

Preparing for an emergency

A guide developed by and for
disabled people



Preparing for an emergency: A guide developed by and for disabled people

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**National Emergency
Management Agency**
Te Rākau Whakamarumaru
Aotearoa New Zealand



Whaikaha
Ministry of Disabled People



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The content and concepts in this guide are taken from the Person-centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) Workbook, one component of the P-CEP process tool and framework. Learn about the P-CEP Workbook:

- <https://collaborating4inclusion.org/pcep/>
- Villeneuve, M., Abson, L., Yen, I., & Moss, M. (2020). Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (P-CEP) Workbook. Centre for Disability Research and Policy, The University of Sydney, NSW 2006. 652-2241, Issue 2/No 1 (Online)

The Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness Capability Wheel, Four Steps of Emergency Planning and Level of Preparedness Scale are part of the original Framework and Process Tool, created by Prof. Michelle Villeneuve, University of Sydney and lead researcher at Collaborating4Inclusion.

Find the Capability Wheel and definitions:

<https://collaborating4inclusion.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/PCEP-Overview.pdf>

Learn more about the original research: Villeneuve, M. (2022). Disability-Inclusive Emergency Planning: Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Global Public Health.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190632366.013.343>

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Learn more about the Wellington region guide at
wremo.nz/alternative-formatsresources-for-disabled-people/

Personal preparedness is the most important thing a person can do to be safe in an emergency

A realistic emergency plan considers:

- Your strengths, access needs, and situation.
- Steps you have already taken to prepare.
- Gaps in your plan that increase your risk in an emergency; and ways to address this.

In a disaster such as a big earthquake, there is likely to be widespread damage to power lines, water pipes, buildings, roads, and phone networks.

You may not have water, power, toilets, transport, or communications for more than three days.

As you use the guide, think about how this could change your daily routine.

Prompts and tips will help you think about how prepared you are now and how to get to the next level.

You can also find out more about emergencies in alternate formats at **getready.govt.nz**



Make your emergency plan. Use this guide with *Preparing for an emergency: A personal plan for disabled people*.

Getting Started

This guide breaks planning down into 4 steps. These actions are not going to happen in one day. Work through planning at your own pace. Keep your plan in your grab bag or somewhere easy to get to in an emergency.

Steps of emergency planning



1

Step one

Identify your strengths and access needs in your daily life.



2

Step two

Know your level of preparedness. Understand your risk and practice lifesaving actions.



3

Step three

Starting your emergency plan. Make a plan that reflects your needs before and after a disaster.



4

Step four

Share your plan and get support. Find and work on any gaps.

Help from others is important. Reach out to family, friends and others in your community to get the information and help you need.

1

**Identify your strengths
and access needs in
your daily life**



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Your typical week

Disabled people are used to managing and adapting to inaccessible situations every day. These are strengths that you can bring to emergency preparedness.

Think about what you do every week; where you do it; and who you do it with.

For example, your schedule might include:

- Work or volunteering.
- Gym, exercise.
- School or study
- Meeting with other people.
- Support worker schedule.
- Therapy appointments.
- Other family members leaving for work and coming home.

Knowing how you manage every day is the first step in planning how you will manage in an emergency.

What would your daily routine look like if there was no power, water, toilets, transport or communication?

How would you manage these disruptions?

Write about your typical week

What are examples of things that are important to your routine during the week?

What would change if there was no power, water, toilets, transport or communication?



Write about your typical week in your plan. Think about one or two days of the week. How would they change after an emergency?

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02

Know your level of preparedness



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How prepared are you for emergencies?

Where are you on this line?



Level of Emergency Preparedness, Taken from the Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness Framework. Published with permission of collaborating4inclusion.org

Some of us are further along on our emergency preparedness than others.

If you haven't thought much about preparedness, it would be unfair to expect you to achieve level 4 or 5 yet.

It takes time to learn about your risks and get prepared.

Emergency preparedness is a process, not a one-time event!

- Increase your emergency preparedness, little by little.
- Start by identifying your top areas to work on and take small steps.
- Start with what you can do today.

