

Disaster Planning for Caregivers¹

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News that a hurricane or tornado is on its way can cause anyone to worry. But if you're responsible for providing care for someone who's disabled, chances are you face additional concerns. You and the person you care for may not be able to "jump and run" when the tornado sirens are sounded or the hurricane warning is issued. As a caregiver, you should have specific strategies to be prepared for any natural disaster that may come your way.

For caregivers, as for everyone else, it's important to have basic supplies available. The supply list available at the American Red Cross website serves as the model for many basic supply lists.

With supplies in hand, it's important to create a plan. Although planning for a disaster can be frightening, having a plan in place, including an evacuation strategy, can help you and the person you care for feel more secure.

Next, create a disaster team. Caregivers often feel they're "on their own" during normal times, and this feeling may intensify during times of disaster when people are hurrying to take care of their own family and property. Consider family, friends, and neighbors who will be more than glad to help, but they'll need to know exactly what you need and when you need it. Be sure to include someone on your team who is able to lift and carry heavy objects such as wheelchairs or other medical equipment.

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With a team and a plan in place, you should be able to find a little peace of mind if and when disaster strikes.

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To listen to the radio broadcast:

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/504.mp3

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/504.wav

Reference

Wilken, Carolyn S. (2005). *Disaster planning tips for caregivers of the elderly and people with disabilities* (FCS9216). Gainesville: Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Retrieved August 4, 2006, from <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY751>.