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LAMAR UNIVERSITY - DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

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ENTERGY SERVICES INC.

DISASTER PLANNING FOR THE SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATION
PROJECT TEAM

JEFFERSON COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

KBMT-TV CHANNEL 12 TELEVISION

Disaster Preparedness Planning for the Special Needs Population

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DISASTER PLANNING INFORMATIONAL PACKET FOR THE SPECIAL NEEDS / MEDICALLY FRAGILE POPULATION

Dear Special Needs / Medically Fragile Individual, Families, and Friends:

This packet was designed to assist you to plan for a disaster that may necessitate evacuation and/or prolonged periods of power outage. Hopefully, you and your loved ones have already developed a disaster/evacuation plan. However, due to the uniqueness of planning for those with special needs, the enclosed packet of information will guide you through many available resources and attempt to assist you in evaluating and/or completing your plans.

The Contents of the Packet Include:

Transportation issues / Shelter issues	Transfer trauma issues
Evacuation shelter supply list	Disaster Preparedness Form
Management of home medical equipment	Important Web links and contacts
Evacuating with a Loved One who Usually Lives in a Long Term Care Facility	Be Informed: All Hazards Approach
	Hurricane tracking map

Key Points to Remember:

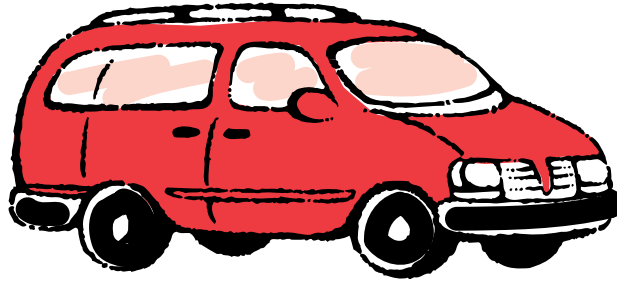
- **Please prepare early!**
- Special needs persons need to leave at first alert (**at least 12 hrs.**) prior to a **formal** call for a mandatory or voluntary **general population** evacuation.
- Don't rely on phone or cellular phone services once an evacuation is declared. It may be interrupted or overwhelmed.
- Traffic management plan will be new, read it carefully and allow for delays. Hurricane evacuations are based on distance from the outer edge of the hurricane and not the center of the hurricane.
- Resources will be severely limited during an evacuation. Please use all community, church, and family support available.
- Listen to Emergency Alerting System, weather radio, local television or radio for public service announcements or instructions.

MAJOR PARTS TO CONSIDER WHEN DEVELOPING YOUR PLAN

- 1) **Transportation Arrangements** – You will need to make prior arrangements especially if special transportation is needed, such as an ambulance. Or, if the individual has to travel with special medical equipment, or does not drive and needs someone to take them out of the area.
- 2) **Shelter Destination** - You will need to identify an appropriate facility such as a hotel, extended care facility, or a special needs shelter in the shelter destination area prior to evacuating.

Thank you for taking the time to plan for the safety and welfare of yourself and your loved ones. If you should need further information, please contact your local Emergency Management Office.

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION FOR EVACUATION OF SPECIAL NEEDS INDIVIDUALS



***Note:**

- * Every effort should be made by an individual with special needs or their family member to identify appropriate transportation in the event of an evacuation.
 - * If special transportation is needed, such as an ambulance, please make arrangements with the ambulance company well in advance.
 - * Public transportation should be accessed by those special needs individuals who are basically ambulatory.
 - * Evacuate early, prior to general evacuation, if possible!
 - * When two or more, family members/friends are evacuating together in different vehicles, stay in the same traffic lanes at **ALL** times. Use cell phones or walkie talkies to maintain communication between vehicles.
 - * Listen for public service announcements.
-

WEB LINKS:

Special Needs and Disaster Research Information

www.disaster-research.us

Federal Emergency Management Agency

www.fema.gov

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org

U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security

www.dhs.gov/dhspublic

F.E.M.A. (CERT Information)

<http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/cert/index.asp>

Area Agency on Aging

www.nwrdc.org/aging.htm

Ready Gov

www.ready.gov

White House

www.whitehouse.gov/homeland

Citizen Corp

www.citizencorps.gov

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS SUPPLY CHECKLIST FOR THE SPECIAL NEEDS INDIVIDUAL

- ___ 7 day supply of water - 1 gallon of water per person/per day
- ___ 7 day supply of non-perishable food per person and plan for any special dietary needs
- ___ Manual can opener
- ___ Flashlight/radio with extra batteries
- ___ First-Aid kit
- ___ 2 Week supply of all your medication and medical supplies: Depends, Chucks, urinals, sanitary napkins, etc.
- ___ Wheelchair/walker/cane, if needed
- ___ Necessary health equipment: oxygen, tubing, feeding supplies, as needed
- ___ Personal identification/Health insurance information/Wear medic alert bracelet and/or identification arm band
- ___ List of family physician and relatives phone numbers
- ___ List of model/serial number of any medical devices/equipment
- ___ Personal grooming items: toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, soap, towel, washcloth, comb, brush, etc.
- ___ Eye glasses, contacts, cases, solutions, hearing aides and batteries
- ___ Bedding: pillow, blanket, sheets, or sleeping bag, or eggcrate mattress
- ___ Chair: lawn chairs, chaise lounge, etc.
- ___ Reading material: books, magazines
- ___ Extra clothing
- ___ Important papers/Cash

SHELTER ISSUES FACING THE SPECIAL NEEDS INDIVIDUAL



Before you make a decision to **STAY** when an evacuation is called, **please** consider some **key points**:

1. Electricity may be off for long periods of time. Therefore, powering electrical medical equipment will be a problem.
2. Water may be off or not safe to use.
3. Many hospitals and EMS systems may be severely limited or overwhelmed.
4. Local American Red Cross shelters will not be opened until they are cleared to re-enter the area, and then they will still be trying to maintain the shelters in the northern evacuation receiving area.
5. Be aware of the flood zone in which you live and prepare for even more water.
6. Usual medical supplies, food, and pharmacy services will not be available or severely limited.

Make plans to care for your emotional well being. Such as:

- Take care of yourself, coping requires energy
- Prioritize your problem solving
- Take advantage of opportunities to talk to caring professionals
- Bring music, healthy foods and perform some type of exercise to comfort yourself

SHELTER SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SPECIAL NEEDS INDIVIDUAL

- ❖ Leaving the area ahead of the formal called mandatory or voluntary evacuation is **STRONGLY** suggested for the special needs/medically fragile individual.

POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND:

1. Talk with your health care agency to see if they can provide any assistance in identifying possible shelters.
2. Stay with family or friends in the shelter/hosting areas, if possible.
3. Prior arrangements for hotel or medical facilities are strongly suggested.
4. Relying on American Red Cross (ARC)/Salvation Army shelters is not suggested unless you can take care of yourself. Most general shelters are not setup at facilities that are equipped or comfortable for a special needs individual.
5. Listen for announcements of a Special Needs Shelter becoming available.
6. Bring your disaster supply list items with you. Make sure you have all your medically related supplies and medications.
7. If on dialysis, know the locations of more than one dialysis center or other location where life-sustaining equipment is available. Follow the directions given to you by your dialysis center.
8. If on chemotherapy, consult with your healthcare provider in advance, and make arrangements in another city to receive any necessary treatments.
9. Prepare in writing your medical history including the following items:
 - Summary of your medical history
 - List of past and current conditions or diagnoses
 - List allergies to medicine, food, and materials
 - Include your immunization record
 - Include names and phone numbers of your healthcare providers
 - Place copies of the history with your other important documents

HOME MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Your emergency-preparedness plan should include the following in regard to your home medical equipment:

- *Know how to contact your medical equipment company. Put in writing: the name of the company, phone number, and contact persons.
- *Keep a record of the model and/or serial numbers of all equipment.
- *Make sure your significant others (family member, friend, etc.) know how to operate your equipment.
- *Make sure you have all of the supplies (and extra supplies) for your equipment in the event you have to leave your home, or if you are unable to leave your home for a period of time.
- *Identify alternate sources of power, such as generators, A/C invertors, and local fire and EMS facilities.
- *Identify and learn an alternate manual means of providing care, i.e., instead of a suction machine use a manual suction syringe.
- *Contact local electrical company if you feel you may qualify as a life support customer.