Keeping mentally prepared

It's just as important to be mentally prepared for an emergency.

You can make a better plan when you understand what to expect.

- Plans might need to change quickly.
- You might have not access to the support or technology you are used to.
- New people coming to help might not understand your needs.
- You could feel isolated.

Thinking about how you would adapt to different situations helps keep your mind resilient to change.

“After the Kaikōura Earthquake, I had no support person, technology or power initially. I had to manage myself and adapt to that situation mentally, as well as thinking about my support needs.” – Mr. PT, workshop member

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Understanding your local hazards

Visit **getready.govt.nz** or your local Civil Defence Emergency Management Group's website to learn about hazards where you live. If you do not have internet access, you can talk to someone at your local council about the hazards where you live, work, and spend time, or go to a workshop in your area.

Your local Civil Defence Emergency Management Group will be able to tell you if there are workshops in your area. Find your local Civil Defence Emergency Management Group at **civildefence.govt.nz**



In your plan, include the main risks in your community. For example, earthquakes, flooding and tsunami. How would they affect you?

Know your immediate life-saving actions

Earthquake – “Drop, Cover, Hold”

Most injuries and deaths during earthquakes are caused by things falling on people rather than buildings collapsing. You need to practise the version of DROP, COVER, HOLD that works for you and make it your immediate reaction when the ground starts shaking.

Learn how to Drop, Cover and Hold at getready.govt.nz/drop-cover-hold

Tsunami – “Long or Strong, Get Gone”

If you feel an earthquake that is EITHER longer than a minute OR strong enough that it makes it hard to stand up or keep upright, and you are in a tsunami zone, leave immediately

As soon as the shaking stops, move immediately to the nearest high ground or as far inland as you can out of tsunami evacuation zones. Even if you can't get out of your evacuation zone, go as far or as high as you can. Every metre makes a difference.

The earthquake may be the only warning you get of a tsunami. Do not wait for more instructions, alerts or advice.

Find out more information about tsunami at **getready.govt.nz**

Check if you live, work or play in a tsunami zone at **getready.govt.nz/tsunami-evacuation-zones** or contact your local council.

See Page 41 for information about evacuation planning for disabled people.



Supporting each other in an emergency

Civil Defence Centres, community-led centres and marae



What is a Civil Defence Centre?

Civil Defence Centres (CDC) offer a safe place in local communities where people can go for help during an emergency and everyone is welcome.

They are run by Civil Defence Emergency Management staff and volunteers.

In an emergency, if you cannot stay with whānau/family, you can evacuate to a Civil Defence Centre. Some areas in New Zealand have a list of Civil Defence Centres on their website. Others will open a building as a Civil Defence Centre depending on the emergency.

In some areas of New Zealand, a Civil Defence Centre can be called a Welfare Centre or a Community Emergency Centre.

What is a community-led centre?

At a community-led centre (or community hub), you can:

- Ask for and offer help by sharing skills and resources among your community.
- Share and find information about what's happening in your area.
- Start organising the clean-up of your community.

Your centre is run by the people in your local community without official assistance. There are no supplies, food, water or blankets stored because these things are often already in your own homes and in the community.

Community-led centres can work with Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups for advice and support before and during emergencies.

Community-led centres can be places that the community identifies before an emergency. Or communities might open and run a community-led centre depending on the emergency.

Some communities don't use a physical building. They provide support through networks of people.

Depending on where you live, a community-led centre can be called a:

- Community Hub,

- Community Emergency Hub,
- Community Response Hub,
- Manaaki Hub/Centre, or
- Sector Post.

Marae

Marae are often a place for whānau and the wider community to come together in times of need. Marae sometimes act as community-led centres.

They play an important role in an emergency. They serve as trusted community centres, providing essential services like:

- food,
- shelter, and
- care for both Māori communities and the wider public.

Marae provide support and cultural safety through the expression of manaakitanga (hospitality) and kotahitanga (unity).

Your Civil Defence Emergency Management Group might have a list of possible Civil Defence Centre's in an emergency. In your plan, list your closest Civil Defence Centres, community-led centres or marae that might open in an emergency.

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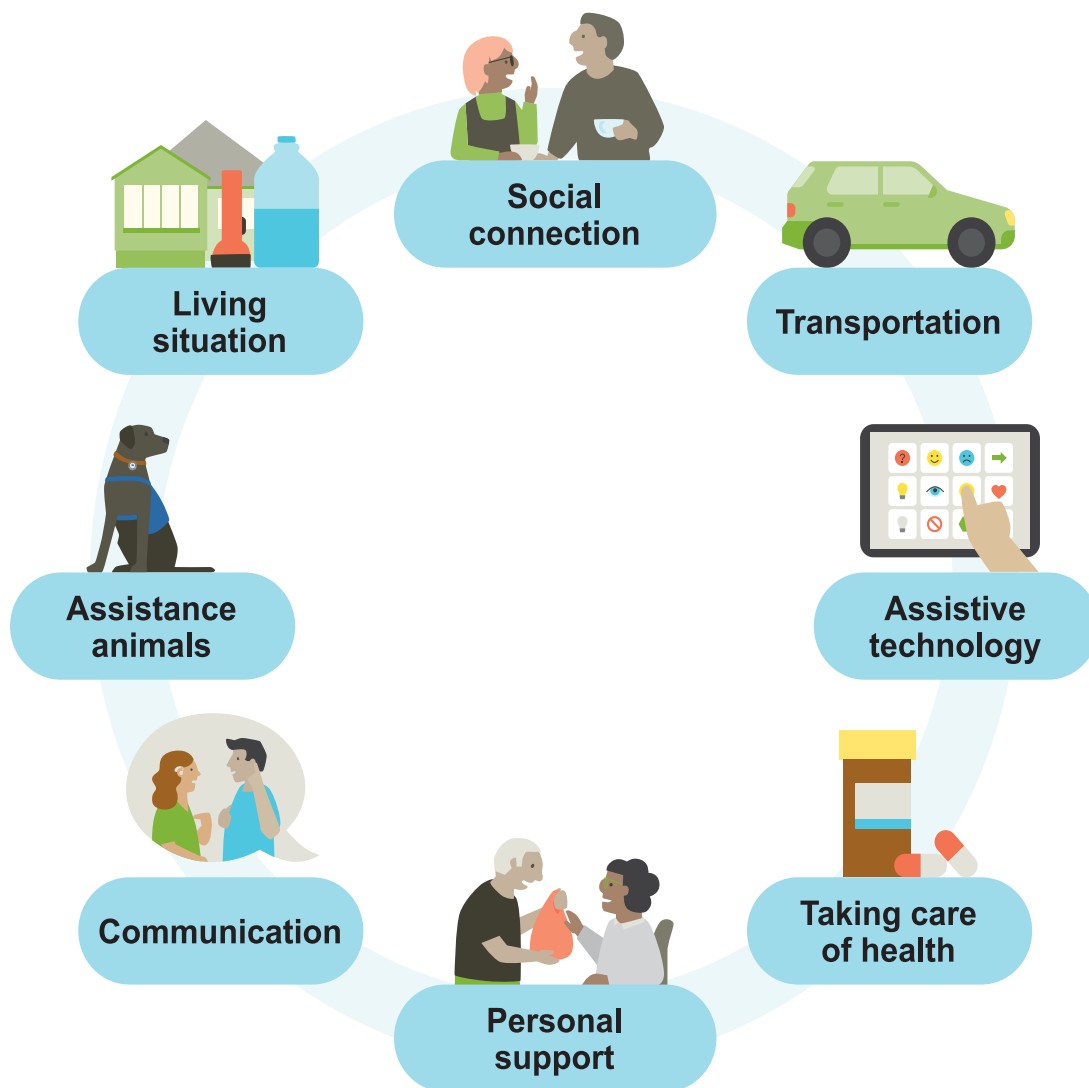
Starting your emergency plan



Using the “Capability Wheel”, think about your strengths and how you manage your needs every day.

Focus on the parts that are relevant and skip the ones that do not apply to you.

