

Emergency & Disaster Planning

for Children with Special Health Care Needs



Children with Special Health Care Needs Services Program



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Emergency & Disaster Planning for Texas Families of Children with Special Health Care Needs



Hurricanes, acts of terrorism, and floods are on the minds of many people today. Even though you may know what CAN happen . . . are you prepared? Can you protect your family and yourself? Would you know what to do in a disaster?



Disaster can strike quickly and without warning. You could be anywhere when it happens—at work, at school, or in the car. You may be separated from your family or be forced to evacuate the area where you live. You may have to stay inside your home without electricity and other basic services. Although local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, they may not be able to reach you right away.

Planning in advance is very important. Your planning as a family of a child with special needs is critical. You have to plan ahead for equipment and medication needs. You may need to plan to go to a special shelter or notify your child’s doctors, among other things. Being prepared is your best protection and your responsibility.

The Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Services Program wants to help families of children and youth with special health care needs prepare for any type of emergency or disaster. Using this guide can help you be better prepared, no matter what the emergency or disaster.



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Types of Disasters



Natural disasters are not new to people in Texas. Many types of natural disasters are common to the state. These include fires, floods, tornados, high winds, and coastal damage from storms in the Gulf of Mexico. Natural disasters have killed, injured, displaced, and caused property damage to thousands.

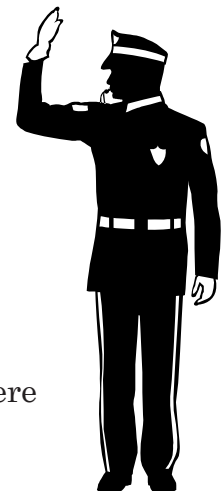
Disease epidemics might hit the state. Epidemics can limit access to health care, force strict sanitation and prevention practices, or require quarantines within your home or community.

Texans have also experienced man-made disasters. Man-made disasters are the result of explosions or terrorism. Terrorism can come in many forms. So, it is important for your family to understand how to put a plan for man-made disasters and emergencies into action.

When planning for a disaster, you need to think about all the different types of disasters. Then, make sure your plan meets your needs, no matter what the disaster.

Basic Tips for Disaster Response

- Stay in your home or other shelter during a disaster or emergency. Leave only if told to do so.
- Stay off the streets and do not drive around to “see what happened.”
- Do not use fuel-powered devices (such as a charcoal grill or gas stove for cooking) in your home, car, or garage.
- Use gas-powered generators or equipment outside only.
- Follow any official’s directions.
- Do not hide from officials.
- Stay out of unfamiliar places.
- Do not leave loaded weapons in the reach of children.
- Put a large note on your door that shows you have chosen to stay there so officials can locate you after the emergency passes.





Call 2-1-1 before the storm

Texas has a service for people with disabilities or special health care needs who need a ride during a hurricane evacuation. If you can't drive or get a ride with someone else, call 2-1-1 at least 72 hours **before** the storm to sign up for a ride. Local officials will make sure you get a ride if there is an evacuation.

Calling 2-1-1 can also help you find medical and social services in your area. During an emergency, 2-1-1 has the most current news on evacuation routes and shelters.



Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Meet with your neighbors to plan how you can work together after a disaster until help arrives. If you're a member of a neighborhood group like a homeowners' association or crime watchers, talk to them about how to prepare for a disaster.



Know the special skills your neighbors have. See how they might help people who have special needs, the disabled, or the elderly.

Teach your children what people in the neighborhood can help them if there is a disaster and you cannot get home.

Make sure your neighbors know how to contact you at work. Make sure they also know where your family meeting place is.

Set up a system with your neighbors to “signal” for needed help. Some ideas are to put up a towel across the top of the front door or to tie a red ribbon on the doorknob.

