

TIP SHEET:

Evacuation procedures and simulations

DISABILITY INCLUSION KEY MESSAGES

When thinking about evacuation procedures and simulations, it is important to ensure the following:

- ✓ Community preparedness and evacuation plans incorporate accessible evacuation procedures.
- ✓ First responders are trained in evacuation of people with disabilities.
- ✓ People with disabilities are personally prepared for evacuation.
- ✓ Evacuation simulations involve people with disabilities.

THINGS TO DO TO ENSURE COMMUNITY EVACUATION PLANS ARE INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE

- ✓ Ask for advice from people with disabilities and their caregivers. People with disabilities and their family members are best placed to give advice on their specific needs and the most appropriate ways to assist during evacuation.
- ✓ Ensure the evacuation procedures use inclusive and accessible early warning systems. Ensure that people with disabilities can receive, understand, and take action to respond to the warning. This requires providing warnings in multiple formats (audible, easy to read, as well as visual) and ensuring community members with disabilities are aware of the meanings of warning information.

- ✓ Identify in advance those community members who may require assistance to evacuate. Creating and maintaining a register of community members who require assistance can be helpful to ensure that volunteers or responders are assigned to help them evacuate.
- ✓ Identify clear and accessible evacuation routes. Ensure that routes to safe meeting points and evacuation centres are accessible and communicated to people with disabilities. Map barriers and enablers to evacuation routes. Evacuation routes need to have pathways free of hazards, signage, transport and/or assistance for people with difficulties moving.
- ✓ Include stretchers, wheelchairs, and crutches in equipment stocks to support responders assisting in evacuation, search and rescue, and first aid efforts. These items are also helpful for assisting newly injured people, elderly people, and pregnant women.

THINGS TO DO TO ENSURE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE PERSONALLY PREPARED FOR EVACUATION

- ✓ Ensure that people with disabilities have information on disasters and the community evacuation plans.
- ✓ Support people with disabilities to develop their own personal disaster preparedness plans. These personal plans should include:
 - Developing a support network that is trusted by the person with a disability, is familiar with their personal disaster preparedness plan, and can assist when required, before, during or after a disaster. This may include family members and/or volunteers identified in the community disaster preparedness plan.
 - If the person has difficulties in communicating, personal information required to enable assistance should be written down (e.g., health, type of assistance needed, etc.).
 - A clear plan on what to do during an emergency, including where to go inside the home (e.g., during an earthquake) and how to quickly leave the home (e.g., exits from each room), and getting to the evacuation centre.
 - Personal emergency kit, which should include assistive devices and medication, where applicable.

THINGS TO DO TO ENSURE FIRST RESPONDERS ARE PREPARED TO ASSIST PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- ✓ Help first responders to understand the evacuation concerns of people with different types of impairments. For example, people with physical impairments may be concerned about how they will escape from a dangerous situation as well as losing mobility devices, while people with vision impairment are concerned about being able to detect danger and move safely.
- ✓ Train first responders on safe lifting and carrying techniques for people with physical impairments, and on the use of any equipment (such as stretchers, crutches, etc). Practice will help to prevent unnecessary discomfort and injuries, as well as save time in an emergency.
- ✓ Train first responders in communication strategies. It is important to practice communication techniques with people with different impairments to prepare for emergency situations.

THINGS TO DO TO ENSURE EVACUATION SIMULATIONS ARE INCLUSIVE

- ✓ Invite Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) to participate in the evacuation simulation to help prepare for the simulation, test and provide feedback on the accessibility and level of inclusion of evacuation procedures.
- ✓ Share information about the planned simulation event with people with disabilities in advance, encourage them to attend, and work with them to address any logistical challenges to their participation. Their involvement is important to become familiar with the evacuation process and provide feedback.
- ✓ Ensure that measures taken for adapting search and rescue or first aid techniques to meet the needs of people with disabilities are demonstrated by the taskforces during the simulation/drill. Allow time for first responders to practice safe lifting and carrying techniques, and communication strategies with people with different impairments.
- ✓ Encourage people with disabilities who are members of relevant committees and taskforces to demonstrate their skills and roles during the simulation.
- ✓ Assess levels of inclusion in the simulation and hold a debrief session with people with disabilities and OPDs to discuss what went well or what needs improving.
- ✓ Ensure any reporting on the simulation includes analysis of inclusion of people with disabilities and further capacity building and vulnerability reduction required.