

Don't Be Scared Just Be Prepared

**A Guide for Disabled People
on what to do
in the case of an emergency**

Please read this book
and keep it in a safe place.
Do not throw it away!



Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

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Introduction

This booklet was first written in 2009, with the advice given seen as a “worst case scenario”. However, since the Christchurch earthquakes of 2010/11 and the Kaikōura one in 2016, New Zealanders have become very aware of what emergencies are.

The term “Emergency” means a big event that could put peoples lives, health or property at risk. It may be an **earthquake** that damages buildings and roadways and cuts off the supply of power, or it may be a **tsunami** (said like “sue-nar-mee”) which is a big wall of water that comes in from the sea (usually after an earthquake out at sea) and can flood buildings and surroundings.

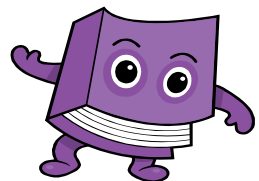
The Covid-19 pandemic, the first truly worldwide one in 100 years, a virus that is easily spread and can cause serious illness or death, has also taught us much about the need for good hand hygiene, wearing masks when necessary and keeping contact tracing details either written or using the mobile phone app.

Pandemics can happen very quickly and make people very sick. Health authorities alert people and tell them how to keep safe and make sure the infection doesn't spread. In New Zealand we have four Alert Levels – Level 4 being a full lockdown with schools businesses and all community activities, except essential services like supermarkets and petrol stations closed – to Level 1 where hand hygiene and contact tracing are the main requirements.

When these events happen you need to know what to do and how to survive. Your daily routine can change suddenly and perhaps the help you need may take some time to arrive.

Read this book and keep it in a safe place.

Prepare your emergency plan so that if something does happen, you won't have to be scared – you'll be prepared!



Things You Can Do to Prepare for an Emergency

- Get to know your neighbours and people you work with or spend time with during the day. Talk to them about what would happen if there was an emergency, such as an earthquake. What would you do? How would you keep yourself and other people safe? Talk about what help you might need.
- At home, arrange for friends or neighbours to check on you in the case of an emergency. Share contact details so you can get in touch if an emergency happens.
- Make sure you have any supplies you need (see pages 8 and 9).



- Keep a list of phone numbers, in a handy place, of family, friends, emergency services. However, in some emergencies landlines and cell phones won't be working.
- Read the back page of your **Yellow Pages phone book** if you have one for more information on what to do. Visit the Get Ready website for information for before, during and after an emergency.

www.getready.govt.nz/

READ IT BEFORE YOU NEED IT!

- Know where your nearest **Civil Defence Centre** is. It will be at a school or a community centre near your home.

Look for this sign in your neighbourhood.



Your Emergency Supplies

This list is only intended as a guide. If there are items on it that are not easy for you to get, or you cannot get straight away, don't worry. Try to build up your kit by a few things at a time. You can tick them off here as you get them.

- Long-lasting food** that doesn't need cooking. (tinned food dried fruit)

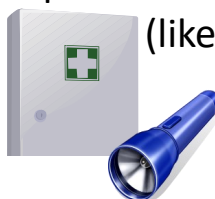


- Water** for 3 days or more make sure you have at least 3 litres per person per day.



- Pet food/Baby food** (if needed).

- First Aid Kit** (bandages, antiseptic cream, small scissors, pain relief tablets (like Panadol).



- First Aid manual.**

- A torch.**

- A transistor radio.**

- A mobile phone** for calling or texting



- Spare batteries** for hearing aids, radios, and torches.



- Medication** (keep a supply in your emergency supplies, and change it often to keep it fresh).



- A fire extinguisher** (hand held).

- Toilet paper and large plastic buckets** for an emergency toilet.

- Soap.**



- Antiseptic hand wash.**

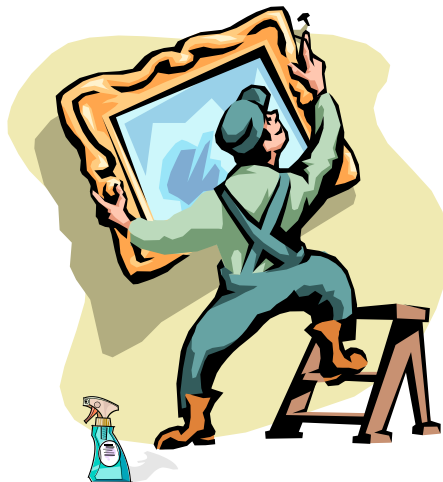
- Another cooking source** (camping gas cooker or barbeque).

- Important family documents** (birth/marriage certificates, insurance papers, etc.).

- Protective clothing** including dust masks, work gloves, and sturdy shoes.

Is Your Home Safe?