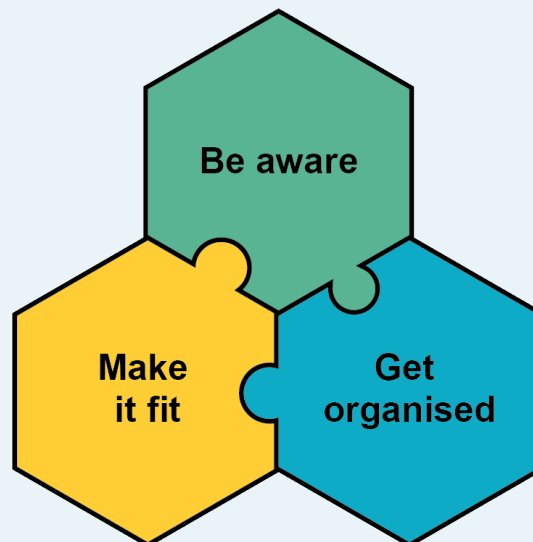
In your plan, answer the questions and make your own notes for each area that is relevant to you.



Capability Wheel, taken from the Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness Framework and modified with permission to match our graphics. Published with permission collaborating4inclusion.org

Planning for how you will manage your needs after an emergency

Plan for an emergency by doing these three things.



What happens when it doesn't fit?

In your plan, you can include any gaps.

Think about the options you have when identifying gaps.

- Some gaps in your plan can be solved yourself by using your current support networks. You may also find more support online, from suppliers/providers or larger organisations.
- Some gaps are part of a larger system. Disabled people and allies may need to advocate at local and/or national levels to bring change.

This guide was designed by disabled people to be one part of disability inclusive emergency planning.

Communication



Communication

This includes sending and getting information such as by telephone (landline/mobile) or computer. It also includes anything you use to help with, replace or support speech or writing.

Consider:

- What support do I need for seeing, hearing, speaking and understanding?
- What assistive devices, tools, technologies, or services do I rely on to communicate?
- How do I best communicate? (Eg. NZSL, written communication, Braille etc.)
- How do I usually get information?
- What are the things that help me talk? (Eg. Communication system, gestures, pictures, people, etc.)
- What are the things that help me understand? (Eg. Pictures, simple words, showing me, etc.)
- What support do I need to call people or get information from others? (Eg. Landline, mobile, computer, other device.)
- Who/what sources do I trust to give me helpful information?
- What tools do I need? (Eg. Computer/internet/data.)

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Tips



- Create a health passport and keep it in your grab bag so others know the best way to communicate with you. Learn about My Health Passport at **hdc.org.nz/disability/my-health-passport**
- Pre-planning is really important for people who need a power supply and/or people to operate life-sustaining equipment. If you rely on power for medical reasons, contact your power company to register as a medically dependent consumer.
- **Your power supply cannot be guaranteed in an emergency.** Your power company can help you put an emergency response plan in place—so you know what to do if the power goes out. You can find more information about making an emergency response plan with your power company at **shorturl.at/ETo3Q**
- Ask your life-sustaining equipment providers/suppliers how to get support from them in an emergency.
- If you urgently need power, call 111 if possible or go to your nearest medical centre. Think about what information you will need to communicate to make sure your access needs are met quickly. It's helpful to write this down. If you have difficulty hearing or talking on the phone, you can register for the 111 TXT service at **police.govt.nz/111-txt**. You can also use the New Zealand Relay Service. Learn about the service at **nzrelay.co.nz**.

Taking care of health



Taking care of medical conditions can include medicines, nutrition, exercise, or other treatments or therapies that help you stay well. This also includes how you look after your mental health.

Medical support includes caring for wounds, catheters or stoma; access to medical supplies, equipment or their maintenance; using power-dependent equipment to keep you alive or mobile.

Many people find this is the most complex section of planning. It may raise gaps, questions or concerns. Some parts may be out of your direct control. Write down and plan for as much as you can. Bring questions to your local GP, health group, advocacy organisation or pharmacist.

