



Leaving Home in an Emergency

What to expect and how to prepare



Sometimes an emergency, such as a wildfire, flood, storm, earthquake, power outage or gas leak, may happen near my home.

I may hear alarms, sirens, phones or people talking quickly. It is okay if I feel worried, confused, upset or scared. The people supporting me will help me understand what is happening and stay safe.

Getting ready

We may be told to get ready to leave.

This does not always mean we must leave right away. It means we prepare in case we need to go.

My support person will pack my most important items, such as:

- ▶ My medications
- ▶ My medical supplies
- ▶ My communication device
- ▶ My wheelchair, walker, or mobility equipment
- ▶ Chargers and backup batteries
- ▶ Feeding supplies
- ▶ Breathing or respiratory equipment
- ▶ Continence supplies
- ▶ Clothing and personal-care items
- ▶ Important medical information
- ▶ Comfort items
- ▶ Food and water that are safe for me



My support person will make sure my most important needs are included.



Leaving home

Emergency workers may tell us to leave home. This is called an evacuation.

We may need to leave quickly, and I may have to stop what I am doing or leave some things behind. My support person will bring the items I need most.

We may travel by car, van, bus, ambulance or another vehicle. There may be traffic, noise, smoke, flashing lights or many people nearby. **I can use headphones, sunglasses, a communication tool or a comfort item to help me feel calm.**



Getting the support I need

I may need help with medication, eating, breathing, moving, using the restroom, communicating, personal care or staying calm.

My support person can explain my needs and share my emergency information with responders. I can communicate by speaking, pointing, signing, writing, using pictures or using a communication device.

I can say or show:

- ▶ “I need more time.”
- ▶ “Please explain that again.”
- ▶ “I need my support person.”
- ▶ “I need a quiet place.”
- ▶ “I need medical help.”
- ▶ “I need my medication.”
- ▶ “This is how I communicate.”
- ▶ “Please do not touch my equipment.”



Staying somewhere safe

We may go to a family member’s home, hotel, hospital, shelter or another safe place. The new place may be unfamiliar, noisy, bright or crowded. My schedule may change, and I may need to wait. My support person will help make a plan for meals, medication, rest, personal care and activities.

I can ask for a quiet space or other accommodations when available. A calendar, checklist or visual schedule may help me understand what will happen next.



Returning home

We will return home when emergency officials say it is safe.

My home or neighborhood may look different, and some services may not be working. The people supporting me will make sure the home and my equipment are safe.

It may take time for routines to return to normal.

What I can remember

- ▶ Emergencies can be confusing, but I will not face them alone.
- ▶ The people supporting me will help keep me safe.
- ▶ My needs are important.
- ▶ It is okay to ask for help and to feel upset.
- ▶ We will take one step at a time.



Smart Tips and Resources

- ▶ **In an emergency, dial 911.**
- ▶ **911 disability information:** Ask your local 911 center whether you can add notes about communication, medical or disability-related needs. You can also check Smart911 at smart911.com.
- ▶ **Medication replacement:** Contact your pharmacy and health insurance plan. Apple Health members can find plan contacts at hca.wa.gov.
- ▶ **Backup power:** Ask your electric utility or insurance plan about backup batteries, medical equipment programs and outage alerts.
- ▶ **Replacing Basic Food benefits:** Food lost during a fire, flood or power outage may qualify for replacement SNAP benefits. Report the loss to DSHS within 10 days at dshs.wa.gov.
- ▶ **Local disability support:** Contact your Developmental Disabilities Administration case manager at dshs.wa.gov/dda or find a local chapter of The Arc at arcwa.org/find-a-chapter/.
- ▶ **For help finding local food, shelter, transportation or utility resources,** call 211 or visit Washington 211's website at wa211.org.
- ▶ **Community Action:** Help may be available through your local Community Action Agency. wapartnership.org/agencies.



My Emergency Information

About Me

My name:

I like to be called:

My address:

How I communicate:

Primary support person and
phone number:

Another emergency contact:

Responders Should Know

My medical needs,
medications, and equipment:

My mobility and personal
care needs:

My food, feeding, or allergy
needs:

My sensory or emotional
support needs:

Things that help me feel calm

Things that may cause
distress:

My preferred hospital or
medical provider:

My Emergency Plan

Who will help me leave:

How I will travel:

Where my emergency
supplies are kept:

Plan for pets and service
animals:

Anything else responders
should know: