, it may be helpful to download an application that warns of disasters such as floods.
Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

True or False.

_____1. Floods only happen during the day.

_____2. A flood occurs when there is too much water where it’s not supposed to be.

_____3. A flash flood is a slow-developing flood.

_____4. If a flood watch is issued, it means that a flood is already happening or is on its way.

5. Specify two signs that a flood may be approaching.

Step 2: Planning and Preparing for a Flood

After individuals with disabilities are taught what a flood is and learn what watches and warnings mean, they should be taught what to do. Preparing and planning ahead will enable individuals with disabilities to act quickly and to seek the best available protection during a flood.

Prior to a flood, people with disabilities can be taught that there are some steps that they can take to prepare their home. These steps include:

- Bringing outdoor items (e.g., lawn furniture, trash cans, grills, etc.) inside.
- Storing important items in safe locations.
- Moving important items to upper floors.
- Disconnecting electrical appliances.
- Turning off utilities (if instructed).
- Filling bathtubs, sinks and plastic soda bottles or milk jugs with clean water for “sheltering-in-place.”
Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

6. List two steps that people with disabilities can complete to prepare their home for a flood.

Preparing an Emergency Supply Kit

It is important to teach individuals with disabilities how to prepare an emergency supply kit as they may not have access to emergency assistance, medical services, or a pharmacy for several days following a disaster. The American Red Cross and Ready.gov recommend that people with disabilities are supported to gather essential items that will help them to make it on their own for at least three days.

A checklist for preparing an emergency supply kit is provided in Appendix G.

Preparing to Evacuate

If a flood watch is issued, people with disabilities should be taught that they may need to evacuate and to take the following steps:

- Make transportation arrangements with family members, friends, or support staff if the individual does not drive.
- Have a full tank of gas and an emergency supply kit in the car if the person drives.
- Gather essential documents (e.g., ID card, medical records, insurance card, etc.) and place in waterproof container.
- Fill clean water containers.
- Make plans for pets.
- Review emergency plans and supplies.
- Listen to the radio or television for weather updates.
- Listen for alerts and warning signals.

In preparation for an evacuation, it may be helpful for family members or direct support professionals to complete a checklist with the individuals whom they support. The person’s parents, guardians, or caregivers may also have important input about the best way to provide support during an emergency that requires an
evacuation. The items on the checklist should be individualized for each person with disabilities. A sample evacuation checklist is found in Appendix H.

**Step 3: Responding During a flood**

Depending on the severity of the flood, local law enforcement personnel or emergency responders will provide instructions about whether to “shelter in place” or evacuate. People with disabilities need to be taught the difference between “sheltering in place” and evacuating during a flood.

**“Sheltering-in-Place”**

Following a flood, if it is unsafe or unnecessary to leave, people will need to take shelter in place instead of evacuating. “Sheltering-in-place” means staying wherever one is until being instructed that it is safe to leave.

**Evacuating**

Evacuating means leaving wherever one is (e.g., home, workplace, school, community building) and going somewhere that is safer (e.g., a shelter, a home that is in a safe area, another location in the community).

During a flood, individuals with disabilities should be taught the following safety tips:

- Take only essential items.
- “Turn around. Don’t drown.” Individuals with disabilities should be taught to avoid walking or driving through flood waters. People can be knocked down by just six inches of moving water and vehicles can be swept away by two feet of water.
- Avoid standing water as it may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
- Watch out for debris and eroded roads and sidewalks.

**Mandatory Evacuations**

If a mandatory evacuation order is issued, individuals with disabilities must be taught that they cannot ignore the evacuation order. People with disabilities should also be taught to follow officials’ instructions about when to evacuate, either immediately or within a specified time frame, and where to go.
For more information about evacuating or “sheltering-in-place,” please see Appendix I.

Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

*True or False.*

_____ 7. People with disabilities should have an evacuation plan if it is necessary to leave during a flood.

_____ 8. It is safe to walk through flood waters as long as the water is less than 12 inches deep.

_____ 9. If a person needs to evacuate during a flood, pets should be left behind.

_____ 10. During a mandatory evacuation, it is okay for a person with disabilities to stay in his or her home as long as he or she notifies the police.

Step 4: Following Up After a Flood

General Safety Precautions

There are some important safety steps that individuals with disabilities should be taught to take following a flood. These tips may help people with disabilities to avoid injury following a flood and include:

- Continuing to monitor radio or television for emergency announcements.
- Using caution when entering structures that have been damaged.
- Wearing a two-strap protective mask to avoid breathing mold spores and other contaminants in flooded homes and other structures.
- Wearing sturdy shoes or boots, long sleeve shirts, and gloves when handling or walking or near debris.
- Being careful of hazards caused by broken glass and exposed nails.
- Avoiding contact with downed power lines or items touching downed lines.
- Using battery-powered lights.
- Cooperating with public safety officials.
Cleaning Up After a Flood

In an article by WebMD News, several general guidelines are provided for cleaning-up after a flood. These include:

- Removing wet items (especially items that soak up water such as furniture, pillows, carpeting, etc.).
- Sucking water out of soggy carpet with a shop or wet vacuum.
- Using a fan to get air moving in enclosed spaces.
- Using a dehumidifier to keep moisture levels low.
- Using detergent and hot water to remove mold from hard surfaces.

Clean-up activities need to start within 24 to 36 hours after a flood to prevent mold and bacteria from forming and spreading. While mold can be especially dangerous for individuals who have breathing problems such as allergies or asthma, high levels of mold can also cause problems for people who are healthy. Exposure to mold can cause wheezing, shortness of breath, sore throats, flu-like symptoms, and fatigue. In houses that have sewage back-up as a result of flooding, bacteria may also be a problem. Bacteria can cause dangerous gastrointestinal illnesses and skin infections.

Because of the dangers associated with flood clean-up (mold, bacteria, exposed electrical wiring, debris, etc.) it may be simply too dangerous for individuals with disabilities to assist with flood clean-up activities. In these cases, people with disabilities may need to be supported to hire specially trained experts to complete clean-up activities. In addition, individuals with disabilities may need support to work with their insurance companies (health, homeowners, renters, etc.) to process flood-related claims.

Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

11. Identify two guidelines for cleaning-up following a flood.
Providing Extra Support

After a flood, individuals with disabilities may be traumatized. People with disabilities will be less likely to experience prolonged fear and anxiety if they know what to expect following a flood. The following suggestions can be used to support individuals with disabilities following a flood:

- Encouraging the individual to express feelings.
- Listening carefully, showing understanding, and offering reassurance.
- Including the individual in cleanup activities to re-establish a sense of normalcy.

It is important to note that symptoms of anxiety may not be evident for weeks or even months after a flood. Because emergency/disaster-related fear and anxiety may have a negative impact on the daily activities of a person with disabilities, professional assistance from a physician, counselor, social worker, or community religious organization may be necessary.

Additional resources from the American Red Cross on emotional support following a disaster can be found in Appendix F. Furthermore, resources for individuals with disabilities who may need communication supports during a disaster or emergency are found in Appendix J.
Chapter 3: Snowstorms and Blizzards

Did you know?
Snowstorms and blizzards often happen in North Dakota. While most snowstorms and blizzards occur in the winter, they can also occur in the fall and spring. Some of the people you support may not know what a snowstorm or blizzard is. They may not understand how dangerous a snowstorm or blizzard can be. It is important for individuals with disabilities to understand what snowstorms and blizzards are, when a snowstorm or blizzard might happen, how to plan for a snowstorm or blizzard, and what to do if there is a snowstorm or blizzard.

Objectives

After completing this chapter, direct support professionals will be able to teach the following concepts to individuals with disabilities:

- The definition of a snowstorm and blizzard.
- The difference between snowstorms and blizzards.
- How to make a plan for a snowstorm or blizzard.
- What to include in a snowstorm or blizzard safety kit.
- What to do if there is a snowstorm or blizzard (how to implement the plan).

Step 1: Understanding Snowstorms and Blizzards

Some of the people whom you support may not know what a snowstorm or blizzard is. At the beginning of the session, show the participants pictures of snowstorms and blizzards (Appendix C). Ask the participants if they know what snowstorms and blizzard are. Give the participants a few minutes to discuss snowstorms and blizzards.

There are several facts about snowstorms and blizzards that should be taught to people with disabilities. These include:

- A snowstorm is a large amount of falling snow.
- A blizzard is falling or blowing snow with winds over 35mph and visibilities of less than ¼ of a mile for three or more hours.
- Snowstorms and blizzards can happen in North Dakota.
• Snowstorms usually happen in the winter but can also happen in the fall and spring.
• Snowstorms and blizzards can be very dangerous.
• People can be hurt or killed in snowstorms and blizzards.

To help the individuals you support to understand snowstorms and blizzards show one of the videos listed in Appendix C.

**Definition of Snowstorms and Blizzards**

Snow is a common occurrence in North Dakota. Snow events can include relatively minor snowfalls, winter storms, or blizzards. Oftentimes, North Dakota’s winter storms and blizzards include dangerously low temperatures, strong winds, freezing rain, sleet, and ice.

It is important to teach the individuals you support the difference between snowstorms and blizzards as shown in the following box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snowstorm</th>
<th>Blizzard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Snow, blowing snow, ice, sleet, freezing rain or a combination of these conditions</td>
<td>• Severe snowstorm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Significant falling and blowing snow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High winds (35 mph or more)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Very difficult to see (poor visibility)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for three or more hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Causes of Snowstorms and Blizzards**

Snow is formed when water vapor changes directly to ice without first becoming a liquid. This happens when the temperature is less than 32 degrees Fahrenheit. When a lot of snow falls at the same time, it is a snowstorm. When intense snowfall is accompanied with very strong wind (either during or following the snowfall), causes poor visibility, and lasts for three or more hours, it is called a blizzard.

