PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

If you or someone close to you has a disability or special needs, you should make special preparations in case of an emergency. Those with physical disabilities could have increased complications during an evacuation. Those with visual, hearing or mental disabilities may be especially fearful and reluctant to leave familiar surroundings. Others with medical conditions may be dependent on devices or medications that need to travel with them. To adequately prepare for every possible emergency situation, consider making the following arrangements.

Preparing for an Emergency

- Check for hazards in your home and workplace.
- Discuss your needs with family members, neighbors, coworkers, and those who manage your office or apartment.
- Make sure those around you know how to operate any necessary equipment and where it is stored. Label equipment and attach instructions as a backup.
- Have a list with the types and models of any equipment or devices you need.
- If you use electrical equipment, plan how you will deal with a power outage, for instance, keeping a manual wheelchair for use if your electrical wheelchair becomes inoperable.
- Consider having backup equipment stored at your evacuation location or places where you spend a lot of time.
- Know more than one location of a medical facility that provides the services you need.
- Add any necessary supplies such as wheelchair batteries, catheters, oxygen, medication, food for service animals, or other special supplies to your emergency kit.
- Do not assume that you or your loved one has been factored into an evacuation procedure. Let others know of your specific requirements.
- Make the necessary preparations and know what needs to happen during an emergency.
- If you are physically disabled, study the evacuation procedure of any building from which you might evacuate. If necessary, know if and where an Evacuation Chair (EVAC+CHAIR) is located, and make sure several others know how to operate it.
- Request your office or housing building install clear visual and audio alarms and signage indicating accessible exits and designated emergency shelter areas.
- Learn about specific devices and technology that may assist you in receiving information during an emergency.
- Arrange for someone to communicate essential information to you during an emergency if you are hard of hearing or visually impaired.
- Consider getting a medical alert system that allows you to call for help in case you are immobilized.
- If you receive care through an agency, ask about its plans to provide care during and after an emergency.
- Prepare any instructions you need to give rescuers or others who may be around you. Use concise verbal directions, or carry written instructions with you at all times. Practice giving these instructions.

During an Emergency

- If told to evacuate, do so if it is possible with the help of others.
- If you are unable to evacuate, wait where you are for rescuers.
- Take your emergency supply kit, including any necessary items, with you.
- Stay as calm as possible to help those around you.

Where to Find Additional Information

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Ready.gov—
  - **http://www.ready.gov/individuals-access-functional-needs**
  - **http://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/FEMA_Disabilities_R-6_web_june2012.pdf**
  - **http://www.fema.gov/office-disability-integration-coordination/office-disability-integration-coordination/office-1**
  - **www.fema.gov/pdf/library/pfd_all.pdf**
- Center for Disability Issues and the Health Professions (CDIHP)—
  - **www.cdihp.org/evacuation/emergency_evacuation.pdf**

Semper Paratus

Be "Always Ready." Be informed about what might happen, make an emergency plan with your family, and build an emergency supply kit good for at least three days.