Internet Resources for Families

www.dshs.state.tx.us/preparedness/

The Public Health Preparedness homepage of the Texas Department of State Health Services website has links to the most up-to-date news about any disaster in Texas and how to respond to it.

www.dshs.state.tx.us/cshcn

The Children with Special Health Care Needs Services Program website has information about the program and its services. Click on “Program Contract Providers” in the left-hand menu to find out how to get case management services in the region of Texas where you live.



www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem

The Governor’s Division of Emergency Management website has information on how to prepare disaster kits for all kinds of disasters, maps of escape routes, maps of potential coastal flooding due to storms, and much more.



www.ready.gov/america/

The Department of Homeland Security has a website to help people prepare for and respond to any kind of disaster. The site has brochures and lists for emergency kits that you can print out and use. It also has links to other resources.



www.fema.gov/

The Federal Emergency Management Agency website has information on current and past disasters and how to apply for help. It also has maps and information about planning for a disaster. It has a special website at **www.fema.gov/kids/** just for kids.

www.redcross.org/

The Red Cross website has a lot of information about planning and responding to disasters. The site also has specific information for communities after a disaster strikes.

www.salvationarmyusa.org

The Salvation Army offers services that include disaster relief, day care centers, summer camps, services for the aging, AIDS education and residential services, medical facilities and shelters for battered women and children.

Are You Prepared?

Use these questions to help you prepare for a disaster.

Your Child with Special Needs

- ☞ Do you have a current care plan and list of medications from your child's doctor?
- ☞ Do you have an emergency information form filled out for your child? Fill out the **Emergency Information Form** in the middle of this booklet. It will tell emergency workers your child's medical history. This will help them give your child better medical care.
- ☞ Do you have at least a two-week supply of medications and supplies for your child?
- ☞ Do you have a back-up or plan for equipment that needs electricity? If you have a generator, remember to only use it *outside*.
- ☞ Have you talked to your child's doctor about the best places to go during a disaster?
- ☞ Do the emergency workers in your area and your neighbors know that you have a child with special needs? Do they know what those needs are?
- ☞ Do you have a disaster plan for your child while he or she is away from home? Be sure to have a plan for school, day care, and place of worship.



Your Family

- ☞ Does your family have a disaster or home evacuation plan? Have you practiced your plan?
- ☞ Do you have a disaster supply kit for your family?
- ☞ Have your children seen pictures of emergency workers in uniform, in fire suits, or with protective face gear on so they know what these workers look like?
- ☞ Have you talked to your children about disasters and how to prepare for them? Have you told them about disasters that are common in Texas?
- ☞ Have you made plans for your pets?
- ☞ Has your family agreed on a meeting place and a contact person if you are separated during a disaster?



Your Home

- ☞ Have you checked your home for things that might be unsafe during a disaster? (Don't forget the outside!)
- ☞ Have you located and learned how to turn on and off utilities such as gas and electricity?
- ☞ Do you have working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in your home? Do you check them every month?
- ☞ Do you have a water hose, fire extinguishers, or a generator? If you have a generator, remember to use it outside only.
- ☞ Have you made a plan with your neighbors to help each other in a disaster?



Preparation and Planning Tips

☞ Meet with your family and talk about why you need to prepare for a disaster. Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather, and hurricanes to children. Plan to share jobs and work together as a team.

☞ Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen. As a family, talk about how a disaster can affect each of you. Make a plan for how to handle the special needs of your family members. Know what to do in each type of disaster.



☞ Pick **two** different places to meet if you are separated.

- Pick one outside your home in case of a sudden emergency like a fire.
- Pick another one that is outside of your neighborhood in case you cannot return home during the emergency.



Make sure everyone knows the address of the meeting places and how you will contact each other.

☞ Ask an out-of-state friend to be your family contact. After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Family members should call to tell this contact person where they are. Everyone in your family needs to memorize the contact person's phone number.



☞ Put emergency telephone numbers by your phones. The numbers should be for people like the police, fire, ambulance, hospital, doctor, and poison control.

☞ Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1 or your local Emergency Medical Services number for emergency help.

☞ Show each adult family member how and when to turn off the water, gas, and electricity at the main switches.

☞ Decide the best evacuation routes from your home.

☞ Discuss what to do in an evacuation.

☞ Plan how to take care of your pets.