**Difference Between Winter Weather Advisories, Watches, and Warnings**

In addition to knowing what a snowstorm and blizzard is, it is also important for individuals with disabilities to understand when these severe winter weather events may occur. Sometimes the National Weather Service office in your community will issue winter weather-related advisories, watches, and warnings. It is important
to teach the people you support about the differences among winter weather advisories, watches, and warnings. This information is summarized in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Winter Weather Advisory – Be Aware</th>
<th>Winter Storm Watch – Be Aware and Prepared</th>
<th>Winter Storm Warning – Take Action</th>
<th>Blizzard Warning – Take Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Winter weather conditions may occur but will not be as bad as those in a watch or warning.</td>
<td>• A winter storm might happen in the next 36 to 48 hours.</td>
<td>• A winter storm will happen within 24 hours.</td>
<td>• There will be falling snow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Temperatures may be low.</td>
<td>• There may be snow, blowing snow, ice, sleet, freezing rain or a combination of these conditions.</td>
<td>• There will be snow, blowing snow, ice, sleet, freezing rain or a combination of these conditions.</td>
<td>• There will be high winds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Travel should not be affected.</td>
<td>• Temperatures may be low.</td>
<td>• Temperatures may be low.</td>
<td>• There will be blowing snow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Travel may be somewhat difficult.</td>
<td>• Travel is difficult or impossible.</td>
<td>• There will be poor visibility.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adapted from the American Red Cross and National Weather Service*

**Signs of an Approaching Snowstorm or Blizzard**

Snow forms when a warm air mass collides with a cold air mass. If there is more cold air than warm, snow will be created. If there is more warm air than cold, it will just rain. When snow is combined with wind and decreased visibility, a blizzard is formed.

The National Weather Service indicates that most snowstorms and blizzards don’t occur suddenly; they develop over a period of several days. Because of this, there is usually time for the National Weather Service to issue a winter storm warning or blizzard warning. This will allow individuals with disabilities to follow the plan they have developed for severe winter weather.
In addition to watching for signs of a snowstorm or blizzards, people with disabilities can stay informed about current weather conditions:

- a battery-operated radio (with extra batteries),
- local and cable television stations, and/or
- a radio from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) which provides alerts from the National Weather Service and has a tone-alert feature that automatically sounds when a weather watch or warning is issued (More information about NOAA weather radios can be found at http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/).

In some cases, there may be enough time for local law enforcement agencies or weather bureaus to send out warnings about a snowstorm or blizzard that is coming. Because of this, the people that you support should be taught about a variety of systems that provide alerts when there is a snowstorm or blizzard warning in a particular area. Several emergency organizations have apps to warn individuals about a snowstorm or blizzard. If you support an individual who has a smart phone, tablet, or the other device, it may be helpful to download an application that warns of disasters such as snowstorms and blizzards.

Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

Matching.

_____1. A winter storm will happen within 24 hours.  
   a. Winter weather advisory

_____2. Includes high winds, blowing snow, and poor visibility.  
   b. Winter storm watch

_____3. A winter storm might happen within 36-48 hours.  
   c. Winter storm warning

_____4. Usually does not affect travel.  
   d. Blizzard

5. Identify two ways to stay informed about weather conditions.
Step 2: Planning and Preparing for a Snowstorm or Blizzard

After individuals with disabilities are taught the difference between snowstorms and blizzards and learn what advisories, watches, and warnings mean, they can be taught what to do in each situation. Preparing and planning ahead will enable individuals with disabilities to act quickly and to seek the best available protection during a snowstorm or blizzard.

Preparing an Emergency Supply Kit

It is important to teach individuals with disabilities how to prepare an emergency supply kit. People with disabilities need to be taught that they may not have access to emergency assistance, medical services, or a pharmacy for several days following a disaster. The American Red Cross and Ready.gov recommend that people with disabilities are supported to gather essential items that will help them to make it on their own for at least three days.

A checklist for preparing an emergency supply kit is provided in Appendix G.

True or False.

_____6. Snowstorms only happen in the winter.

_____7. An emergency supply kit should include the essential items that a person might need for at least ten days.

Step 3: Responding During a Snowstorm or Blizzard

While individuals with disabilities should be taught to stay inside during a snowstorm or blizzard, they should also be taught that there may be times when they have to go outside when it’s snowing (but not during a snowstorm or blizzard). People with disabilities may need to go to work or to the grocery store when it is snowing. It is important to teach individuals with disabilities what to do if they have to go outside while it is snowing. Recommendations for outdoor winter safety include the following:

- Dress in several layers of clothing that is warm, water repellant, loose-fitting, and lightweight. Layered clothing preserves body heat better than a single heavy coat.
- Wear a hat to prevent loss of body heat from the head.
• Wear mittens or gloves. Mittens keep hands warmer because fingers maintain more heat when they touch each other.
• Wear insulated, waterproof boots.
• Wear a scarf over the mouth to protect lungs from extremely cold air. Avoid deep breaths and minimizing talking.
• Keep dry. Because wet clothing loses its insulating properties and transmits heat away from the body, it is important to change wet clothing frequently to prevent loss of body heat.
• Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia. If either frostbite or hypothermia is suspected, it is important to follow appropriate first aid guidelines or to seek medical assistance.

Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

8. Identify three safety tips for going outside when it’s snowing (but not during a snowstorm or blizzard).

Safety Tips for Walking in Snow

According to a nurse with Trinity Health’s Trauma Services in Minot, North Dakota, “falls are one of the more common winter related injuries seen in the Emergency Department.” The following tips are provided for walking safely in snow:

• Wear proper footwear for ice and snow.
• Keep feet flat and slightly spread apart.
• Point toes slightly outward.
• Take slow, short steps.
• Make wide turns at corners.
• Keep arms at one’s sides for additional balance and for support in case of a fall.

Traveling Safely

If you are supporting individuals with disabilities who drive, they should be supported to winterize their vehicle with the assistance of a reliable mechanic. Tires, brakes, battery, antifreeze levels, wires, and hoses should be checked. By
keeping vehicles in good condition, the likelihood of becoming stranded is decreased. In addition, individuals with disabilities should be encouraged to keep their gas tank full so the gas line doesn’t freeze.

People with disabilities should be taught to minimize travel when it is snowing and to avoid driving at all during a snowstorm or blizzard. If a person with disabilities must travel when it is snowing, they should be taught to follow these guidelines:

- Plan trips carefully. Because traveling during winter weather can be dangerous, individuals with disabilities should be taught to listen to the radio or to call the state highway patrol for road conditions. People with disabilities should be encouraged to travel during daylight and if possible, to take another person with them.
- Inform others of their destination, route, and expected arrival time so that help can be sent if necessary.
- Avoid the use of cruise control in wintery conditions.
- Accelerate and decelerate slowly.
- Increase following distances between other vehicles.
- Be aware of hazardous driving conditions such as heavy snow and slippery roads.

Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

True or False.

_____9. It is important to check road conditions before driving in snow.
_____10. It is safe to use cruise control when driving in snowy conditions.
_____11. Traveling during a snowstorm or blizzard should be avoided if possible.
_____12. When traveling during winter weather, it is safer to travel at night because there will be less traffic.

Individuals with disabilities should be taught to travel with their cell phone and to keep an emergency supply kit in their vehicle. Recommended items for a vehicle emergency kit include:
- Windshield scraper and small broom
- Several blankets or sleeping bags
- Extra sets of dry clothing, mittens, socks, and hats
- Extra newspapers for insulation
- Plastic bags for sanitation
- High energy snacks such as nuts and canned fruits
- Bottled water (it is important to avoid eating snow because it lowers body temperature)
- Cans of soup and a manual can opener
- Small tools such as a shovel, pocket knife, pliers, wrench, and screw driver
- Small bag of sand or kitty litter for generating traction under wheels
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- First aid kit and necessary medications
- Candle in a metal can or other fireproof container for a source of heat and light
- Matches
- Brightly colored cloth to tie to the antenna as an emergency signal

**Self-Assessment**

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

13. List three items that should be included in a vehicle emergency kit for travel during winter weather.

If an individual with disabilities becomes stranded in a vehicle during a snowstorm or blizzard, they should be taught the following safety tips:

- Stay with their vehicle. Because it is easy to become disoriented and confused during a snowstorm or blizzard, people with disabilities should be taught to stay in their vehicle and wait for help to arrive.
- Signal for help by displaying a trouble sign (e.g., brightly colored cloth) on the radio antenna and raising the hood of the vehicle (after the snow stops falling).
- Run the engine and heater periodically (for approximately 10 minutes each hour) to keep warm while reducing the risk of carbon monoxide and preserving gas.
- Leave the overhead light on when the engine is running to be spotted.
• Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow.
• Slightly open a window for ventilation.
• Use newspapers, maps, or car mats for added insulation. By layering items, more body heat will be trapped.
• Shift position periodically and move arms and legs for circulation.
• Stay awake if possible (or taking turns sleeping if traveling with a companion) to increase body temperature and circulation.
• Huddle together for warmth.
• Drink warm liquids.
• Drink other fluids to avoid dehydration.

Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

True or False.

_____14. During a snowstorm or blizzard, it is safe for a person to leave his or her vehicle to seek help.

_____15. A person who is stranded in a vehicle during a snowstorm or blizzard should signal for help by typing a brightly colored cloth to the radio antenna.

_____16. Newspapers, maps, and car mats can be used by a person to keep warm if he or she is stranded in a vehicle during a snowstorm or blizzard.

