

RESPIRE TIP



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Hurricane Ziggy is coming to the Maritimes and Nova Scotia will be experiencing its effects. Although we cannot be certain exactly how Ziggy will affect us, it is important to be prepared for whatever may come. This article offers suggestions for families of, or individuals with special needs to be more prepared in case of an emergency. There are also several good resources and websites listed at the end of the article.

The following information on Support Networks and Disaster Kits is taken directly from "Are You Ready?" a resource developed by the Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission.

Establish a Support Network

Families who have a family member with a disability or individuals with disabilities should have a Support Network set up to help during an emergency. A Support Network is a group of at least three people who you and your family member know and trust and who will assist you with your specific needs in the event of an emergency or disaster.

How do I create a support network?

- Make a list of family, friends, co-workers, personal attendants, service providers and others who can be part of your plan.
- Ask people if they would be willing to help you in case of a disaster. Be sure to ask people at important locations such as home, work, or school.
- Tell these people where you keep your disaster supplies. Give one member a key to your home when you know a storm is coming.
- Include someone who lives outside of your geographic community in your support network. Choose someone who is far enough away that they will not be affected by the same disaster.
- Work with your support network to ensure that your plan matches your needs.
- Make sure that you have a phone that does not require electric power to work (for example, not a cordless phone or a TTY).

Design a Disaster Plan

A Disaster Plan is a set of instructions you create for yourself on how to respond to a disaster. For example, a disaster plan can include knowing different ways to get out of a building or out of your community and specific telephone numbers to call.

Suggestions for your disaster plan:

- Plan for home, work, school, or any place you spend a lot of time. At home, have a disaster kit ready to go. Have a smaller kit at school or work.
- Plan to have a family meeting point if you get separated
- Know the disaster plans at places you spend a lot of time. Review them every six months to make sure they continue to meet your needs.
- Create a communication plan to contact your support network in other ways if telephones are not working.
- Plan to stay with friends or family during a disaster. Ask if they have a wood stove or a generator in their home.
- Community shelters should be considered as an important but last resort.

Create a Disaster Supply Kit**Disaster Supply Checklist:**

- Two litres of water (per person, per day)
- Prescription medication (at least a three-day supply) and, if applicable, any medical supplies needed to administer medication (i.e. syringes, needles, glucose testing strips).
- Non-perishable canned and dry foods
- First-aid supplies
- Lighter or waterproof matches
- Flashlight
- Extra batteries for all devices that need them. Pay close attention to the size and type of battery the device uses.
- List of all important medical information, including a list of medical conditions, prescription medications, and instructions- dosages, allergies, doctor's name and contact information.
- Portable radio
- Manual can opener and plastic dinnerware (forks, knives, and spoons)
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Change of clothing and shoes for you and your family
- Personal hygiene items such as soap and shampoo
- Money
- Copies of all important papers (e.g., insurance papers, driver's license, birth certificate)
- Paper and pen or pencil
- House keys and car keys
- Extra rolls of toilet paper
- A whistle or other noise-generating device
- A pair of work gloves
- Keep car gas tank at least half full where there is potential for a disaster. Have a car disaster kit with blankets, shovel, kitty litter for traction, and a flashlight
- A small item such as a book or puzzle
- If you have pets, you should have a carrier or leash in case you have to leave with your pet
- If you have a child or children, you may want to bring a couple of their favourite toys

Suggestions for your disaster kit:

- If you have difficulty opening items, keep this in mind when preparing your disaster kit. For example, consider purchasing flip-top cans.
- Nova Scotians are encouraged to have enough supplies to last 72 hours (3 days) following a disaster.
- Make sure you have enough supplies in your disaster kit for each member of your family.
- Your disaster supply kit should also include other items that are specific to your disability (see the *Are You Ready?* booklet listed below for specific examples for different types of disabilities.)
- Consider the Vial of Life program. The Vial of Life consists of a list of medications that is kept in a vial in the fridge. A Vial of Life sticker is placed on the door of the fridge and alerts emergency personnel to the vial in case of an emergency. It is available free of charge to anyone who wants it. If you live in Nova Scotia and would like a Vial, contact the VON at 902-454-5755, or check with your local VON branch to find out if they provide the service.

Pack the items in a tote bag or box, ready to use or take with you at all times, in the event that you have no power or you may need to go to a shelter.

Tip: Ask yourself what resources you or your family member rely on regularly and determine how a disaster might affect your use of them.

Do you or your family member use communication devices?

Do you or your family member depend on accessible transportation to get to work, doctors' appointments, or to other places in the community?

Do you or your family member receive medical treatments (e.g. dialysis) on a regular basis?

Do you or your family member need assistance with personal care?

Do you or your family member rely on electrically dependent equipment or other durable equipment?

Do you or your family member use mobility aids such as a walker, cane, or a wheelchair?

Do you or your family member have a service animal?

Pets or Service Animals

Be sure to prepare a kit for your pets. Animals are not allowed at shelters, unless they are a service animal. If you do need to evacuate to a shelter, be sure to leave enough food and water for your animal until you can return. If you have a service animal, be sure to bring sufficient supplies for the animal's care at the shelter. For a more detailed list, please see the list in the *Are You Ready?* resource listed below.

Additional resources:

Emergency Management Office Nova Scotia - <http://novascotia.ca/dma/emo/>

Are You Ready? Nova Scotia's Guide to Emergency Preparedness: Tips for Persons with Disabilities, Tips for Frail or Older Seniors -

<http://disability.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/Are%20You%20Ready%20web.pdf>

Get Prepared (Public Safety Canada) - <http://www.getprepared.gc.ca>

This Respite Tip has been brought to you by the Nova Scotia Partnership on Respite, Family Health, and Well-Being. Information on the Respite Partnership and this and other Respite Tips can be found at: <http://disability.novascotia.ca/content/nova-scotia-respite-partnership>



The information contained in this Respite Tip article is not intended to be formal legal or financial advice. It has been gathered from a variety of sources and is provided as an introduction to the topic. It is not complete and should not be used in the place of professional advice or consultation.

The Nova Scotia Partnership on Respite and its member organizations shall not be responsible for information provided here, under any theory or liability or indemnity.