Disaster Supply Kit

Families of children with special needs must be prepared to manage in difficult conditions. One way to prepare is by making a **Disaster Supply Kit**. When a disaster hits, you won't have time to shop or search for supplies. But if you put your supplies together ahead of time, your family can handle an evacuation or having to stay at home.

Use the following lists to create your kits.

Keep items in airtight plastic bags or containers.

Review your family needs at least once a year.

WATER



☞ Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person in your home.

☞ Store water in plastic bottles. Avoid using containers such as cardboard milk cartons or glass bottles.

☞ Store two gallons of water per person per day. You will need **twice** that amount during hot weather.

☞ Children, nursing mothers, and many people with special needs will also need more.



Replace your stored food and water supplies every six months so they stay fresh.

FOOD

☞ Store at least a three-day supply of food that does not spoil.

☞ Pick foods that do not need to be kept cold or cooked, and need little or no water.

☞ Pick food items that are compact and lightweight:

☞ Canned or boxed juices

☞ Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables

☞ High-energy foods like raisins, peanut butter, or granola bars

☞ Vitamins

☞ Foods for people with special dietary needs

☞ Food for infants

☞ Manual can opener

☞ Plastic forks, knives and spoons

☞ Plastic cups and plates

☐ Paper towels and napkins



IF YOU MUST LEAVE HOME . . .

- ☞ You should always be prepared to evacuate.
- ☞ Keep all of the things that you will need during an evacuation in an easy-to carry bag like a backpack or duffle bag.
- ☞ Keep the bag in an easy to reach place near the exit you usually use at your home.
- ☞ Ask your doctor or pharmacist about storing medications that have to be kept in the refrigerator. Keep a cooler and ice on hand for this purpose.



SUPPLIES FOR BABIES AND CHILDREN (two-week supply)

- ☞ Formula: Ready-to-eat or with sterile water for mixing
- ☞ Diapers
- ☞ Baby wipes and diaper rash ointment
- ☞ Bottles
- ☞ Powdered milk
- ☞ Medications
- ☞ Pacifiers
- ☞ Favorite blanket or toy



SUPPLIES FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- ☞ Two-week supply of all disposable supplies such as dressing materials, nasal cannulas, or suction catheters
- ☞ Two-week supply of all prescription and non-prescription medications
- ☞ Generator or battery backup for all electrical medical equipment
Remember to use generators **outdoors only**.
- ☞ Copies of prescriptions for medical equipment, supplies, and medications
- ☞ Extra glasses or contact lenses and supplies
- ☞ Extra batteries for hearing aids or communication devices
- ☞ Special dietary foods and supplies
- ☞ Manual wheelchair and other necessary equipment





FIRST AID AND GENERAL MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Put together a first aid kit for your home and one for each car. Each kit should include:

- ☞ Sterile band-aids in assorted sizes
- ☞ Assorted sizes of safety pins
- ☞ Soap or hand sanitizer
- ☞ Latex gloves (2 pairs)
- ☞ Non-prescription medications in doses that are right for all family members:
 - ☞ Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
 - ☞ Anti-diarrhea medication
 - ☞ Antacid (for stomach upset)
 - ☞ Laxative or stool softener
- ☞ Anti-itch cream
- ☞ Sunscreen
- ☞ Triangular bandages (3)
- ☞ 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- ☞ 4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- ☞ 2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- ☞ 3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- ☞ Eye dressing pads
- ☞ Scissors
- ☞ Tweezers
- ☞ Needles and thread
- ☞ Moistened towelettes
- ☞ Antiseptic like hydrogen peroxide or rubbing alcohol
- Thermometer
- Tongue blades (2)
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
- Medicine dropper

CLOTHING AND BEDDING

- One complete change of clothing and extra shoes per person, that are right for the season and weather
- Sturdy shoes or workboots
- Rain gear
- Hat and gloves
- Blankets and sleeping bags

ENTERTAINMENT

- Books for all ages
- Games (card or board games)



DOCUMENTS AND OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS


Keep documents and records in waterproof, portable containers, such as sealed plastic bags.