Home Safety During Snow Events

For individuals who live in their own homes or apartments, there are some safety guidelines that individuals with disabilities should be taught to follow during snow events in North Dakota. These include:

• Insulate homes or apartments by covering windows with plastic from the inside to keep cold air out.
• Have furnaces cleaned and inspected every year.
• Keep heating equipment clear to avoid fires.
• Run water (even at a trickle) to prevent pipes from freezing.
Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

17. Identify three winter safety guidelines for individuals with disabilities who live in their own homes or apartments.

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that is produced by the incomplete combustion of fuels (from sources such as heaters, furnaces, wood stoves, gas stoves, grills, or automobile exhaust). Carbon monoxide can build up when these sources are not installed properly or there is poor ventilation.

Carbon monoxide interferes with the delivery of oxygen in the blood to other parts of the body. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include fatigue, headache, weakness, dizziness, confusion, and even death.

There are several suggestions for preventing carbon monoxide poisoning such as:

- Having a certified technician inspect and clean furnaces, fireplaces, and chimneys.
- Refraining from using generators, grills, camp stoves or other alternative sources for electricity, heating, or cooking inside a home, garage, or basement (to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, electric shock and fire).
- Not leaving a vehicle running in an enclosed space such as a garage.
- Having a carbon monoxide alarm in the house.
- Going outside for fresh air if a carbon monoxide alarm sounds and calling 9-1-1.
- Seeking medical attention if symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are present.

“Sheltering-in-Place”

During a snowstorm or blizzard, it is usually unsafe to leave. In such cases, people with disabilities should be taught that they will need to “shelter-in-place.” “Sheltering-in-place” means staying wherever one is until being instructed that it is safe to leave. More information about “sheltering-in-place” is included in Appendix I.
Step 4: Following Up After a Snowstorm or Blizzard

For updated information and instructions about what to do following a snowstorm or blizzard, people with disabilities should be taught to listen to local radio or television stations or a NOAA Weather Radio. Sometimes after a snowstorm or blizzard (or during periods of extreme cold), a person’s home may lose power or heat. If this happens, individuals with disabilities should be taught that they may need to go to a shelter. Evacuation information is found in Appendix H.

It is often necessary to shovel snow following a snowstorm or blizzard. Shoveling can be physically strenuous. The cold can increase heart rate and blood pressure. The cold can also make blood clot more easily and constrict arteries which can lead to decreased blood supply. Shoveling heavy snow or pushing a snow blower can also cause strain to the back and other parts of the body. Because of the risk factors associated with shoveling or snow blowing, individuals with disabilities should be taught to follow these important safety recommendations:

- Make sure that physical exertion will not have an adverse effect on health.
- Avoid overexertion such as shoveling heavy snow, pushing a vehicle, or walking in deep snow. The strain from the cold and hard work may cause a heart attack. Sweating from hard labor could lead to a chill and hypothermia.
- Stretch before shoveling or other outdoor physical activity. By doing a few stretching exercises to warm up the body, chances of muscle injury will be limited.
- Push snow rather than lifting it. If lifting snow is necessary, a person should lift with his or her legs rather than back.
- Stop immediately if chest tightness, dizziness, or chest pain is present.
- Take periodic breaks during outdoor physical activities.
- Wear warm, loose-fitting, lightweight clothing in several layers to protect from frostbite and hypothermia.
- Wear waterproof, insulated boots with warm socks.
- Wear a hat that covers the ears and a scarf that covers the mouth.
- Wear gloves or mittens.
Snow Blower Safety

There are a few guidelines that individuals with disabilities should be taught to follow if they will be using a snow blower after a snowstorm or blizzard. These are:

- Keep hands away from moving parts.
- Turn the snow blower off before reaching in and unjamming it.
- Refuel the snow blower when it is off.
- Avoid running the snow blower in an enclosed space to prevent buildup of carbon monoxide.

Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

True or False.

_____18. During a snowstorm or blizzard, it is usually necessary to “shelter-in-place” until it is safe to leave one’s home or apartment.

_____19. When shoveling, it is safer to lift snow than to push it.

_____20. It is important to take periodic breaks during outdoor physical activities in the winter.

Providing Extra Support

After a snowstorm or blizzard individuals with disabilities may be traumatized. People with disabilities will be less likely to experience prolonged fear and anxiety if they know what to expect following a severe winter weather event. The following suggestions can be used to support individuals with disabilities following a snowstorm or blizzard:

- Encouraging the individual to express feelings.
- Listening carefully, showing understanding, and offering reassurance.
- Including the individual in cleanup activities to re-establish a sense of normalcy.
It is important to note that symptoms of anxiety may not be evident for weeks or even months after a severe winter weather event. Because emergency/disaster-related fear and anxiety may have a negative impact on the daily activities of a person with disabilities, professional assistance from a physician, counselor, social worker, or community religious organization may be necessary.

Additional resources from the American Red Cross on emotional support following a disaster can be found in Appendix F. Furthermore, resources for individuals with disabilities who may need communication supports during a disaster or emergency are found in Appendix J.
Chapter 4: Tornadoes

Did you know?
Tornadoes are one of nature’s most violent storms. Tornadoes sometimes happen in North Dakota. Some of the people you support may not know what a tornado is or just how dangerous they can be. It is important for individuals with disabilities to understand what a tornado is, when a tornado might happen, how to plan for a tornado, and what to do if there is a tornado.

Objectives

After completing this chapter, direct support professionals will be able to teach the following concepts to individuals with disabilities:

- The definition of a tornado.
- The difference between a tornado watch and warning.
- How to make a plan for a tornado.
- What to include in a severe weather safety kit.
- What to do if there is a tornado (how to implement the plan).

Step 1: Understanding Tornadoes

Some of the individuals whom you support may not know what a tornado is. At the beginning of the session, show the participants pictures of a tornado (Appendix D). Ask the participants if they know what a tornado is. Give the participants a few minutes to discuss what a tornado is.

There are several facts about tornadoes that should be taught to people with disabilities. These include:

- A tornado is a very violent windstorm.
- A tornado is a rotating column of air that comes out of a thunderstorm and goes to the ground.
- Thunderstorms that lead to tornadoes may include heavy rain, hail, and flash flooding.
- The air in a tornado moves very fast.
- Sometimes tornadoes can be seen as a funnel cloud.
- Tornadoes can happen in North Dakota.
- Tornadoes can happen in any season, but they occur most during the spring and summer months.
- Tornadoes can happen at any time during the day or night, but usually occur between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m.
- Tornadoes can cause a lot of destruction within seconds.
- Tornadoes can damage or destroy homes and other buildings.
- Tornadoes can disrupt transportation, electricity, gas, communication, and other services.
- Tornadoes can uproot trees.
- Tornadoes can send objects flying through the air.
- Tornadoes can flip cars and trucks.
- Tornadoes can hurt or kill people.

To help the individuals you support to understand tornadoes, show one of the videos about tornadoes found in Appendix D.

**Definition of Tornadoes**

A tornado is defined as a violently rotating column of air that extends from a thunderstorm to the ground. It is often, although not always, visible as a funnel cloud.

**Causes of Tornadoes**

Scientists are not sure what causes all tornadoes. They do know that tornadoes happen when cold air up high meets warmer air down low. This causes the winds to swirl very quickly and the warmer air from below moves up at very fast speeds. As the tornado moves forward, the warm rushing wind picks up objects in its path.

**Difference Between a Tornado Watch and Warning**

In addition to knowing what a tornado is, it is also important for individuals with disabilities to understand when a tornado may occur. It is important for day support professionals to teach participants the difference between a tornado watch and warning. This can be done by using the information in the following box.
Tornado Watch – Be Aware and Prepared

- Conditions are right for the formation of a tornado.
- Tornadoes are possible in the area.
- Listen to the radio or television for alerts about tornado watches.
- Check supplies.
- Be ready to follow emergency plan if the watch becomes a warning.

Tornado Warning – Take Action

- A tornado has been sighted in the area or shown on the weather radar.
- Listen to the radio or television for alerts about tornado warnings.
- Listen for tornado warning sirens.
- Take action immediately.
- Take shelter.
- Follow emergency plan.
- Go to safe room.

Adapted from the American Red Cross and National Weather Service

On average, tornado warnings are issued 13 minutes before the tornado occurs, but warning times can vary and may be much less. Sometimes a tornado happens without any advance warning and no official warning can be made before it touches down. Weather forecasters do their best to predict the path of a storm but tornadoes can be very unpredictable. Even though there may not be time for an official warning (e.g., siren, media alert, etc.), there are some signs that can be taught to individuals with disabilities to signal that a tornado is coming.

Signs of an Approaching Tornado

Some tornadoes happen very quickly and without time for a tornado warning such as a siren or news alert on the radio or television. Sometimes tornadoes happen without a thunderstorm in the area. At other times, a tornado may occur even though a funnel cloud is not visible.

Having advance notice that a tornado might be approaching can give individuals with disabilities the critical time they need to move to a room or location with better protection. Because of this, it is helpful to teach individuals with disabilities the following weather signs that may mean a tornado is approaching:

- A change in the color of the sky (usually green or dark-colored),
- A large low-lying cloud,
- A rotating, funnel-shaped cloud,
- An approaching cloud of debris,
- Large hail,
- A loud noise like a freight train, and/or
- A strange quiet that occurs during or shortly after a thunderstorm.
In addition to watching the sky for signs of a tornado, people with disabilities can be taught a variety of ways to stay informed about current weather conditions. These include:

- a battery-operated radio (with extra batteries)
- local and cable television stations, and/or
- a radio from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) which provides alerts from the National Weather Service and has a tone-alert feature that automatically sounds when a weather watch or warning is issued (More information about NOAA weather radios can be found at http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/).

In some cases, there may be enough time for local law enforcement agencies or weather bureaus to send out warnings about a tornado that is coming. Some communities in North Dakota have tornado sirens that are activated by local law enforcement agencies or community officials. The people that you support should be taught about a variety of systems that provide alerts when there is a tornado warning in a particular area. Several emergency organizations have apps to warn individuals about a tornado. If you support an individual who has a smart phone, tablet, or other device, it may be helpful to download an application that warns of disasters such as floods.

**Self-Assessment**

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

*True or False.*

_____1. Tornadoes only happen in the spring and summer months.

_____2. Tornadoes are not powerful enough to flip vehicles.

_____3. A tornado is a violent windstorm.

_____4. If a tornado warning is issued, it means that a tornado has already been sighted.

_____5. There is always advance warning before a tornado occurs.

6. Specify three weather signs that a tornado may be approaching.
Step 2: Planning and Preparing for a Tornado

After individuals with disabilities are taught what a tornado is and learn what watches and warnings mean, they should be taught what to do. Preparing and planning ahead will enable individuals with disabilities to act quickly and to seek the best available protection during a tornado.

Individuals with disabilities need to know how to prepare and plan for a tornado.

Preparing an Emergency Supply Kit

It is important to teach individuals with disabilities how to prepare an emergency supply kit, and that they may not have access to emergency assistance, medical services, or a pharmacy for several days following a disaster. Because of this, the American Red Cross and Ready.gov recommend that people with disabilities are supported to gather essential items that will help them to make it on their own for at least three days.

A checklist for preparing an emergency supply kit is provided in Appendix G.

Preparing to Evacuate

If a tornado watch is issued, people with disabilities who do not have a safe place to go in their home (e.g., those who live in a mobile home) should be taught that they may need to evacuate. To prepare for an evacuation, individuals with disabilities should be taught the following steps:

- Make transportation arrangements with family members, friends, or support staff if the individual does not drive.
- Have a full tank of gas and an emergency supply kit in the car if the person drives.
- Gather essential documents (e.g., ID card, medical records, insurance card, etc.) and place in a waterproof container.
- Make plans for pets.
- Review emergency plans and supplies.
- Listen to the radio or television for weather updates.
- Listen for alerts and warning signals.

In preparation for an evacuation, it may be helpful for direct support professionals to complete a checklist with the individuals whom they support. The person’s
parents, guardians, or caregivers may also have important input about the best way to provide support during an emergency. The items on the checklist should be individualized for each person with disabilities. A sample evacuation checklist is found in Appendix H.

**Step 3: Responding During a Tornado**

Most injuries and deaths from tornadoes are caused by being struck or cut by falling or flying debris. When a tornado is threatening, individuals with disabilities must be taught to move to the safest location for protection BEFORE the tornado hits and to follow steps for taking personal cover.

**Moving to a Safe Area**

Some places are safer than others during a tornado. It is important to teach individuals with disabilities where to go if there is a tornado warning or if they are caught in a tornado. The following table summarizes safe areas in a variety of settings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Safe Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>• Basement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If no basement, an inside room on the lowest level of the house (closet, bathroom, or hallway).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Away from windows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Under a workbench, mattress, or stairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cover self with coat or blanket; cover head and neck with arms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home</td>
<td>• Get out and go to a tornado shelter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If there is no tornado shelter, lie flat in a ditch, culvert, or ravine and cover head with hands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>• Inside hallway on the lowest floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Away from windows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Avoid large rooms such as the gym, cafeteria, or auditorium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Building (e.g., workplace, store, church, etc.)</td>
<td>• Go to the designated tornado safety area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For more detailed information about where to take shelter during a tornado, there is a resource in Appendix D.

**Self-Assessment**

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

*True or False.*

_____7. People with disabilities should have an evacuation plan if it is necessary to leave during a tornado watch.

_____8. It is safe to stay in a vehicle during a tornado.

_____9. An inside room on the lowest level of the house is the safest location during a tornado.

_____10. It is safe to stay in a mobile home during a tornado.

**Taking Cover During a Tornado**

Individuals with disabilities need to be taught to assume a protective position once they move to a safe area in their home, school, workplace, or community building. The protective stance involves kneeling on their knees and elbows with their foreheads on the floor and their hands covering their heads. People who use a wheelchair should be taught that they need to stay in their wheelchair in case they need to move to another area or evacuate. These individuals should be taught how to lean forward and cover their heads with their elbows and hands.

Many people with disabilities learn best when they are shown *how* to do something rather than just being told *what* to do. Therefore, a demonstration may be the most
effective strategy for teaching those whom you support how to take cover during a tornado. Opportunities to practice safe positions during a tornado should also be provided. In addition, it might be helpful to teach individuals with disabilities the following acronym to help them stay safe during a tornado.

\[
\begin{align*}
D &= \text{Go DOWN to the lowest level} \\
U &= \text{Get UNDER something sturdy} \\
C &= \text{COVER your head} \\
K &= \text{KEEP in shelter under the tornado has passed}
\end{align*}
\]

**Step 4: Following Up After a Tornado**

While injuries may result from the direct impact of a tornado, tornado-related injuries may also occur when people walk through debris or enter damaged buildings when they are cleaning up after a tornado. Stepping on nails and falling objects are common causes of injury following a tornado. In addition, since tornadoes frequently damage power lines, gas lines, and electrical systems, injuries may be caused by fire, electrocution, or explosions. Following a tornado, people with disabilities should be taught to turn off their gas and electricity. Because sparks could ignite gas and cause an explosion, individuals with disabilities should be taught to avoid using matches or lighters as well as to avoid operating appliances or light switches until utility officials have determined there is no gas leak.

**General Safety Precautions**

There are some important safety steps that individuals with disabilities should be taught to take following a tornado. These tips may help people with disabilities to avoid injury following a tornado and include:

- Continue to monitor radio or television for emergency announcements.
- Use caution when entering structures that have been damaged.
- Wear sturdy shoes or boots, long sleeve shirts, and gloves when handling or walking or near debris.
- Be careful of hazards caused by broken glass and exposed nails.
- Avoid contact with downed power lines or items touching downed lines.
- Use battery-powered lights.
- Cooperate with public safety officials.
Checking for Injuries

A tornado may cause injury to the individual with disabilities and/or others. When there are tornado-related injuries, people with disabilities must understand that it may be necessary for them to call 9-1-1 to request emergency assistance. If a person with disabilities is trapped by debris or a collapsed building, they must be taught ways in which they can draw attention to themselves so that they can be rescued by emergency responders. This may include using a whistle or yelling for help.

Individuals with disabilities must also be taught that they may need to administer general first aid such as applying pressure to stop a wound from bleeding or cleaning out open wounds and cuts. People with disabilities should also be aware that they may need to get a tetanus shot if they are injured by debris from a tornado.

Providing Extra Support

After a tornado, individuals with disabilities may be traumatized. People with disabilities will be less likely to experience prolonged fear and anxiety if they know what to expect following a tornado. The following suggestions can be used to support individuals with disabilities following a tornado:

- Encouraging the individual to express feelings.
- Listening carefully, showing understanding, and offering reassurance.
- Including the individual in cleanup activities to re-establish a sense of normalcy.

It is important to note that symptoms of anxiety may not be evident for weeks or even months after a tornado. Because emergency/disaster-related fear and anxiety may have a negative impact on the daily activities of a person with disabilities, professional assistance from a physician, counselor, social worker, or community religious organization may be necessary.

Additional resources from the American Red Cross on emotional support following a disaster can be found in Appendix F. Furthermore, resources for individuals with disabilities who may need communication supports during a disaster or emergency are found in Appendix J.
Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

*True or False.*

_____11. During a tornado, people should go under something sturdy and cover their heads.

_____12. People should avoid debris following a tornado.

_____13. Symptoms of anxiety will always be evident immediately following a disaster.

_____14. Some individuals with disabilities will need emotional support following a disaster such as a tornado.
Chapter 5: Train Derailments

Did you know?
Because of increased train traffic in North Dakota, the number of train derailments in our state has increased significantly over the past few years. Some of the people you support may not know what a train derailment is. They may not understand how dangerous a train derailment may be. It is important for individuals with disabilities to understand what a train derailment is, where and when a train derailment might happen, how to plan for a train derailment, and what to do if there is a train derailment.

Objectives

After completing this chapter, direct support professionals will be able to teach the following concepts to individuals with disabilities:

- What a train derailment is.
- The causes of a train derailment.
- Where and when a train derailment might occur.
- How to make a plan for a train derailment.
- What to include in a train derailment kit (to prepare for an evacuation or to remain where one lives until it the area is safe).
- What to do if there is a train derailment (how to implement the plan).

Step 1: Understanding Train Derailments

Some of the individuals whom you support may not know what a train derailment is. At the beginning of the session, show the participants pictures of a train derailment (Appendix E). Ask the participants if they know what a train derailment is. Give the participants a few minutes to discuss what a train derailment is.

There are several basic facts about train derailments that you should teach to people with disabilities. These include:

- A train derailment is when a train car or cars goes off the railroad tracks.
- Train derailments can happen in North Dakota.
- There are a lot of reasons why a train may go off of its rails (e.g., excessive speed, hits another object, damaged rails, broken wheels or brakes).
A train derailment can cause a fire.
A train derailment can cause an explosion.
A train derailment can cause a hazardous spill.
A train derailment can cause dangerous chemicals to go into the air.
A train derailment can hurt or kill people.

Definition of a Train Derailment

A train derailment is when a train car or cars leaves the railroad tracks.

Causes of Train Derailments

The main causes of train derailments include:

- Poor and improper maintenance of train tracks/rails,
- Collisions with other trains,
- Improper switch alignment,
- Failing to install adequate signals (lights and gates),
- Collisions with cars or trucks at dangerous crossings,
- Mechanical failures of train engines or rail cars,
- Overworked and tired train crews,
- Excessive speed, and/or
- Poor weather conditions.

Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

True or False.

