Disaster Tips for People with Visual Disabilities

Developed by the Independent Living Resource Center, San Francisco, California

The more you prepare for earthquakes or other disasters the more you will be able to protect yourself, your family and your belongings

Canes

❑ If you use a cane, keep extras in strategic, consistent and secured locations at work, home, school, volunteer site, etc., to help you maneuver around obstacles and hazards.

❑ Keep a spare cane in your emergency kit.

Alternate mobility cues

❑ If you have some vision, place security lights in each room to light paths of travel. These lights plug into electric wall outlets and light up automatically if there is a loss of power. They will, depending on type, continue to operate automatically for 1 to 6 hours and can be turned off manually and used as a short- lasting flashlight.

❑ Store high-powered flashlights with wide beams and extra batteries.

❑ Plan for losing the auditory clues you usually rely on after a major disaster.

❑ Service animals may become confused, panicked, frightened or disoriented during and after a disaster. Keep them confined or securely leashed or harnessed. A leash/harness is an important item for managing a nervous or upset animal. Be prepared to use alternative ways to negotiate your environment.

Label supplies

❑ If helpful, mark emergency supplies with large print, fluorescent tape or Braille.

Secure computers

❑ Anchor special equipment and large pieces of furniture, such as computers and shelving. Create a computer back-up system for important data and store it off site.

Advocacy issues

❑ Advocate that TV news not only post important phone numbers, but also announce them slowly and repeat them frequently for people who cannot read the screen.