

Emergency Planning Checklist
For Seniors and Persons with Disabilities
Prepared by the Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate
Department of Justice

When emergencies strike, everyone is forced out of their comfort zone. For persons with disabilities and their families, this is especially true. This is a quick guide for preparing yourself for an emergency. For detailed information, please refer to the *Are You Ready Guide*, available [here](#).

Plan

- Know the natural and manmade threats in your area
- Make sure you have all home insurance coverage for the threats in your area
- Talk to your family about emergency/disaster threats in your area and specific challenges you would have during an emergency
- Have an evacuation plan

Prepare

At Home

- Make a list of important contacts (including out-of-town contacts) from family, friends, work, school.
- Build a support network from those contacts who are willing to help you in an emergency
- Make sure you have a simple landline telephone that works without power
- Identify areas in your home for easy access to emergency food supplies and emergency kit
- Prepare and practice an evacuation plan for getting out of your home, neighbourhood, and community. Make sure each member of your family knows a single meeting place locally and outside the immediate area
- Make an emergency kit and include:
 - Water (Two litres per person, per day)
 - Non-perishable canned and dry goods
 - Important identification and other personal papers
 - Prescription medication and medical supplies
 - First-aid supplies
 - Lighter or waterproof matches
 - Extra batteries
 - Portable radio (preferably crank-powered)
 - Flashlight
 - Manual can opener/plastic utensils
 - Blankets or sleeping bags
 - Change of clothing and shoes
 - Personal hygiene products, including toilet paper
 - Money
 - Paper, pen and paper
 - Book, puzzle or small toy

- Disability related supplies
- Service animal/pet supplies
- List of all important medical information

At Work/School

- Learn workplace/school evacuation procedures
- Prepare a smaller emergency kit for the workplace, dorm room, vehicle.
- If needed, create a “buddy-system” to ensure you have assistance when needed.

In a vehicle

- Keep a small emergency kit in the car
- Fill up the tank when weather warnings are posted

Tips for Persons with Disabilities and Frail Seniors

Mobility/Agility Disabilities

- Know how much your wheelchair weighs and if it can be easily transported.
- Know different ways to leave a building. For example, have a plan for when the elevators are not working. Check with friends or family to make sure they have at least partial wheelchair accessibility at their home.
- Find out if your workplace building has an area of refuge, which is a temporary shelter in an office or public building. It can be a stairwell where wheelchair users and others might stay and wait to be rescued.
- Choose clothing, linens, and blankets made of fire-resistant material in case of fire.

Deaf and hard of hearing

- Install both audible alarms and visual smoke detectors. At least one should be battery operated or attached to a personal signaling device.
- At work, fire alarms should be visual as well as auditory.
- Your support network should know if you work alone or in an office that is far from visual alerts.
- Review the evacuation procedures for your workplace.
- Have a sign ready to post on your door saying you have left your home so workers will not break in to look for you.
- Have a plan for alternative communication like a text messaging system or a communication book.

Blind or Visually Impaired

- Practice your plan regularly so you will know what to do at home, work, or school in a disaster.
- If you have some vision, have security lights in each room to light paths of travel.
- Prepare (if needed) a folding white cane, dark glasses or other aids in your emergency kit.

Speech difficulties

- Have your disaster plan written out. Keep copies at important locations.
- Practice your plan regularly so you know what to do.
- Listen carefully to instructions.
- Try to be around people you trust during a disaster. Have a support network at different locations.

- Consider making a communication binder with pictures or phrases to help you communicate, such as “I need a family doctor,” “Where is the bathroom?” or “Where will I sleep?” The binder might also include a family contact name/phone number.

Developmental Disabilities

- Work with someone you know and trust to help you create a plan. Make your plan with pictures instead of words so you will be able to follow it better. For example, show the exit route from the building in pictures.
- Keep a copy of your plan in your bedroom and in your communication book.
- Practice your plan regularly so you will know what to do.

Mental Health Issues

- Practice your plan regularly so you will know what to do at home, work, or school in a disaster.
- Practice how to communicate your needs.
- Put copies of your plan in several places so you can find it quickly and easily.
- Identify the name of a support person you have a good relationship with, that you can contact right away in case of an emergency.

Older or Frail Seniors

- Plan and practice the best escape route from your home.
- Arrange for two people you trust to check on you in case of a disaster or an emergency. If possible provide them with a spare key to your residence. Inform them of your special needs and where your emergency supply kit is located, and instruct them on how to use any special equipment.
- Have a plan to signal for help if you require assistance being evacuated from your home.
- If you receive home health care/support services, plan with your agency in the event of an emergency.
- Post all emergency and non-emergency contact numbers next to your phone.

Important Contacts

Emergencies

In an immediate emergency call/text 911 anywhere in Nova Scotia.

If you are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and use a TTY to communicate, you can call the RCMP at 1-866-297-7554. (24/7)

Nova Scotia Power

Nova Scotia Power's Critical Customer Communication Program call: 1-800-428-6230 (provincial toll-free number) or (902) 428-6230 (Halifax Regional Municipality)

Canadian Red Cross

For more information on personal preparedness, go to www.redcross.ca or call your local Canadian Red Cross Office:

Eastern Nova Scotia (Cape Breton): (902) 564-4114

Central Nova Scotia (Halifax): (902) 424-1432

Northern Nova Scotia: (902) 893-8339

Western Nova Scotia: (902) 678-0982

Emergency Management Office (EMO) Nova Scotia

1-866-424-5620 (provincial toll-free number)

(902) 424-5620 (Halifax Regional Municipality)

www.gov.ns.ca/emo

Environment Canada (Weather information for Nova Scotia)

Dartmouth-Halifax 1-902-426-9090

Greenwood 1-902-765-5040

New Glasgow 1-902-752-2222

Sydney 1-902-564-7788

Windsor 1-902-798-3634

Yarmouth 1-902-742-6464

http://weather.gc.ca/forecast/canada/index_e.html?id=ns