_____1. A train derailment is when a train car or cars leaves the railroad tracks.

_____2. Train derailments do not cause fires or explosions.

_____3. People are not hurt or killed in train derailments.

4. Specify three main causes of train derailments.
Signs of a Train Derailment

Most train derailments happen without warning. Because of this, there usually aren’t signs prior to a train derailment.

Step 2: Planning and Preparing for a Train Derailment

After individuals with disabilities are taught what a train derailment is, they can be taught how to plan and prepare for a train derailment.

Preparing an Emergency Supply kit

It is important to teach individuals with disabilities how to prepare an emergency supply kit, and that they may not have access to emergency assistance, medical services, or a pharmacy for several days following a disaster. Because of this, the American Red Cross and Ready.gov recommend that people with disabilities are supported to gather essential items that will help them to make it on their own for at least three days.

A checklist for preparing an emergency supply kit is provided in Appendix G.

Step 3: Responding During a Train Derailment

Depending on the severity of the train derailment, local law enforcement personnel or emergency responders will provide instructions about whether to evacuate or “shelter in place.” People with disabilities need to be taught the difference between evacuating and “sheltering in place” during a train derailment.

“Sheltering-in-Place”

Following a train derailment, it may be unsafe or unnecessary to leave. In such cases, people with disabilities should be taught that they will need to “shelter-in-place” instead of evacuating. “Sheltering-in-place” means staying wherever one is until being instructed that it is safe to leave.
Evacuating

Evacuating means leaving wherever one is (e.g., home, workplace, school, community building) and going somewhere that is safer (e.g., a shelter, a home that is in a safe area, another location in the community).

People with disabilities should be taught that they may need to evacuate after a train derailment. To prepare for an evacuation, individuals with disabilities should be taught the following steps:

- Make transportation arrangements with family members, friends, or support staff if the individual does not drive.
- Have a full tank of gas and an emergency supply kit in the car if the person drives.
- Gather essential documents (e.g., ID card, medical records, insurance card, etc.) and place in waterproof container.
- Fill clean water containers.
- Make plans for pets.
- Review emergency plans and supplies.
- Listen to the radio or television for updates.
- Listen for alerts and warning signals.

In preparation for an evacuation, it may be helpful for direct support professionals to complete a checklist with the individuals whom they support. The person’s parents, guardians, or caregivers may also have important input about the best way to provide support during an emergency. The items on the checklist should be individualized for each person with disabilities. A sample evacuation checklist is found in Appendix H.

Mandatory Evacuations

If a mandatory evacuation order is issued, individuals with disabilities must be taught that they cannot ignore the evacuation order. People with disabilities should also be taught to follow officials’ instructions about when to evacuate (either immediately or within a specified time frame) and where to go.

For more information about evacuating or “sheltering-in-place,” please see Appendix I.
Step 4: Following Up After a Train Derailment

General Safety Precautions

There are some important safety steps that individuals with disabilities should be taught to take following a train derailment. These tips may help people with disabilities to avoid injury following a train derailment and include:

- Staying away from the train derailment site.
- Treating the train accident as a hazardous site due to spills from fuel and chemicals.
- Being aware of explosion, fire, and flying metal.

Providing Extra Support

After a train derailment, individuals with disabilities may be traumatized. People with disabilities will be less likely to experience prolonged fear and anxiety if they know what to expect following a train derailment. The following suggestions can be used to support individuals with disabilities following a train derailment:

- Encouraging the individual to express feelings.
- Listening carefully, showing understanding, and offering reassurance.
- Including the individual in cleanup activities to re-establish a sense of normalcy.

It is important to note that symptoms of anxiety may not be evident for weeks or even months after a train derailment. Because emergency/disaster-related fear and anxiety may have a negative impact on the daily activities of a person with disabilities, professional assistance from a physician, counselor, social worker, or community religious organization may be necessary.

Additional resources from the American Red Cross on emotional support following a disaster can be found in Appendix F. Furthermore, resources for individuals with disabilities who may need communication supports during a disaster or emergency are found in Appendix J.
Self-Assessment

Check your understanding of this section’s content by completing this self-assessment.

True or False.

_____5. It is always necessary to evacuate following a train derailment.

_____6. A train derailment site may be hazardous because of fuel or chemical spills.

_____7. Flying metal is one of the dangers associated with train derailments.

_____8. People with disabilities may need emotional support following a disaster such as a train derailment.
Appendix A: Emergency Preparedness

Resources for Fires

Safety Tip Sheets (tip sheets on a variety of fire safety topics including cooking fires, smoke alarms, escape plans, fire safety and people with disabilities, and pet safety) from the National Fire Protection Association
http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/safety-tip-sheets

Home Fire Safety Checklist from the Red Cross
http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/home-fire

Fire Safety for Children with Disabilities from the National Fire Protection Association

**Escape Plans**

Single family home -

Multi-family home -

Apartment complex -
http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m39740206_High_Rise_Apartment.pdf

Escape Plans for Children -
http://chandleraz.gov/content/FPW2011EscapePlan.pdf

**Following Up After a Fire**

Picking up the Pieces after a Fire from the American Red Cross

After the Fire! Returning to Normal
Emotional Support Following a Disaster
http://www.redcross.org/find-help/disaster-recovery/recovering-emotionally

Videos

Fire Prevention and Safety
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kP5X2kEK5NU&list=UUvrYey5SZMid_VZk9D8tYmA&index=232

Fire is Everyone’s Fight
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X2cecHqY2xs&list=UUvrYey5SZMid_VZk9D8tYmA&index=200

Have Two Ways Out
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9kSFQ4rX&list=UUvrYey5SZMid_VZk9D8tYmA&index=233

Winter Fire Safety
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UXLRvu61Gc&index=221&list=UUvrYey5SZMid_VZk9D8tYmA

Cooking Fire Safety
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcZ4dEDPgLg&index=27&list=PL69D1444B992E92E8

Watch What You Heat
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-veTPrWM0Vo&index=223&list=UUvrYey5SZMid_VZk9D8tYmA

Prevent Scalds and Burns
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9qW-0PCN_r4&index=224&list=UUvrYey5SZMid_VZk9D8tYmA

Keep Things Away From Heat
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0GHHF5grds&list=UUvrYey5SZMid_VZk9D8tYmA&index=225

Know What To Do IF There Is A Cooking Fire
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FlUShpjos4&list=UUvrYey5SZMid_VZk9D8tYmA&index=227

Electrical Fire Safety
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbPKVMpEA6M

Grilling Fire Safety
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gk2qroYtSY&list=PL69D1444B992E92E8&index=18
Holiday Fire Safety
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfuSO6cMPYM&index=19&list=PL69D1444B992E92E8

Smoking and Fire Safety
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKxEGq_u6cM&index=16&list=PL69D1444B992E92E8

Fire Emergencies – for kids
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCAqm8U8k60

Fire safety for children who have mobility challenges

Fire safety for children who have cognitive impairments

Fire safety for children who have visual or hearing impairments
http://www.safekids.org/video/fire-safety-families-children-who-are-visually-or-hearing-impaired

Photos of Fires
Appendix B: Emergency Preparedness
Resources for Floods

How to Prepare for a Flood (Resources from FEMA)
http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1409002852888-3c5d1f64f12df02aa801901cc7c311ca/how_to_prepare_flood_033014_508.pdf

Floods (Resources from Ready.gov)
http://www.ready.gov/floods

Flood Safety (Resources from the American Red Cross)
http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/flood

Flood App (Resources from the American Red Cross)
http://www.redcross.org/prepare/mobile-apps/flood

Emotional Support Following a Disaster (Resources from the American Red Cross)
http://www.redcross.org/find-help/disaster-recovery/recovering-emotionally

Video from National Geographic

Photos of Floods

![Photo 1](image1)

![Photo 2](image2)

![Photo 3](image3)
Appendix C: Emergency Preparedness Resources for Snowstorms and Blizzards

How to Prepare for a Winter Storm (Resources from FEMA)
http://www.community.fema.gov/hazard/winter-storm/be-smart

Winter Storms and Extreme Cold (Resources from FEMA)
http://m.fema.gov/winter-storms-extreme-cold

Winter Storms and Extreme Cold (Resources from Ready.Gov)
http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather

Winter Storm Preparedness (Resources from the American Red Cross)
http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/winter-storm

Emergency App (An App from the American Red Cross that includes real-time severe weather alerts and safety information)
http://www.redcross.org/mobile-apps/emergency-app

Winter Storms for Kids
http://www.weatherwizkids.com/weather-winter-storms.htm

Emotional Support Following a Disaster (Resources from the American Red Cross)
http://www.redcross.org/find-help/disaster-recovery/recovering-emotionally

Videos

Prepare for Severe Winter Weather Now
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FsRDkPaM_a8&index=273&list=UUVrYey5ZMid_VZk9D8tYmA

When The Sky Turns Gray
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVpGJ_XI_w&list=UUVrYey5SZMid_VZk9D8tYmA
Photos of Snowstorms and Blizzards
Appendix D: Emergency Preparedness
Resources for Tornadoes

Tornadoes (Resources from FEMA)
http://m.fema.gov/tornadoes

Tornadoes (Resources from Ready.Gov)
http://www.ready.gov/tornadoes

Tornadoes (Resources from the National Weather Service)
http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/severeweather/index.shtml

Tornado Safety (Resources from the American Red Cross)
http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/tornado

Tornado Safety Checklist (Resource from the American Red Cross)

Be Ready! Tornadoes (Resource from the Centers for Disease Control)

Where to Take Shelter During a Tornado (Resources from the Centers for Disease Control)
http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/tornadoes/during.asp

Emotional Support Following a Disaster (Resources from the American Red Cross)
http://www.redcross.org/find-help/disaster-recovery/recovering-emotionally

