

# Disaster Response Checklist for IDD Organizations

Disasters happen. Whether they are natural disasters or man-made disasters, IDD organizations must prepare accordingly. However, it's crucial to keep in mind the specific needs individuals with IDD have when facing emergencies and be prepared to meet those needs.

To help your organization provide the best emergency response possible, we've put together this checklist that outlines how to prepare for and respond to disasters as an IDD organization.

## Know what to expect.

- Determine what types of natural disasters you can expect in your area and when.
- Identify the methods local authorities will use to warn you of an impending, or current, disaster.
- Gather information on what to do during an unpredictable emergency, like a tornado or a mass shooting.
- Determine the type of aid available during a disaster from local emergency services.

## Make sure everyone at your organization is prepared for a disaster situation.

### Create a plan.

- Help persons served learn best practices for sheltering in their homes or your facility.
- Create a communication plan for your organization. This should include:
  - Primary emergency contact for persons served
  - Out-of-town emergency contacts for persons served
  - Meeting locations (though this may depend on the level of individuals' independence)
- Outline efficient, accessible, and easy-to-understand evacuation routes.



### Have persons served practice the plan so it's part of their routine/lives.

### Prepare a disaster kit for persons served. This should include (but is not limited to):

- The individuals necessary medication
- Food
- Water
- Change of clothing
- Important documents, such as state-issued photo ID
- Sleeping bags and/or blankets
- Batteries for assistive devices, such as hearing aids (if applicable)

### Have your staff conduct personal assessments of all persons served to determine what assistance they may need before, during, and after a disaster situation.

## Have a back-up plan in place.

- Identify secondary safe places and evacuation routes.
- Ensure your facility has a backup power generator.
- Make sure your electronics have a backup power supply.
- Train your staff to:
  - Convey essential information in case TV or radio losses signal
  - Help individuals cope with the stress of having to change plans

## Know what to do in case of an evacuation.

- Identify caregivers within the individuals' network of family or friends who may provide shelter.
- Foster partnerships with other agencies to identify out-of-town shelters or safe spaces for individuals with IDD.
- Create plans to move any necessary medical equipment or therapy animals.
- Make sure each individual takes their disaster kit upon evacuation.



[LEARN MORE](#)