MEDICATION TIPS:

- Make a list of all medicines, schedule and dosage
- Keep on hand 2-3 months of prescription medicines
- Carry your insurance card with other important papers
- Keep medicines safe and dry
- Refrigerate medications as needed
- When possible, use a national drugstore chain so medicines can be accessed from numerous locations
- Learn to refill prescriptions online, for easy access

EVACUATING WITH A LOVED ONE WHO USUALLY LIVES IN A LONG TERM CARE FACILITY

You may decide to take your loved one, who usually lives in a long term care facility (LTC) with you as you evacuate. If you plan on evacuating your loved one from a LTC facility you may want to schedule a meeting with the facility coordinator as soon as possible to discuss and plan for this critical decision. Here are some **key** planning **tips** to consider when the loved one is in your care.

- Make sure your loved one has identification such as an arm band and make sure they wear it at **all** times. In addition, have in writing the name, location, and phone number of facility where they usually live.
- Be sure you have ALL medications before leaving the LTC.
- Ask for essential information regarding **each** medication (see sample form at bottom of page).
- Have instructions on how to obtain refills on essential medications if necessary.
- Take personal hygiene items; especially bowel and bladder supplies as appropriate.
- Receive instructions about special care needs such as oxygen and tubes. An example would be, what rate should the dial be set at, etc?
- Have copies of essential papers such as DNR instructions and living wills.
- Have clothes for several days.
- Identify LTC facilities in the city where you will evacuate in case admission is necessary for your loved one.
- Understand that Transfer Trauma may occur even though your loved one is among family or friends. See page 9 for behavior/actions that indicate the individual may be having problems with the sudden move from their familiar surroundings.

This is a sample form that can be used to ensure that you have **basic** information to safely give your loved one their medications.

SAMPLE MEDICATION INFORMATION FORM

Name of Resident _____

Name of Medication	Amount To Be Taken	Purpose Taken	Time To Take	Special Information
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Note that the 'special information' might be information such as the medication needs to taken with a meal or behaviors that indicates the individual may be having a reaction to the medication that requires medical attention.

UNDERSTANDING AND MINIMIZING THE EFFECTS OF TRANSFER TRAUMA

Definition:

Transfer trauma is defined as the negative impact of sudden relocation usually following abrupt, unplanned moves of the frail elderly. This condition may occur whether the individual is staying in a shelter, hotel, or with friends or relatives.

Signs and Symptoms:

- * Confusion
- * Aggression
- * Obsessive Behaviors
- * Depression
- * Serious Illness.....could lead to death

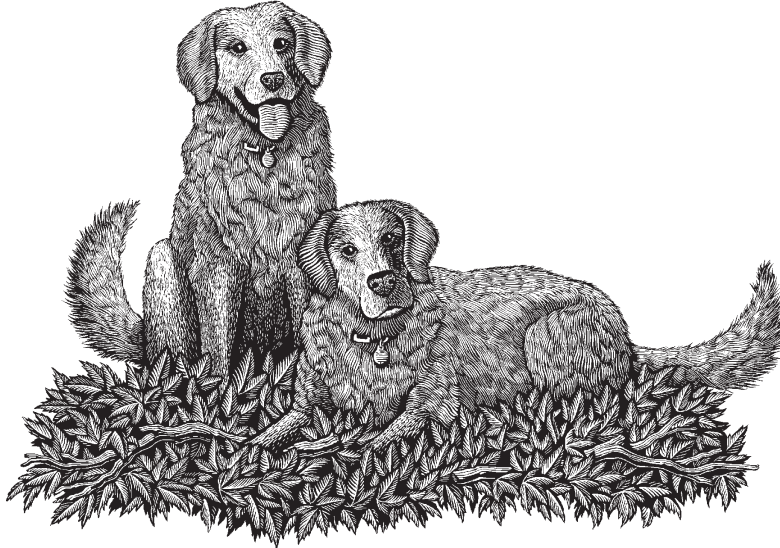
Behavioral Symptoms:

- * Asks frequently, "What time is it?"
- * Distrustful—afraid someone will steal their belongings
- * Crying
- * Refusal to eat, bathe, or change clothes
- * Jumbling facts
- * May become combative
- * Increased incontinence

How To Minimize The Effects Of Transfer Trauma:

- * Learn all you can about the nature of the disaster.
- * Develop and update your disaster plan.
- * Designate who will be responsible for transportation of all family members.
- * Have a family meeting, share the plan with everyone.
- * Include physical, personal, and emotional security issues in the plan.
- * Bring a calendar to provide a visual picture of day and length of stay.
- * Establish a chain of command AND a common meeting place.
- * Make arrangements for pets.
- * Gather medical supplies, infant needs.
- * Take small valuables and familiar objects.
- * Assign a constant companion to the elderly or infants and small children.
- * Write down where each person is going, with whom they are going, have one person to contact. Carry everyone's phone numbers.
- * Don't forget to get cash.