- Have any alterations been done to your house that may affect its structural safety?
- Are heavy items of furniture fastened to the walls? If not, these could fall on you or block your access in an earthquake. Don't put heavy mirrors or pictures above beds as these could fall on you in an earthquake.
- Are petrol and sprays safely stored where they will not spill or leak?
- Visit eqc.govt.nz/be-prepared for more on how to prepare your home.



Using Food in the Right Order

If you are not able to leave your home for a few days after a civil defence emergency, you need to make the most of the food you have in your home.

Make sure you eat **perishable** food **first**. This is **fresh** food that may go bad quickly such as cooked meat, some fruit, vegetables, milk, etc.

Then eat the food from the fridge. **Keep the fridge and freezer doors closed as much as possible if the power is not on**. This will help keep the food cool for as long as possible.

Next eat the food from the freezer, then lastly use canned food.



Planning for People Who Have a Learning Disability

- **Talk** to your family, friends and support people.
- **Know** what to do if an emergency happens without warning.
- **Look** through this booklet. **Talk** with people about what you would do if you were: at home, at work, on a bus or out somewhere (like shopping).
- Practice what you would do in an earthquake.
- **Look** at the list on **Pages 8–9**, “Your Emergency Supplies”. Have you got those items at your place? If not, plan how you can get them.
- **Talk** about how to help people around you in an emergency. How could they help you?
- **Make** a big, brightly-coloured sign saying “**HELP**” to put outside the door or window if the telephone isn’t working.

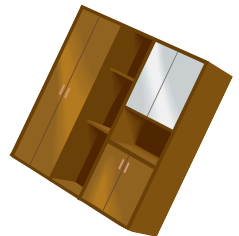


Planning for People Who Have a Mobility Impairment

During an emergency you may not be able to move around as easily as usual, particularly if you use a wheelchair and objects have fallen in your way. Lifts may not be working.

Before an Emergency

- Plan ahead by letting neighbours and colleagues know that you may need their assistance in getting out of your home or workplace.
- If you use a wheelchair, try to make more than one exit from your home wheelchair-accessible, in case your usual exit is blocked in an emergency.
- Work out how you would get out of each room of your home if the usual way was blocked.
- Secure large objects such as bookcases to walls, so that they can't fall and block your way.
- Keep extra supplies of catheters or continence pads if you use them. Toilets may not be working after an earthquake or flood.



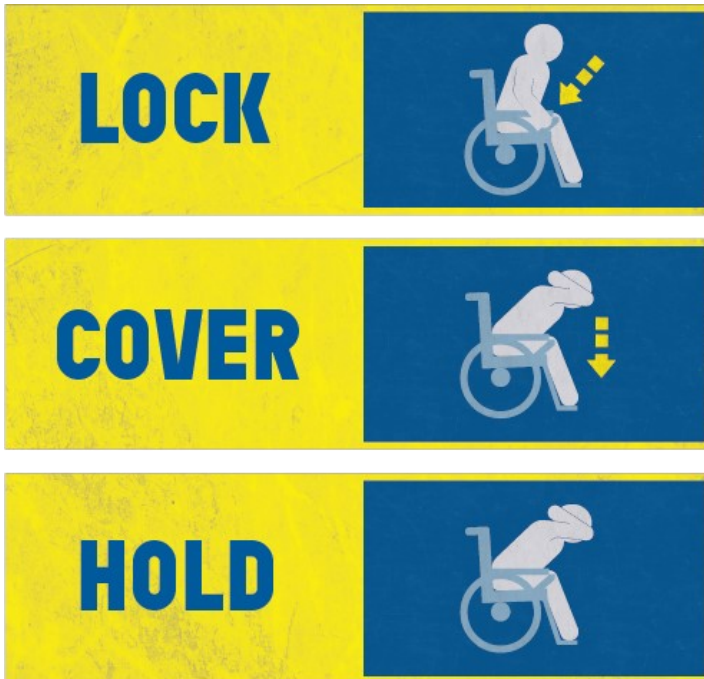
During an Emergency

- In an earthquake, if you use a wheelchair or walker, **Lock, Cover, and Hold**.

Lock your wheels. If you're using a walker, carefully get as low as possible.

Bend over and **Cover** your head as best as you can.

Then **Hold** on until the shaking stops.



- Move no more than a few steps away from buildings, trees, streetlights and powerlines, then **Lock (or Drop), Cover and Hold**.
- If you are in bed, stay in bed and pull the sheets and blankets over you and use your pillow to protect your head and neck.
- If you don't use a wheelchair or walker, **Drop, Cover and Hold**.

Drop down on your hands and knees or as low as possible.

Cover your head and neck under a sturdy table or desk, or with your arms as best as possible.