 Will

 Insurance policies

 Contracts and deeds

 Stocks and bonds


 Passports


 Inventory of valuable household goods

 Cash, traveler's checks, and change

 Social Security cards



 Phone book with important telephone numbers

 Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)


 Immunization records

 Disposable camera

 Bank account numbers


 Credit card account numbers and companies


TOOLS AND EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

 Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water

 Whistle

 Plastic sheeting

 Map of area (with shelter locations)

 Charcoal (for outside use only)

 Cups, plates and plastic utensils

Emergency preparedness manual

Small ABC fire extinguisher

 State highway map

 Compass

 Paper and pencil

Emergency cell phone charger with batteries



Flashlight with extra batteries and bulbs

Manual can opener

Battery-operated radio with extra batteries

Tube tent (small emergency tent that uses no poles)

Pliers

Tape

Utility knife

Matches in a waterproof container or a lighter

Aluminum foil

Plastic storage boxes

Signal flare



CLEANING SUPPLIES

Toilet paper, towelettes

Soap or hand sanitizer

Feminine supplies

Disinfectant, such as bleach

Personal hygiene items

Plastic garbage bags and ties for personal sanitation

Plastic bucket with tight lid





SUPPLIES FOR FAMILIES WITH SERVICE ANIMALS

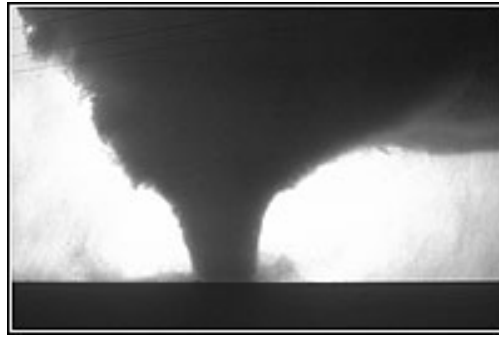
Make a seven-day supply kit for your service animal.

Put it in a pack that your animal can carry.

- 👉 Food and water bowls
- 👉 Food and water for seven days
- 👉 Pet bed and toys
- 👉 First aid kit for minor wounds
- 👉 Pet medications
- 👉 Pet carrier marked with your name, your pet's name, and an emergency contact number
- 👉 Plastic garbage bags (to dispose of waste)
- 👉 Medical and current vaccination records
- 👉 Identification tags and license
- 👉 Extra harness
- 👉 List of hotels that accept animals

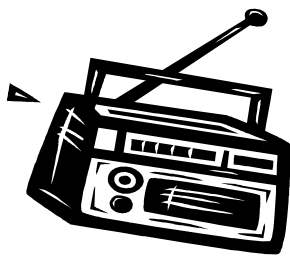
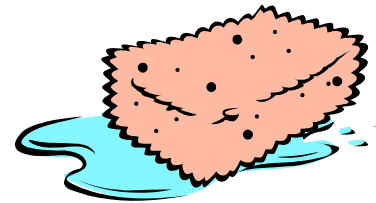
Practice doing things without help from your service animal.

If Disaster Strikes...



- ☞ Stay calm. Put your plan into action.
- ☞ Evacuate, if told to do so.
- ☞ Stay away from downed power lines.
- ☞ Check for damage in your home.

- ☞ Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline, and other liquids right away.



- ☞ Listen to your battery-powered radio for news and instructions.

- ☞ Check for injuries and give first aid, or get help for seriously injured people.

- ☞ Check (smell) for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows and get everyone outside quickly.

- ☞ Shut off any other damaged utilities.

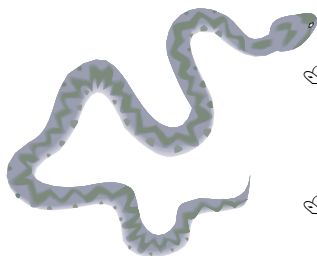
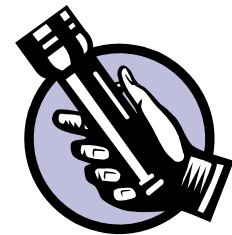
- ☞ Check for fires, fire dangers and other dangers around your house.

- ☞ Put all your pets in a safe and secure place. Do not just “let them go.”