Consider:

- Where do I keep my health information?
(Eg. Identification, NHI, health records.)
- What are my health conditions/exercise/nutrition needs?
- How do I manage and monitor my health/medical/treatment?
- What monitoring devices do I need to make sure are working or have supplies?

- What power sources are needed to operate my medical equipment? (Eg. Battery, electricity.)
- Where do I get my supplies? How do I manage my supplies?
- What treatments/therapies are important for my physical health, my mental health and well-being?
- Do I have private health insurance? What services are covered by my insurance?

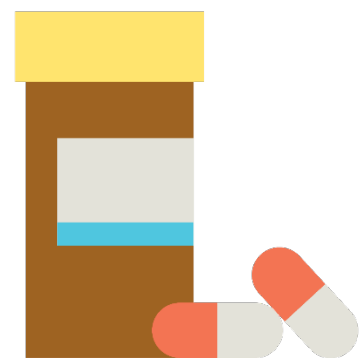
Medication

- Discuss with your doctor how you will access medication during and after an emergency, especially medications and supplies that are controlled or require refrigeration.

Tips



- Remember to keep copies of community service cards, health insurance cards and prescriptions together with this emergency plan.
- Make a note of where you keep your medication in case you have to evacuate quickly, or someone needs to get it for you.



Assistive technology

The help you get from equipment



Assistive technology is any device, system or design, that allows you to do things that you would otherwise be unable or find difficult to do. It can include anything (eg. tool or device; high or low tech) that supports you to carry-out your daily activities. This can include canes and walkers and things to keep you calm like headphones or fidget spinners.

Consider:

- What assistive devices, technology, or equipment do I use?
- What supplies do I always have on hand?

Tips



- Identify your priority assistive technology and make sure your plan includes how you will take critical equipment with you if you have to evacuate.
- Make a plan for how you will manage your equipment in an emergency. Include things like having spare wheels and parts.

- Pre-planning is really important for people who need a power supply and/or people to operate life-sustaining equipment. If you rely on power for medical reasons, contact your power company to register as a medically dependent consumer.
- **Your power supply cannot be guaranteed in an emergency.** Your power company can help you put an emergency response plan in place—so you know what to do if the power goes out. You can find more information about making an emergency response plan with your power company at shorturl.at/ETo3Q
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Personal support

The help you get from other people every day



The support or help from another person for personal support or support with activities of daily living. It can include both practical and emotional support that enables you to do the things you want, need or have to do every day.

Consider:

- Who helps me with my self-care/activities of daily living?
- What do they help with?
- When do they help?
- How do I organise my personal support?
- How do I manage if/when they are unavailable



Tips



- Ask your service provider about what plans they have during and after emergencies. Make sure your expectations match what they can deliver in an emergency.
- Think about what support services are critical to you and which you could go without in the short term.
- You may be separated from the people who normally support you. Your emergency plan should include a record (in whatever way is useful for you) of the needs you have and the support you receive to meet those needs.
- Recording details about your specific needs can help you make better decisions when you are under pressure. Share the information with others who support you. Together, you can make back-up plans for help in emergencies. Make a plan for how you will manage your equipment in an emergency.

Assistance animals



Help from animals and how you care for them

It's important to evacuate with your assistance animal and pets if possible and have a plan for their safety in an emergency.

Consider:

- Do I have all the information I need about my animal somewhere easy to find?
- Do I have a grab bag of basic supplies for my animal in case I had to evacuate quickly?
- Do I know the name and number of my local vet?
- Do I have an emergency plan for my animal?

Assistance/guide dogs

Assistance animals are trained and certified by an organisation. They provide important services such as alerting or provide support. They are legally allowed into any public space. You might need permission to enter a marae or a church.

Legally, you can't be separated from your Assistance/Guide dog. This includes at places giving support in an emergency, like Civil Defence Centres.

Your dog's certifying organisation will give your dog a coat to wear with the organisation's name on it and some form of identification for you. This can help to quickly reunite you and your dog if you are separated.