Tornado App (Resources from the American Red Cross)
http://www.redcross.org/mobile-apps/tornado-app

Videos

National Geographic

For younger participants
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVud3SsyFx4
Photos of Tornados and Tornado Damage
Appendix E: Emergency Preparedness Resources for Train Derailments

Hazardous Materials Incidents (Including train derailments from Ready.Gov)
http://www.ready.gov/hazardous-materials-incidents

Emotional Support Following a Disaster (Resources from the American Red Cross)
http://www.redcross.org/find-help/disaster-recovery/recovering-emotionally

Photos of Train Derailment and Train Derailment with Fire
Appendix F: Additional Resources

General Preparedness Resources

American Red Cross Tools and Resources (fact sheets, preparedness checklists, recovery guides and other helpful information to keep people informed and safe)
http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster-safety-library

The “Ready Now!” Toolkit –
http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/outreach/occyshn/upload/ReadyNowToolkit.pdf

The “Get Ready!” Toolkit
http://www.cdc.gov/features/emergencypreparedness/index.html

Emergency Preparedness: Get Ready! -
http://www.cdc.gov/features/beready/index.html

Emergency Preparedness For You
http://www.bt.cdc.gov/preparedness/

Community Preparedness: Simple Activities for Everyone
https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is909/preparedness_facilitatorguide.pdf

Introduction to Emergency Preparedness for Kids
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbvomQYJpE

Preparing Makes Sense for People with Disabilities

Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs

Special Populations: Emergency and Disaster Preparedness

Resources for Children

Be a Hero!
http://www.ready.gov/kids

Fun Games
Disaster Kit Hidden Pictures

Emergency and Disaster Supply Kits

Basic emergency/disaster supply kit
http://www.ready.gov/kit

Homeland Security Emergency Checklist

Evacuation Checklist

Readiness Checklist

Communication Plans

Family Communications Plan and Emergency Kit
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LviZ4pZrqu8

Family Emergency Communication Plan
http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1440449346150-1ff18127345615d8b7e1effb4752b668/Family_Comm_Plan_508_20150820.pdf

Family Communication Plan
http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/0e3ef555f66e22ab832e284f826c2e9e/FEMA_plan_parent_508_071513.pdf

Wallet Size Emergency Communication Plan
http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1440449198497-a0623af833be9ade00cfbf6856fa678b/Family_Comm_Plan_Cards_508_20150820.pdf

Disaster and Emergency Alerts and Warnings (Including Apps)

Be Smart. Take Part. Know Your Alerts and Warnings
http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1440448868597-c0112a8bd0aa1c4a62ed44ba68b24d3f/Alerts_and_Warnings_508_20150824.pdf

Recovering After a Disaster

Emotional Recovery Following a Disaster
http://www.redcross.org/find-help/disaster-recovery/recovering-emotionally
Appendix G: Emergency and Disaster Supply Kits

An emergency supply kit is a collection of basic items that an individual with disabilities may need in the event of an emergency or disaster. An emergency or disaster kit may be necessary during incidents in which a person with disabilities may be required to evacuate. It may also be necessary for individuals with disabilities who are required to “shelter-in-place.” Following an emergency or disaster, people with disabilities may be required to “survive on their own” for several hours or days. Because it may take local officials, emergency responders, and relief workers several days to be on the scene of an emergency or disaster, it is recommended that people with disabilities have sufficient food, water, and other supplies for a minimum of 72 hours.

Since it may be necessary to evacuate or “shelter-in-place” immediately, the person with disabilities probably won’t have time to search for supplies once an emergency or disaster has occurred. Because of this, individuals with disabilities should be supported to assemble their kits before an emergency or disaster happens.

People with disabilities should be taught that they might not have access to food or water during emergencies or disasters. Basic services such as electricity, gas, sewage treatment and telephones may also be cut off. It is important to teach individuals with disabilities how to pack an emergency/disaster supply kit so that they can manage outages and have safe food and water.

While an emergency or supply kit should be individualized based on the needs of each person with disabilities, there are some standard items that should be included in each kit. Based on recommendations from the American Red Cross and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, individuals with disabilities should be taught to pack the following items in their emergency/disaster supply kits:
### Items for emergency/disaster supply kits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water and Food</th>
<th>Electronics</th>
<th>Health and Safety Supplies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• One gallon of water per person, per day</td>
<td>• Flashlight</td>
<td>• First aid kit*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Easy-to-make food that won’t spoil</td>
<td>• Battery powered, solar, or hand crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio)</td>
<td>• Medicine (7 day supply)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Manual can opener</td>
<td>• Extra batteries</td>
<td>• Other medical supplies (hearing aids with extra batteries, glasses, contact lenses, syringes, cane or walker, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cell phone with charger, inverter, or solar charger</td>
<td>• Whistle to signal for help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Dust mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Plastic and duct tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Wet wipes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for sanitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Paperwork about any serious or ongoing medical conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Soap, toothbrush, other personal care items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Individuals with disabilities may need to be taught specific items that should be included in their first aid kit. These include:

- Disinfectant
- Alcohol swabs
- Prescription medications
- Antibiotic ointment
- Pain relievers
- Diarrhea medicine
• Eye drops
• Scissors
• Thermometer
• Tissues

• Band-Aids
• Tweezers
• Bar soap
• Cold pack

If necessary, individuals with disabilities should be supported to gather the following items:

• Family and emergency contact information
• Copies of important documents (doctor’s phone number, insurance cards, immunization records, etc.)
• Extra cash
• Multipurpose tool
• Matches in a waterproof container
• Map(s) of the area
• Extra set of car and house keys
• Sleeping bag or blanket
• Change of clothes

**Pet or Service Animal Supplies for Emergencies/Disasters**

Individuals with disabilities who have a pet or service animal should also be supported to use the following checklist to gather pet supplies.

• Pet medicines and medical records
• Food and water for at least three days for each pet
• Food and water bowls
• Manual can opener
• Leash, collar/harness, and carrier
• Litter box and litter, litter scoop, plastic trash bags
• Grooming items
• Pet bed
• Current photos and description of pets to help others identify them in case the individual becomes separated from his or her pet(s)
• Information on medical conditions, feeding schedules, and behavior problems
• Contact information for the veterinarian
Appendix H: Evacuation Checklist

Communication

✓ Sign language interpreter  ( ) Yes  ( ) No

✓ I read others' lips  ( ) Yes  ( ) No

✓ TTY or TDD (telecommunication device for the deaf)  ( ) Yes  ( ) No

✓ Large print materials  ( ) Yes  ( ) No

✓ Braille material  ( ) Yes  ( ) No

✓ Recorded material  ( ) Yes  ( ) No

✓ Someone to read and explain information to me  ( ) Yes  ( ) No

✓ Other: ___________________________________________  ( ) Yes  ( ) No

Adapting to a New Place

✓ I have a hard time adjusting to new places  ( ) Yes  ( ) No

✓ I have a hard time adjusting to being around people I don't know  ( ) Yes  ( ) No

✓ It is difficult for me to adjust to crowded and noisy rooms  ( ) Yes  ( ) No

✓ I am blind or visually impaired and need someone to help orient me with the layout of the shelter  ( ) Yes  ( ) No

✓ I use Braille material to help me orient  ( ) Yes  ( ) No
Medications

I need help to remind me when to take medications

I am allergic to the following medications:

Medical Needs

I have a medical condition that is unstable or another health issue that needs continual attention (example: seizures)

I need help with on-going medical therapy, such as IV therapy, catheterization, or wound care

I need essential medical supplies (diabetic needles, etc)

I have a medical device implant (heart defibrillator, nerve stimulator, pacemaker, etc.

I have environmental allergies or chemical sensitivities

I cannot tolerate excessive heat or cold

I have a weakened immunity system and need to stay away from others because I catch illnesses easily

Mobility

I use a wheelchair or other mobility device
I can walk, but have trouble standing for extended periods ( ) Yes ( ) No

I am unable to walk and need someone to help me get into different seating or laying positions ( ) Yes ( ) No

I need a lift, such as a Hoyer lift, to transfer me from one place to another. ( ) Yes ( ) No

Service Animals

I use a service animal ( ) Yes ( ) No

My service animal does not adapt well to emergencies ( ) Yes ( ) No

I need help while my service animal adjusts ( ) Yes ( ) No

Adapted and Medical Equipment

Oxygen ( ) Yes ( ) No

Glasses ( ) Yes ( ) No

Cane/Walker ( ) Yes ( ) No

Wheelchair ( ) Yes ( ) No

Communication device ( ) Yes ( ) No

Diabetes kit ( ) Yes ( ) No

Ventilator ( ) Yes ( ) No
Feeding pump

Yes

Suction Machine

Yes

Other: ____________________________

Yes

Using the Restroom

I need disposable undergarments

Yes

I need help changing undergarments

Yes

I need an adapted toilet

Yes

I need to be catheterized

Yes

Additional information? ____________

Yes

Eating and Drinking

I need special formula

Yes

I need modified plates or silverware

Yes

I need straws or modified cups

Yes

I have food allergies

Yes

I need special food because of an illness

Yes
Bathing, Dressing and Grooming

☑️ I need help taking a shower or bath

☐ Yes ☐ No

☑️ I need help buttoning or fastening clothes

☐ Yes ☐ No

☑️ I need help with grooming (brushing hair, brushing teeth, etc.)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Sleeping

☑️ I need help getting into and out of bed

☐ Yes ☐ No

☑️ I need to be repositioned while I sleep

☐ Yes ☐ No

☑️ I have medical issues when I sleep that require monitoring (sleep apnea, seizures, etc.)

