

## PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS TIPS FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED

This fact sheet is designed to provide a checklist for activities for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to improve your emergency preparedness in a disaster or earthquake. Preparation may seem like a lot of work. It is. Preparing does take time and effort. So do a little at a time, as your energy and budget permit. The important thing is to start preparing. The more you do, the more confident you will be that you can protect yourself and your family.

### DATE COMPLETED / ACTIVITIES:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Store and maintain extra batteries
- \_\_\_\_\_ Store hearing aids
- \_\_\_\_\_ Install both audible alarms and visual smoke alarms
- \_\_\_\_\_ Written communication for emergency personnel

### Batteries

- Store extra batteries for hearing aids and implants. If available, store an extra hearing aid with emergency supplies.
- Maintain TTY batteries (consult manual).
- Store extra batteries for your TTY and light phone signaler. Check the manual for proper battery maintenance.

### Hearing Aids

- Store hearing aid(s) in a strategic, consistent and secured location so they can be found and used after a disaster or emergency.

- For example, consider storing in a container by the bedside which is attached to a nightstand or bed post using string or Velcro. Missing or damaged hearing aids will be difficult to replace or fix immediately after a major disaster.

## **Alarms**

- Install both audible alarms and visual smoke alarms. At least one should be battery operated.

## **Communication**

- Determine how you will communicate with emergency personnel: if there is no interpreter; if you do not have your hearing aid(s). Store paper and pens.
- Consider carrying pre-printed copy of key phrase messages with you such as “I speak American Sign Language (ASL) and need an ASL interpreter.” “I do not write or read English.” “If you make announcements, I will need to have them written or signed.”
- Consider the use of a small, portable, battery-operated television. Emergency broadcasts may include captioned and sign language instructions during an emergency.
- If possible, obtain a battery operated television that has a decoder chip for access to signed or captioned emergency reports.
- Determine which broadcasting systems will be accessible in terms of continuous news that will be captioned and/or signed. Advocate so that television stations have a plan to secure emergency interpreters for on camera emergency duty.

## **Advocacy**

- Encourage Emergency Social Services volunteer teams to recruit interpreters.
- Encourage TV stations to broadcast emergency information in open caption format.

- Ensure commercial accommodations have access packets for deaf and hearing impaired persons, including audible alarms, when you travel. Ask for them when you check in.

***Created in partnership with the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities***

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