- Make sure your animal is wearing their coat or identification if possible. You do not need identification to get support or enter a Civil Defence Centre.
- Make sure you have your assistance animal identification card with you and a second form of identification like a letter from your organisation if possible.
- Ask your certifying organisation how to contact them after an emergency and what support they provide.

Tips



Make sure your animal is microchipped. Register the microchip number with your local vet and the New Zealand Companion Animal Registry
animalregister.co.nz

- Make sure you have a current photograph of you and your animal in case you get separated



Transportation



Transportation

**How you travel to where you want to go
(eg. car, bus, train, taxi, walking)**

This includes independent travel and travel with others (eg. family, support worker), including assistance animals and pets.

Consider:

- Where do I need to go?
(Eg. Work, volunteering, shopping, etc.)
- How do I get to places in the community?
- Who helps me?
- Who drives?
- How do I organise my transportation?
- What assistive devices do I use if walking?

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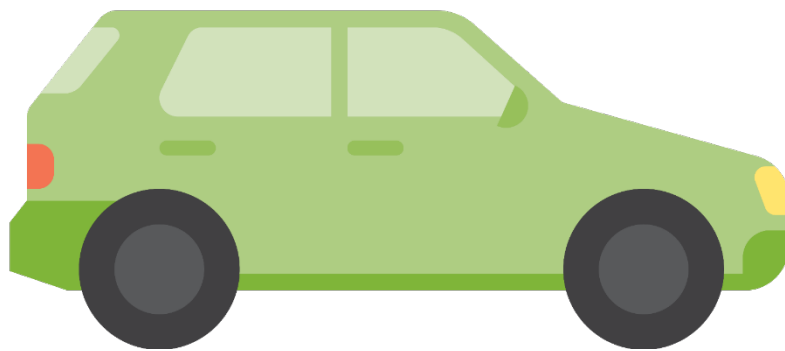
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Tips



- Your plan should also include any assistance you need from people or equipment (assistive technology) that you need to go with you.
- Make back-up transportation plans so that you can manage your health and well-being after an emergency.
- In an emergency, you may not be able to rely on taxi, bus or other public transport.



Living situation

Where you live and who you live with

The context of your home situation including any accessibility modifications and utilities.



Consider:

- Who do I live with?
- Where do I spend most of my time when I'm at home?
- How does the location of my home (city, town, rural) affect
- how I go about my daily activities?
- What is my water, electricity, gas supply?
- How many exits are there? Are they accessible? Is there a lift?



Tips



- Make sure your plan includes how you will exit your house.
- Keep your phone and charger nearby with emergency contacts.
- Keep a torch, radio, shoes, mobility devices and any other essential supplies by your bed in case you have to evacuate quickly.
- If you rely on power for critical medical support, contact your power company now. **Your power supply cannot be guaranteed in an emergency.** Your power company can help you put an emergency response plan in place—so you know what to do if the power goes out. If you urgently need power, call 111 if possible or go to your nearest medical centre. You can find more information about making an emergency response plan with your power company at **shorturl.at/ETo3Q**. If you have difficulty hearing or talking on the phone, you can register for the 111 TXT service at **police.govt.nz/111-txt**. You can also use the New Zealand Relay Service. Learn about the service at **nzrelay.co.nz**.

Social connection

The people you do things with. Your relationships with friends, family and other people. The help you give to other people.



These relationships may be personal (eg. family, friend, neighbour) and/or professional (eg. service provider, community leader).

Consider:

- Who is in my circles of support? (See picture opposite.)
- Who do I count on?
- What type of support do they give me?
- Who counts on me?
- What type of support do I give other people?
- Where can I go if I ever need help or a place to stay?
Have I spoken to them about this?