☐ Yes ☐ No

Adapted from the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness: Preparedness Kit for Ohioans with Special Needs
Appendix I: Seeking Safety: Sheltering-in-Place or Evacuating

During many emergencies or disasters, it is necessary to seek safety. It is important to teach individuals with disabilities how to seek safety by either staying put and “sheltering-in-place” or leaving and evacuating.

I. Sheltering-in-place: Sometimes it may be necessary for people with disabilities to stay put and seek immediate shelter where they are - in their home, workplace, or other location when an emergency or disaster strikes. “Sheltering-in-place” means taking shelter where someone already is because it is unnecessary to evacuate or too unsafe. Sometimes it is enough to simply stay inside. Other times it may be necessary to take additional steps to stay safe. For example, it may be necessary to “seal the room” to prevent outside air from coming in (such as when chemicals are leaking due to a train derailment or other emergency).

When it is best for individuals with disabilities to stay where they are, they should be taught the following steps for “sheltering-in-place.”

Steps for Sheltering-in-Place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choose the safest room</th>
<th>Bring emergency supplies</th>
<th>Follow official instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Move to the safest room of the home or building in which you are sheltering-in-place</td>
<td>• You should bring enough supplies to last for at least three days</td>
<td>• Listen to emergency updates using a battery-powered radio or television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In most emergencies, it is best to go to a room with the least number of rooms and windows</td>
<td>• If you have pets, bring your pet emergency supplies, too</td>
<td>• Continue to shelter-in-place until local authorities say it is safe to leave</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preparing to shelter-in-place

At Home

Prior to an emergency or disaster, individuals with disabilities should be supported to choose a room in their home in which to shelter-in-place. The best room is
usually one with as few windows and doors as possible. A large room with a water supply (e.g., master bedroom connected to a bathroom) is a desirable location in a home for sheltering-in-place. In addition to identifying a location, people with disabilities should develop an emergency plan and practice it regularly. An emergency supply kit should also be assembled.

At Work

A plan should be developed to support individuals with disabilities who may need to “shelter-in-place” at their workplace. People with disabilities should be taught how to access items from the emergency supply kit at the work site.

Additional Guidelines for Sheltering-in-Place

Individuals with disabilities should be taught the following guidelines during emergencies or disasters in which it is necessary to shelter-in-place:

- Go inside to an interior room (with few or no windows) immediately. Bring pets if applicable. Prepare a place for pets to relieve themselves indoors.
- Close and lock all outside doors and windows to create a tighter seal.
- Close the window shades, blinds, or curtains if there is danger of explosion.
- If instructed to seal the room, duct tape and plastic sheeting (e.g., heavy-duty plastic garbage bags) should be used to seal cracks around the doors and windows. Tape over vents, electrical outlets, and other openings.
- To avoid drawing in toxic air from the outside, turn off the heating, ventilation, or air conditioning system. Turn off all fans (including those in the bathroom and kitchen).
- Close the fireplace or wood stove damper.
- Gather emergency supply kit including food and water.
- Because cellular telephone circuits may be overwhelmed, damaged or inoperable, access to a hard-wired telephone is desirable. Keep the phone handy to report a life-threatening condition if necessary. Otherwise, stay off the phone so that the lines will be available for use by emergency personnel.
- Keep listening to the radio or television until being told that it is safe or it becomes necessary to evacuate. Do not leave unless instructed to do so.
- When told that the emergency is over, open windows and doors, turn on ventilation systems, and go outside until the air inside the home has been exchanged with the now clean outdoor air.
• Follow special instructions from emergency responders to avoid chemical contaminants.

II. Evacuating: In some emergencies or disasters (e.g., floods, fires, train derailments), it may be necessary for individuals with disabilities to leave where they are (home, work place, community location) and seek shelter outside of the hazard area. Evacuating means leaving a home or building and going somewhere that is safer. This could mean staying with family or friends, seeking commercial lodging, or staying in a mass care facility that is offered by disaster relief groups.

Individuals with disabilities should be taught to listen to their radio or television to find out if they need to evacuate. Sometimes a siren will warn people that they must leave.

When local officials decide that an emergency or disaster is serious, a mandatory evacuation may be ordered. During mandatory evacuations, individuals with disabilities should be taught that they must leave. Depending on the emergency or disaster, the amount of time that an individual with disabilities has to leave during a mandatory evacuation will vary. If the event is a weather condition such as a flood, individuals with disabilities and other community members may have a day or two to get ready. Because most emergencies and disasters occur with little or no advance warning, however, it is important to teach individuals with disabilities to plan ahead.

In other incidents, evacuations may be voluntary. In these cases, individuals with disabilities may be advised to evacuate in order to avoid situations that may be potentially dangerous.

For emergencies or disasters that require evacuation, the steps in the following table should be taught.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps for Evacuating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify where to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends or family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Friends or family
• Identify people who can transport you
• Tell a family member or support person
• Listen to emergency updates using a
If local emergency authorities order an evacuation, you must leave immediately. During an evacuation, follow these important steps.

- Tell a support person where you are going.
- Turn off your utilities (water, electricity, and gas) if instructed to do so.
- Take your emergency kit and any other needed supplies. Shelters may be able to provide some supplies but not all.
- Lock your home.

If you are unable to evacuate from your home by yourself, make sure that you have a plan. A support person should know and practice your evacuation plan with you.

You should also have an evacuation plan where you go to school, work, or volunteer. Remember to share your evacuation plans with your support people.

**Additional Information about Sheltering-in-Place and Evacuating**

Individuals with disabilities should be taught ways in which they may be alerted during an emergency or disaster that requires either sheltering-in-place or a mandatory or voluntary evacuation. These include broadcasts on the radio or television via the Emergency Alert System (EAS), news media sources such as radio, television, and cable, outdoor warning horns or sirens, telephone calls through an automated system such as reverse 9-1-1, NOAA Weather Radio alerts, emails, or text alerts.

People with disabilities should be taught that they may have to “shelter-in-place” or evacuate for a short period of time (e.g., tornado warning) or a long period of...
time (e.g., winter storm, flood, fire). In addition, individuals with disabilities should be taught that they should stay “sheltered-in-place” or evacuated until local authorities say that it is safe to leave.

During incidents in which it is necessary for individuals with disabilities to evacuate to a mass care shelter, they should be taught to bring their emergency/disaster supply kits. Because mass care sheltering may involve living with a large number of people in a small, confined space, people with disabilities should be made aware that living conditions may be difficult and unpleasant.

For assistance in locating a nearby shelter, please visit: http://www.redcross.org/find-help/shelter.
Appendix J: Communication Supports

Many individuals with disabilities benefit from communication supports. As stress escalates during a disaster or emergency, the ability of people with disabilities to process verbal information decreases. Because of this, one type of communication supports known as visual support strategies can be beneficial during emergency situations.

Pictures that depict the action an individual with disabilities should take in the event of an emergency can be posted in person’s home. Visual instructions have two purposes: they can help the individual with disabilities stay calm and know what to do and they can alert emergency responders that the individual may need extra time and/or support to understand what to do in an emergency situation.

A wide range of picture symbols to create visual instructions are available commercially through programs such as Boardmaker (www.mayer-johnson.com). A variety of free symbols are also available on the Internet. Picture symbols can be used with assistive communication devices. They can also be adapted for PDA’s cell phones, and other electronic devices.

Resources for Communication Supports

Includes printable picture cards for fire safety and safety signs
http://www.do2learn.com/picturecards/printcards/

A sample of devices, applications, or assistive technology that may be useful as emergency planning tools
http://www.mn.gov/mnddc/emergency-planning/products.html

Disaster symbols to use free of charge for non-commercial purposes
http://talksense.weebly.com/symbol-disasters.html
Appendix K: Pre/Post-Test

Pre/Post-Test for Disaster Preparedness Content

This pre/post-test is designed to be used with the individuals with disabilities whom you support following instruction on the disaster preparedness content. This pre/post-test could also be given prior to instruction (as a pre-test) and again following instruction to evaluate changes in responses after the content has been taught.

True or False.

_____1. I cannot do anything to prevent fires.

_____2. It is safe for me to walk through flood waters as long as the water is less than 10 inches deep.

_____3. It is important for me to have an evacuation plan in case I need to leave during a disaster or emergency.

_____4. I will always get advance notice if there is going to be a train derailment.

_____5. It is important for me to have an emergency supply kit.

_____6. Tornadoes can destroy my home and hurt me.

_____7. During a disaster or emergency, it may be necessary for me to “shelter-in-place.”

_____8. It is safe for me to go outside during a blizzard as long as I tell someone where I am going.

_____9. I can get information about disasters or emergencies from a computer, radio, television, or app on my smart phone, tablet, or other device.

_____10. The safest place for me to be during a tornado is in a car.
Appendix L: Answer Keys for Self-Assessment and Pre-Post Test

Chapter 1: Home Fires

True or False.

F 1. Fires are most likely to occur during the night.
T 2. Cooking is a common cause of fires.
F 3. There are eight main types of fires.
T 4. Fires can kill people.

5. List three of the most common causes of fires.

May include three of the following:

Smoking materials, cooking, candles, electrical, appliances, household items

Matching.

6. Electrical fires caused by overloaded outlets or short circuits a. Class A
7. Cooking fires involving cooking oil or grease b. Class B
d 8. Metal fires c. Class C
a 9. Burning of wood, paper, or trash d. Class D
b 10. Flammable or combustible liquids such as oil or gas e. Class K

11. Identify five steps that can be taken to prevent fires.

May include five of the following:

- Removing fire hazards.
- Limiting distractions while cooking.
- Never leaving hot ovens or stoves unattended.
- Keeping fabrics (clothing, bedspreads, curtains, etc.) away from lights and heating sources.
- Keeping electrical appliances in good condition (without loose or frayed cords or plugs).
- Limiting the number of plugs in outlets to avoid overload.
- Avoiding the overuse of extension cords.
• Running electrical wires on top of rugs instead of under rugs.
• Turning portable heaters off when leaving a room or going to bed.
• Blowing out candles when leaving a room or going to bed.
• Using the correct wattage of light bulbs.
• Storing flammable materials safely.
• Smoking outside (if the person who is being supported is a smoker).