Hold on until the shaking stops.

- If the earthquake was longer than a minute or strong enough to make it difficult to stand, move quickly to the nearest high ground or as far inland as you can, as there may be risk of a tsunami.

Planning for People Who Are Deaf or Who Have a Hearing Impairment

If you are Deaf or have a hearing impairment you must take special precautions in emergency situations. If there is no power, your torch may be your best form of signaling for assistance.

In some situations, people in a building may not realise that you cannot hear evacuation warnings and instructions, so you could get left behind.

Before an Emergency

- Remind people around you that you may not hear or be aware of an evacuation order and ask for help.
- Arrange in advance for a neighbour or colleague to let you know of any emergency information from the radio as it becomes available.
- Make sure that you have a torch with spare batteries
- Keep a pad and pencil with your emergency supplies.
- Store extra hearing aid batteries at home and work.



During an Emergency

- During an emergency (such as an earthquake) watch for falling debris as well as seeking cover. Protect your head with your hands. See detailed **Drop, Cover and Hold** information on **pages 14–15**.

After an Emergency

- If you are trapped, get the attention of other people by knocking on doors or windows, or banging objects together to make a noise.
- Store protective clothing to wear, such as sturdy shoes with your emergency supplies.
- If possible, get hearing people to relay information to you as it becomes available over the radio, or contact Deaf Aotearoa.

Deaf Aotearoa Contact Numbers

Service enquires & urgent support:

duty@deaf.org.nz

Telephone: 0800 33 23 22

Text: 021 276 5771 or for an emergency dial 111

See “Once the Emergency is Over” on pages 22–23.

Planning for People Who Are Blind or Who Have Impaired Vision

This disability can pose different threats both during or after an emergency. An earthquake could cause injury as a result of falling debris and usual exits may be obstructed. Familiar exits may not be accessible. A guide dog may become too frightened to be relied upon.

Before an Emergency

- Let neighbours or colleagues know that you may need their assistance in an emergency situation.
- If you use a white cane, keep one at both work and home.
- Plan an alternative escape route from a building and practice using it.

During an Emergency

- If you feel the ground shake, assume that it is an earthquake and **Drop, Cover and Hold**. Drop to your knees and protect your head with your arms. See detailed **Drop, Cover and Hold** information on **pages 14–15**.

After an Emergency

- If you hear objects falling during an earthquake, there will probably be obstructions around you. Ask others for help or proceed carefully to try to leave the building.
- If you are trapped, get the attention of other people by knocking on doors or windows, or banging objects together to make a noise.
- **If the electricity has failed, sighted people may have difficulty finding their way around in the dark. Past experience has shown that people with impaired vision can often assist sighted people in such circumstances.**
- Store protective clothing to wear, such as sturdy shoes with your emergency supplies.

See “Once the Emergency is Over” on pages 22–23.



Pandemic Information

When a new virus infects many people around the world, it is called a pandemic. This kind of virus can be highly contagious (very easy to catch from another person).

Viruses like this can make a lot of people very sick very quickly. Health authorities sometimes have to take special measures such as closing schools to stop the virus spreading.

During a pandemic, you or your family may be so sick that you need to stay at home for several weeks. Make a plan with family or friends.

- **Who** could help with food and supplies if you and your household (if you live with others) are ill?
- **Make sure** you have your annual **flu jab**.
- If you have **prescription medicines**, renew your prescription well before you run out.
- **Keep a list of telephone numbers** of your doctor and people who live near you in an easy-to-find place (like on the fridge door).



- **Have emergency supplies** (see **page 8–9**).
- If you feel unwell **stay home**, use tissues and put them straight into a rubbish bag or bin.
- For more information go to the Ministry of Health website
www.moh.govt.nz/pandemicinfluenza

Once the Emergency is Over

- **Call 111 only** if you need an ambulance, police or the fire service urgently.
- If you had to leave your home during the emergency, make sure it is safe before you return to it. It may need to be inspected if it has been damaged or exposed to hazardous substances or flood waters.
- Any situations where you are not sure who to call please phone your local city council for help with problems such as flooding, water, sewerage, slips, dangerous buildings or if you need supplies or assistance. The council call centre is set up to manage your call and ensure that appropriate action is taken.
- Be aware that in an emergency there may be a large number of different types of calls. **Please be patient** and understand that calls will be dealt with in order of priority.

- Once you have returned home, check for damaged property and take photos to help with your insurance claim.
- If you feel **anxious or afraid** after the emergency, remember that this is a normal reaction. If you need someone to talk to, and a friend or family member is not around, tell your doctor or District Nurse. They will put you in touch with someone who can help.

Emergency Phone Numbers

My Doctor:

My Neighbours:

Preferred Contact Person