PET REMINDER



Important Note To Pet Owners:

- **Please remember to make plans for your pet(s) when developing your disaster plan. Pets are just like family to most people and need a plan for transporting and sheltering during a disaster. Unfortunately, shelters that are open for the general public usually will not allow pets to stay in the shelter.**
- **You may want to check with your local Emergency Management office and/or an animal shelter to see what resources are available in your city.**

SERVICE ANIMALS

Service animals that assist people with disabilities may be the **only** animals allowed in Red Cross shelters.

Service animals are generally allowed anywhere that the general public is allowed.

Be Informed Threat Series:

**This information is basic in nature.
Readers are encouraged to seek additional information.**

Natural Disasters Threat

Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as making an emergency supply kit and developing a family communications plan, are the same for both a natural or man-made emergency. However, there are important differences among natural disasters that will impact the decisions you make and the actions you take. Some natural disasters are easily predicted, others happen without warning. Planning what to do in advance is an important part of being prepared.

Find out what natural disasters are most common in your area. You may be aware of some of your community's risks: others may surprise you. Historically, **flooding** is the nation's single most common natural disaster. Flooding can happen in every U.S. state and territory. Earthquakes are often thought of as a West Coast phenomenon, yet 45 states and territories in the United States are at moderate to high risk from **earthquakes** and are located in every region of the country. Other disasters may be more common in certain areas. Tornadoes are nature's most violent storms and can happen anywhere. However, states located in "Tornado Alley," as well as areas in Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, and Florida are at the highest risk for tornado damage. Hurricanes are severe tropical storms that form in the southern Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, and in the eastern Pacific Ocean. Scientists can now predict hurricanes, but people who live in coastal communities should plan what they will do if they are told to evacuate.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has information available about the following natural disasters:

- Earthquakes
- Extreme Heat
- Fires
- Floods
- Hurricanes
- Landslide and Debris Flow (Mudslide)
- Thunderstorms
- Tornadoes
- Tsunamis
- Volcanoes
- Wildfires
- Winter Storms and Extreme Cold

Planning what to do in advance is an important part of being prepared. Find out what natural disasters are most common in your area.

Biological Threats

A biological attack is the deliberate release of germs or other biological substances that can make you sick. Many agents must be inhaled, enter through a cut in the skin or be eaten to make you sick. Some biological agents, such as anthrax, do not cause contagious diseases. Others, like the smallpox virus, can result in diseases you can catch from other people.

If There is a Biological Threat

Unlike an explosion, a biological attack may or may not be immediately obvious. While it is possible that you will see signs of a biological attack, as was sometimes the case with the anthrax mailings, it is perhaps more likely that local health care workers will report a pattern of unusual illness or there will be a wave of sick people seeking emergency medical attention. You will probably learn of the danger through an emergency radio or TV broadcast, or some other signal used in your community. You might get a telephone call or emergency response workers may come to your door.

In the event of a biological attack, public health officials may not immediately be able to provide information on what you should do. It will take time to determine exactly what the illness is, how it should be treated, and who is in danger. However, you should watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet for official news including the following:

- Are you in the group or area authorities consider in danger?
- What are the signs and symptoms of the disease?
- Are medications or vaccines being distributed?
- Where? Who should get them?
- Where should you seek emergency medical care if you become sick?

During a declared biological emergency:

1. If a **family member becomes sick**, it is important to be **suspicious**.
2. **Do not assume**, however, that you should go to a hospital emergency room or that any illness is the **result of the biological attack**. Symptoms of many common illnesses may overlap.
3. Use common sense, practice good hygiene and cleanliness to **avoid spreading germs**, and **seek medical advice**.
4. Consider if you are in the group or area authorities believe to be in danger.
5. **If your symptoms match** those described and you are in the group considered **at risk**, immediately seek **emergency medical attention**.