- ☞ Call your family contact. Do not use the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.

- ☞ Check on your neighbors, especially the ones who are elderly or disabled.

- ☞ Use flashlights. Do not light matches or turn on electrical switches if you think your home is damaged.



- ☞ Be watchful of animals. They will be confused and scared and may be dangerous.

- ☞ Be careful of snakes and insects. They may be on the move looking for new homes or a place to hide.

Tips to Help Families Support Their Children



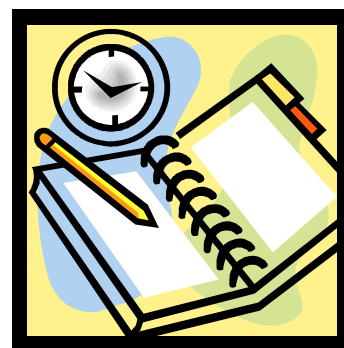
Have a plan and know what you will do. Many children and young people are more disturbed by what they think might happen than by reality. Planning makes the unknown easier for children.



Teach your children to recognize and accept help from emergency workers. Make sure your children can recognize emergency workers, such as police, Red Cross volunteers, and fire fighters. Teach them that if they are alone they can go to these people for help. It is important that they learn NOT to be afraid of emergency workers and NOT to hide from them. This way it will be easier to find your children if they are separated from you.

Don't get caught up in the "hype." Limit the amount of time you watch TV. Just watch it to get regular updates and alerts. Children can be harmed emotionally if they see too much drama.

Keep your routines and regular schedule. Routines remind children that things will be staying the same for a while. This helps comfort children. It also helps them understand that "life goes on." When you can not follow your normal routines because of the weather, start new routines that relate to planning for the storm.



Give children the information they need. Explain to your children what you will do if the disaster is as bad as what they see on TV. If the expected disaster is a storm, you can compare it to others they may have been through. Talk about the family's plan and where you will be. Have the children talk about what they can do to help protect themselves and their things.

Tips to Help Families, continued

Make sure children know what to do if you are not around. If your children are old enough to talk, teach them your name. Teach older children their address and phone number, as well as your cell phone number. Make sure your children have some identification on them, even



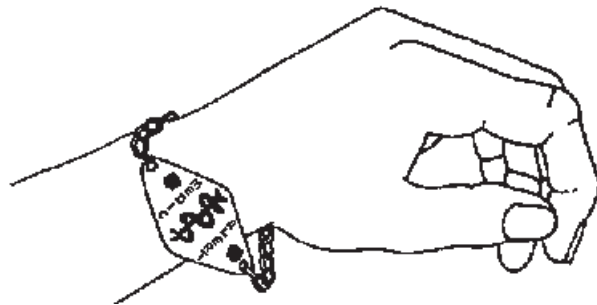
when they are with you. For example, use identification cards sold for shoe laces or put a card in their pocket with information on how to contact you if you become separated.

Make sure your child with special needs has a medical alert bracelet or necklace. This is especially important if your child has a need or condition that may not be obvious (such as diabetes, a chronic health condition, or allergy). Teach your child to answer questions about his or her condition and treatment as soon as possible.

Fill out the Emergency Information Form in this booklet. Keep copies with you and anywhere your child goes often. Have your child keep a copy in his or her pocket.

Interact with your children in a way they can understand. Children of all ages will know or sense that something is wrong.

- Let older children help develop the family plan. They can also make their own plan about things that are important to them.
- Let younger children help make water bottles or pack things such as flashlights.
- Hold infants and toddlers and tell them how much you love them. Tell them that you will always do your best to care for them.
- Calm your children by singing and playing games they know.