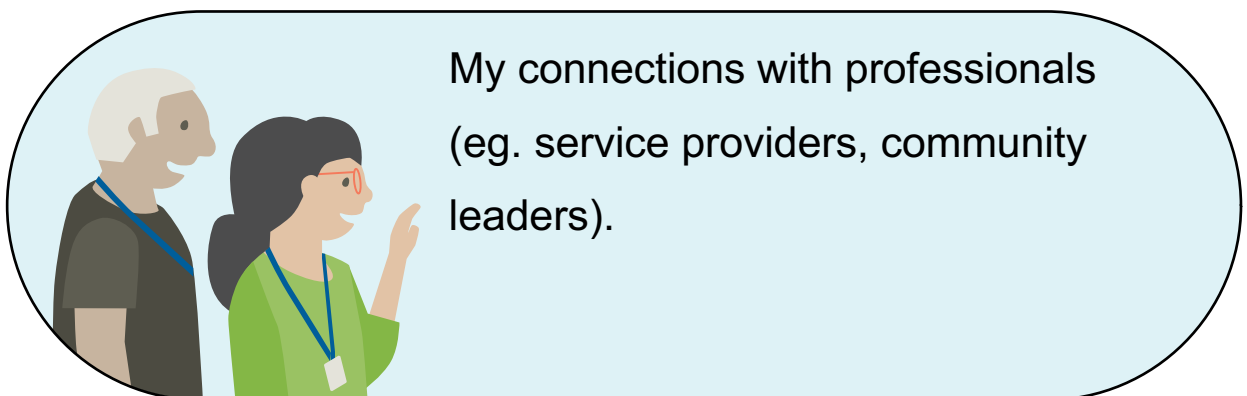
My circles of support



My connections with family, carers, housemates, peers and neighbours.



My connections through regular activities such as work, school, volunteering, religious affiliation, clubs, community groups, fitness, peer support and other activities (eg. online activities).



My connections with professionals (eg. service providers, community leaders).



My connections in the wider community where I spend my time (eg. shopping, restaurants, public transportation, library etc).

Evacuation planning

Thinking about evacuation can be difficult and often overwhelming for people with mobility impairments. You might have understandable concerns about evacuating with important equipment, how to get to safety in time or leaving your home.

In a major disaster, emergency services will be very limited. The roads could be difficult to get through and there may not be enough time or people to evacuate everyone. It is important to make the best evacuation plan you can. It's better to have an imperfect plan than no plan at all.

Consider:

- What are my evacuation options? List by priority from best to last option.
- What are my personal triggers for evacuation? How can I stay informed so I can make the decision to evacuate early?
- How far, long and fast can I travel without anyone else's help (to save my life)?
- Who can I rely on for help?
- What important equipment do I need to bring with me?
- How will I let people know I have evacuated and where I have gone?

- What could stop me evacuating? How can I reduce those barriers?
- What do I need emergency services to know if I am being evacuated?

Tips



Have a grab bag to get you through the first 12 hours. Visit **getready.govt.nz/supplies** or talk to your local council to learn more.

- It may take longer for you to evacuate. Stay informed and be ready to go as soon as you feel you are at risk, even if others aren't leaving.
- Think about which evacuation method is fastest for you.
- Write down instructions that emergency services might need to know if they are evacuating you.
- Practice evacuating so you can find out what is possible or not.
- Let people know your evacuation plan, especially if you are relying on them.

Remember it is far better to have an imperfect evacuation plan than none at all.

4

**Share your plan
and get support**



Communicate your plan with the people in your support network and address gaps through collaboration

“Lots of people have plans “in their heads.” But an effective plan is one that works in practice. Writing it down is not enough. Make time to discuss your situation, your capabilities, and what support you will need in an emergency together with the people in your network” – Prof. Michelle Villeneuve, University of Sydney

You may have to make adjustments to your plan – think about who will actually be there when disaster strikes.

Being clear about what you need will help you to prioritise and plan effectively. It can also help you and others to advocate for the support you will need in an emergency.

Make time to talk about the barriers to preparedness:

- What things are stopping you from getting prepared?
- What do you need to happen to get to the next stage of preparedness?

Record your personal information in your plan. Only share your information with people you trust.

Examples of gaps in emergency preparedness

“Some people didn’t even have a support worker to check in on them. Some of them have a couple different people doing different things for them so they might think, “Oh they might’ve checked in.” So, who’s responsibility is it to check in on that person?”

“What do we do when the support workers are affected by the disaster as well?”



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