

# Preparedness Tips for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

## Hearing aids

- Store hearing aid(s) where you can easily find them after a disaster. For example, you could keep them in a container by your bedside and attach the container to a nightstand or bedpost using a string or Velcro. Missing or damaged hearing aids will be difficult to replace or fix immediately after a major disaster.

## Batteries

- Store extra batteries for hearing aids and implants. If possible, store an extra hearing aid with your emergency supplies.
- Keep your pager, captioned telephone and other communication equipment charged.
- Maintain batteries and store extras for your TTY and other communications equipment. Check the owner's manual for proper battery maintenance.

## Communication

- Know how to communicate with emergency personnel if there is no interpreter or if you don't have your hearing aids. Store paper and pens for this purpose.
- Consider carrying a pre-printed copy of important messages with you, such as:
  - “I use American Sign Language (ASL) and need an ASL interpreter.”
  - “I do not write or read English.”
  - “If you make announcements, I will need to have them written or signed.”

- If possible, get a battery-operated television that has a decoder chip for access to signed or captioned emergency reports.
- Determine which broadcasting systems will be accessible in terms of continuous news that will provide continuous captioned and/or signed news.

## **Alarms**

- Install smoke alarms that give signals that can be both seen and heard. At least one should be battery-operated.

## **Advocacy**

- Recruit interpreters to be Red Cross emergency volunteers.
- Encourage TV stations to broadcast all news and emergency information in open caption format.
- Encourage TV stations to plan to provide interpreters for on-camera duty during emergencies.
- When you travel, be sure hotels have services for deaf and hearing-impaired persons, including visual alarms. Ask for them when you check in.



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