Emergency Information Form

Last Name ~ Apellidos:



Date form completed ~ Fecha en que se llenó el formulario:	Revised ~ Modificado:	Initials ~ Iniciales:
By Whom ~ Quién lo llenó:	Revised ~ Modificado:	Initials ~ Iniciales:

Name ~ Nombre:	Birth date ~ Fecha de nacimiento: Nickname ~ Apodo:
Home Address ~ Dirección del domicilio:	Home/Work Phone ~ Teléfono de casa / de trabajo:
Parent/Guardian ~ Padre / Tutor legal:	Emergency Contact Names, Relationship, Phone Number(s): Nombres en caso de emergencia, parentesco, número(s) de teléfono:
Signature/Consent*: Firma / consentimiento*:	
Primary Language ~ Lengua materna:	

Physicians ~ Médicos:

Primary Care Physician ~ Médico principal:	Emergency Phone ~ Número de teléfono en caso de emergencia:
	Fax:
Current Specialty Physician ~ Médico especialista actual:	Emergency Phone ~ Número de teléfono en caso de emergencia:
	Fax:
Specialty ~ Especialidad:	
Current Specialty Physician ~ Médico especialista actual:	Emergency Phone ~ Número de teléfono en caso de emergencia:
	Fax:
Specialty ~ Especialidad:	
Preferred Emergency Room: La sala de Emergencia adonde probablemente vaya:	Pharmacy / Phone number ~ Farmacia / Número de teléfono:
Anticipated Tertiary Care Center (Hospital with highest level of care): El centro de atención especializada adonde probablemente vaya (Hospital con el más alto nivel de atención):	

Diagnoses/Past Procedures/Physical Exam ~ Diagnósticos / Procedimientos anteriores / Examen físico:

1.	Baseline physical findings ~ Resultados del examen físico inicial:
2.	
3.	Baseline vital signs ~ Signos vitales iniciales:
4.	
Synopsis (Summary) ~ Sinopsis (Resumen):	Baseline neurological status ~ Condición neurológica inicial:

*Consent for release of this form to health care providers ~ *Consentimiento para divulgar este formulario a proveedores de atención médica

Emergency Information Form Instructions

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Emergency Physicians created a form called the **Emergency Information Form**. You can use this simple form to put together health information for your child with special health care needs.

When you and your child's doctor complete the form, you should keep a copy in the different places where your child might be, such as home, child care center, babysitter, grandparents or other relatives, school. In an emergency, doctors and emergency medical workers could read the Emergency Information Form.

You can find a copy of this form on the previous page. To complete this important form, follow these instructions:

1. **FILL IT OUT:** Begin filling out the form to the best of your ability. Take the form to the child's doctor or specialist and ask them to finish filling out the form.
2. **KEEP IT:** Make copies of the form to keep in each of the following places:
 - a. *Doctors:* On file with each of the child's doctors, including specialists
 - b. *Emergency Room:* On file with the local emergency rooms where the child is most likely to be treated in the case of an emergency
 - c. *Home:* At the child's home in a place where it can be easily found, such as the refrigerator
 - d. *Vehicles:* In the glove compartment of each parent's vehicle
 - e. *Work:* At each parent's workplace
 - f. *Purse/Wallet:* In each parent's purse or wallet
 - g. *School or Child-care center:* On file with the child's school, such as in the school nurse's office
 - h. *Grandparents/Other relatives:* At the homes of relatives where the child may visit often. Put it in a place where it can be easily found.
 - i. *Child's belongings:* With the child's belongings when traveling
 - j. *Emergency Contact Person:* At the home of the emergency contact person listed on the form
3. **REGISTER:** Consider registering your child, if he or she is not already registered with MedicAlert®. Send MedicAlert® a copy of the form, and they can keep it stored in their central database. The database is easily accessible by emergency medical personnel. For more information about that system and its enrollment, you may visit www.medicalert.org, call 1-800-ID-ALERT (1-800-432-5378) or email customer_service@medicalert.org. There is a fee to use the MedicAlert® system. However, MedicAlert® offers to waive the fee for applicants who submit a letter from a doctor, nurse, or social service agency with their completed application, which verifies that they cannot pay the fee.*
4. **UPDATE:** It is extremely important that you update the form every 2-3 years, and after any of the following events:
 - a. Important changes in your child's condition
 - b. Any major surgery or procedure
 - c. Important changes in the treatment plan
 - d. Changes in doctors

* *The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) does not endorse the MedicAlert® system, and mentions it for informational purposes only.*