

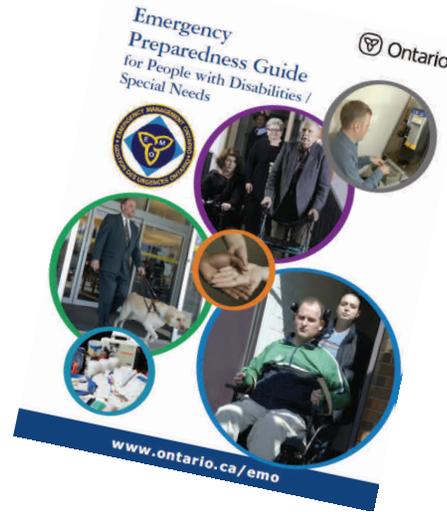
Emergencies can occur at any time and your best defense is to be prepared. The Town of Saugeen Shore's pamphlet series on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities/special needs includes:

- * Service Animals & Support Persons
- * Mobility
- * Non-Visible Disabilities
- * Seniors With Special Needs
- * Travel Considerations
- * Vision



Disability Quick Facts:

Prior to the 1970s, 'disability' was largely defined as a diagnostic, biomedical category. However, disability is now viewed as a social construct rather than a medical one. 650 million people worldwide have a disability of some sort, one million persons aged 15 and over report having a hearing related disability, and 8 in 10 seniors live with a disability



Information drawn from the Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs, prepared by Emergency Management Ontario
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Hearing



Emergency Preparedness



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What are Hearing Disabilities?

A person can be deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. The distinction between these terms is based on the individual's language and means of communicating rather than the degree of hearing loss.

In an emergency, the method in which emergency warnings are issued becomes critical to how a person with hearing loss is able to respond and follow instructions to safety.

Dos and Don'ts - Assisting People with Hearing Disabilities

- ☞ get the person's attention via a visual cue or a gentle touch on their arm before speaking to them
- ☞ face the person and make eye contact when speaking to them as they may rely on speech reading
- ☞ communicate in close proximity
- ☞ speak clearly and naturally
- ☞ use gestures to help explain what you are trying to communicate
- ☞ write a message if there is time and keep a pencil and paper handy
- 🚫 avoid approaching the person from behind
- 🚫 refrain from shouting or speaking unnaturally slowly
- 🚫 do not make loud noises as hearing aids amplify sounds and can create a



Your Emergency Plan

- ✓ if your network* is unavailable during an emergency, seek the assistance of others to whom you can communicate your hearing loss by spoken language, moving your lips without sound, pointing to your ear or hearing aid
- ✓ keep a pencil and paper handy
- ✓ obtain a pager that is connected to an emergency paging system at your workplace and/or the building that you live in
- ✓ install a smoke detection system that includes smoke alarms and accessory flashing strobe lights or vibrators to gain your attention if the alarms sound
- ✓ test smoke alarms on a monthly basis by pushing the test button
- ✓ replace batteries in smoke alarms every six months and whenever there is an indication that the battery is low
- ✓ keep a laminated card on your person and in your survival kit that identifies you as deaf or hard of hearing and explains how to communicate with you

Additional Items for Your Emergency Survival Kit

- ✦ extra writing pads and pencils
- ✦ flashlight, whistle or noisemaker
- ✦ pre-printed key phrases you would use during an emergency
- ✦ assistive devices unique to your needs (e.g. hearing aid, pager, personal amplifier etc.)
- ✦ portable visual notification devices that allow you to know if a person is at the door or calling on the telephone
- ✦ extra batteries for assistive devices
- ✦ a CommuniCard (produced by The Canadian Hearing Society) that explains your hearing loss and also helps identify how rescuers or assisters can communicate with you during an emergency
- ✦ any other contingency supplies unique to your special needs

Note: typically people who are deafened or hard of hearing will need information presented in a text format.

Remember: Individuals are best at knowing their own needs and these should be respected.

* Your 'network' is a list of the people that can be called upon to provide assistance.