True or False.

F 12. Once a fire starts and the smoke alarm sounds, people usually have 10 minutes to get out.

T 13. Smoke alarm batteries should be checked once a month.

T 14. It is important to identify at least two ways out of every room.

F 15. Fire drills should be practiced once a year.

T 16. An escape plan should include a place to meet once everyone is outside of the house.

F 17. Smoke alarms only need to be installed in sleeping areas.

F 18. It is okay to go back into a burning building to get more possession as long as 9-1-1 has already been called.

T 19. If a person is trapped inside a burning building, he or she can open a window and signal for help by waving a brightly colored cloth or flashlight.

F 20. It is okay to open a door knob that is hot to the touch as long as no smoke is present.

T 21. Unless a person is trapped inside a burning building, he or she should wait to call 9-1-1 until he or she is outside.

F 22. No special training is required to use a fire extinguisher.

23. Identify five steps that individuals with disabilities should be taught to take following a fire.

May include five of the following:

• Waiting for permission from emergency personnel to enter a damaged home.
• Using caution when entering a damaged home.
• Wearing sturdy shoes or boots, long sleeve shirts, and gloves when handling or walking near debris.
• Being careful of hazards caused by broken glass and exposed nails.
• Avoiding contact with downed power lines or items touching downed lines.
• Using battery-powered lights.
• Cooperating with public safety officials.

Chapter 2: Floods

True or False.

F 1. Floods only happen during the day.
T 2. A flood occurs when there is too much water where it’s not supposed to be.
F 3. A flash flood is a slow-developing flood.
F 4. If a flood watch is issued, it means that a flood is already happening or is on its way.

5. Specify two signs that a flood may be approaching.
   May include two of the following:
   • Rising water levels in a river or lake
   • Water that is moving quickly in a river or lake
   • Water that is spilling over the banks of a river or lake

6. List two steps that people with disabilities can complete to prepare their home for a flood.
   May include two of the following:
   • Bringing outdoor items (e.g., lawn furniture, trash cans, grills, etc.) inside.
   • Storing important items in safe locations.
   • Moving important items to upper floors.
   • Disconnecting electrical appliances.
   • Turning off utilities (if instructed).
   • Filling bathtubs, sinks and plastic soda bottles or milk jugs with clean water for “sheltering-in-place.”

True or False.

T 7. People with disabilities should have an evacuation plan if it is necessary to leave during a flood.
F 8. It is safe to walk through flood waters as long as the water is less than 12 inches deep.
F 9. If a person needs to evacuate during a flood, pets should be left behind.
F 10. During a mandatory evacuation, it is okay for a person with disabilities to stay in his or her home as long as he or she notifies the police.
11. Identify two guidelines for cleaning-up following a flood.

May include two of the following:

- Beginning clean-up activities within 24 to 36 hours.
- Removing wet items (especially items that soak up water such as furniture, pillows, carpeting, etc.).
- Sucking water out of soggy carpet with a shop or wet vacuum.
- Using a fan to get air moving in enclosed spaces.
- Using a dehumidifier to keep moisture levels low.
- Using detergent and hot water to remove mold from hard surfaces.
- Taking safety precautions to reduce exposure to mold.
- Hiring clean-up professionals.
- Working with insurance companies to cover damages.

Chapter 3: Snowstorms and Blizzards

Matching.

- 1. A winter storm will happen within 24 hours.
- 2. Includes high winds, blowing snow, and poor visibility.
- 3. A winter storm might happen within 36-48 hours.
- 4. Usually does not affect travel.

- e. Winter weather advisory
- f. Winter storm watch
- g. Winter storm warning
- h. Blizzard

5. Identify two ways to stay informed about weather conditions.

May include two of the following:

- A battery-operated radio (with extra batteries)
- Local and cable television stations
- A radio from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- iPhone, iPad, or iPod applications

True or False.

F 6. Snowstorms only happen in the winter.

F 7. An emergency supply kit should include the essential items that a person might need for at least ten days.
8. Identify three safety tips for going outside when it’s snowing (but not during a snowstorm or blizzard).

May include three of the following:

- Dress in several layers of clothing that is warm, water repellant, loose-fitting, and lightweight.
- Wear a hat to prevent loss of body heat from the head.
- Wear mittens or gloves.
- Wear insulated, waterproof boots.
- Wear a scarf over the mouth to protect lungs from extremely cold air. Avoid deep breaths and minimize talking.
- Keep dry.
- Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.

True or False.

T 9. It is important to check road conditions before driving in snow.

F 10. It is safe to use cruise control when driving in snowy conditions.

T 11. Traveling during a snowstorm or blizzard should be avoided if possible.

F 12. When traveling during winter weather, it is safer to travel at night because there will be less traffic.

13. List three items that should be included in a vehicle emergency kit for travel during winter weather.

May include three of the following:

- A windshield scraper and small broom
- Several blankets or sleeping bags
- Extra sets of dry clothing, mittens, socks, and hats
- Extra newspapers for insulation
- Plastic bags for sanitation
- High energy snacks such as nuts and canned fruits
- Bottled water (it is important to avoid eating snow because it lowers body temperature)
- Cans of soup and a manual can opener
- Small tools such as a shovel, pocket knife, pliers, wrench, and screwdriver
- A small bag of sand or kitty litter for generating traction under wheels
- A flashlight with extra batteries
- A first aid kit and necessary medications
- A candle in a metal can or other fireproof container for a source of heat and light
- Matches
- A brightly colored cloth to tie to the antenna as an emergency signal
True or False.

F 14. During a snowstorm or blizzard, it is safe for a person to leave his or her vehicle to seek help.

T 15. A person who is stranded in a vehicle during a snowstorm or blizzard should signal for help by typing a brightly colored cloth to the radio antenna.

T 16. Newspapers, maps, and car mats can be used by a person to keep warm if he or she is stranded in a vehicle during a snowstorm or blizzard.

17. Identify three winter safety guidelines for individuals with disabilities who live in their own homes or apartments.

May include three of the following:

- Insulating homes or apartments by covering windows with plastic from the inside to keep cold air out.
- Having furnaces cleaned and inspected every year.
- Keeping heating equipment clear to avoid fires.
- Running water (even at a trickle) to prevent pipes from freezing.

True or False.

T 18. During a snowstorm or blizzard, it is usually necessary to “shelter-in-place” until it is safe to leave one’s home or apartment.

F 19. When shoveling, it is safer to lift snow than to push it.

T 20. It is important to take periodic breaks during outdoor physical activities in the winter.

Chapter 4: Tornadoes

True or False.

F 1. Tornadoes only happen in the spring and summer months.

F 2. Tornadoes are not powerful enough to flip vehicles.

T 3. A tornado is a violent windstorm.

T 4. If a tornado warning is issued, it means that a tornado has already been sighted.

F 5. There is always advance warning before a tornado occurs.
6. Specify three weather signs that a tornado may be approaching.

May include three of the following:

- A change in the color of the sky (usually green or dark-colored)
- A large low-lying cloud
- A rotating, funnel-shaped cloud
- An approaching cloud of debris
- Large hail
- A loud noise like a freight train
- A strange quiet that occurs during or shortly after a thunderstorm

**True or False.**

T 7. People with disabilities should have an evacuation plan if it is necessary to leave during a tornado watch.

F 8. It is safe to stay in a vehicle during a tornado.

T 9. An inside room on the lowest level of the house is the safest location during a tornado.

F 10. It is safe to stay in a mobile home during a tornado.

T 11. During a tornado, people should go under something sturdy and cover their heads.

T 12. People should avoid debris following a tornado.

F 13. Symptoms of anxiety will always be evident immediately following a disaster.

T 14. Some individuals with disabilities will need emotional support following a disaster such as a tornado.

**Chapter 5: Train Derailments**

**True or False.**

T 1. A train derailment is when a train car or cars leaves the railroad tracks.

F 2. Train derailments do not cause fires or explosions.

F 3. People are not hurt or killed in train derailments.

4. Specify three main causes of train derailments.

May include three of the following:

- Poor and improper maintenance of train tracks/rails
- Collisions with other trains
- Improper switch alignment
- Failing to install adequate signals (lights and gates)
- Collisions with cars or trucks at dangerous crossings
- Mechanical failures of train engines or rail cars
- Overworked and tired train crews
- Excessive speed
- Poor weather conditions

True or False.

F 5. It is always necessary to evacuate following a train derailment.

T 6. A train derailment site may be hazardous because of fuel or chemical spills.

T 7. Flying metal is one of the dangers associated with train derailments.

T 8. People with disabilities may need emotional support following a disaster such as a train derailment.

Pre/Post Test

True or False.

F 1. I cannot do anything to prevent fires.

F 2. It is safe for me to walk through flood waters as long as the water is less than 10 inches deep.

T 3. It is important for me to have an evacuation plan in case I need to leave during a disaster or emergency.

F 4. I will always get advance notice if there is going to be a train derailment.

T 5. It is important for me to have an emergency supply kit.

T 6. Tornadoes can destroy my home and hurt me.

T 7. During a disaster or emergency, it may be necessary for me to “shelter-in-place.”

F 8. It is safe for me to go outside during a blizzard as long as I tell someone where I am going.

T 9. I can get information about disasters or emergencies from a computer, radio, television, or app on my smart phone, tablet, or other device.

F 10. The safest place for me to be during a tornado is in a car.