

# Preparing for Natural Disasters

## *A Checklist for Caregivers of Seniors and Individuals With Disabilities*

*Individual's Name:*

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### **Risk Assessment**

*No one likes to think about what they would do in case of a natural disaster, but when caring for an older adult or someone with disabilities, it's important to take the time to be prepared. Before you begin emergency preparations, you need to first understand your level of risk since it will impact your plan of action. Consider these questions:*

- What types of natural disasters are most common in the area? Consider frequency, severity and duration.
- How likely is it that the individual will need to evacuate their home in the event of a natural disaster? Could the individual self-evacuate, or would they require assistance?
- If the primary caregiver can't reach the individual, who could be called on to help? This could be a trusted neighbor, local church group, Red Cross or another disaster relief organization.
- How long can the individual go without support from a caregiver? Do they rely on around-the-clock care, or are they able to care for themselves for several hours or days?

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### **Emergency Preparation**

- Pack an emergency ready kit and include copies of the individual's ID and medication records, snacks, bottled water, a change of clothing, a flashlight and a 3-day supply of their medications.
- Have copies of the individual's identification, insurance policies and financial information.
- Keep an updated list of the individual's medications and medical history, leaving one copy with the individual and copies with their caregivers and family members.
- Ensure the individual always has a one-month supply of their medications (prescription and OTC) available at all times.
- Keep a stock of ready-to-eat foods on hand, such as bottled nutritional shakes, granola bars, non perishable food items such as canned tuna, can opener and crackers.
- Make sure the individual has a 3-7 day supply of bottled water at all times.
- Install battery-operated, motion-activated lights throughout the home to reduce the risk of falls during power outages.
- If cold weather events are possible, have a sleeping bag, warm clothing including hats, gloves and winter boots ready to use.