If you are potentially exposed:

1. Follow instructions of doctors and other public health officials.
2. If the disease is **contagious** expect to receive **medical evaluation and treatment**. You may be advised to stay away from others or even deliberately **quarantined**.
3. For **non-contagious** diseases, expect to receive **medical evaluation and treatment**.

If you become aware of an unusual and suspicious substance nearby:

1. **Quickly get away**.
2. **Protect yourself**. **Cover your mouth and nose** with layers of fabric that can filter the air but still allow breathing. Examples include two to three layers of cotton such as a t-shirt, handkerchief or towel. Otherwise, several layers of tissue or paper towels may help.
3. **Wash** with soap and water.
4. **Contact authorities**.
5. Watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet for **official news and information** including what the signs and symptoms of the disease are, if medications or vaccinations are being distributed and where you should seek medical attention if you become sick.
6. **If you become sick seek emergency medical attention**.

Chemical Threats

A chemical attack is the deliberate release of a toxic gas, liquid or solid that can poison people and the environment.

Possible Signs of Chemical Threat

- Many people suffering from watery eyes, twitching, choking, having trouble breathing or losing coordination.
- Many sick or dead birds, fish or small animals are also cause for suspicion.

If You See Signs of Chemical Attack: Find Clean Air Quickly

- Quickly try to **define the impacted area** or where the chemical is coming from, if possible.
- Take immediate action to **get away**.
- If the chemical is inside a building where you are, get out of the building without passing through the contaminated area, if possible.
- If you can't get out of the building or find clean air without passing through the area where you see signs of a chemical attack, it may be better to move as far away as possible and "**shelter-in-place**."
- If you are outside, quickly decide what is the fastest way to find clean air. Consider if you can get out of the area or if you should go inside the closest building and "shelter-in-place."

If You Think You Have Been Exposed to a Chemical

If your eyes are watering, your skin is stinging, and you are having trouble breathing, you may have been exposed to a chemical.

- If you think you may have been **exposed to a chemical, strip immediately and wash**.
- Look for a hose, fountain, or any source of **water**, and wash with **soap** if possible, being sure not to scrub the chemical into your skin.
- Seek emergency **medical attention**

Explosion Threats

If There is an Explosion

- **Take shelter** against your desk or a sturdy table.
- **Exit** the building ASAP.
- **Do not** use elevators.
- **Check** for fire and other hazards.
- **Take** your emergency supply kit if time allows.

If There is a Fire

- **Exit** the building ASAP.
- **Crawl** low if there is smoke
- Use a wet cloth, if possible, to **cover** your nose and mouth.
- Use the back of your hand to **feel** the upper, lower, and middle parts of closed doors.
- If the door **is not hot**, brace yourself against it and open slowly.
- If the door **is hot**, do not open it. Look for another way out.
- **Do not use** elevators
- If you catch fire, do not run. **Stop-drop-and-roll** to put out the fire.

- If you are at home, go to a previously designated **meeting place**.
- Account for your **family** members and carefully **supervise** small children.
- **Never** go back into a burning building.

If You Are Trapped in Debris

- If possible, **use a flashlight** to signal your location to rescuers.
- **Avoid** unnecessary movement so that you don't kick up dust.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** with anything you have on hand. (Dense-weave cotton material can act as a good filter. Try to breathe through the material.)
- **Tap** on a **pipe or wall** so that rescuers can hear where you are.
- If possible, **use a whistle** to signal rescuers.
- Shout **only as** a last resort. **Shouting can cause a person to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.**

Nuclear Threats

A nuclear blast is an explosion with intense light and heat, a damaging pressure wave and wide-spread radioactive material that can contaminate the air, water and ground surfaces for miles around. During a nuclear incident, it is important to avoid radioactive material, if possible. While experts may predict at this time that a nuclear attack is less likely than other types, terrorism by its nature is unpredictable.

IF THERE IS A NUCLEAR BLAST

If there is advanced warning of an attack:

Take cover immediately, as far below ground as possible, though any shield or shelter will help protect you from the immediate effects of the blast and the pressure wave.

If there is no warning:

1. Quickly assess the situation.
2. Consider if you can get out of the area or if it would be better to go inside a building to limit the amount of radioactive material you are exposed to.
3. If you take shelter go as far below ground as possible, close windows and doors, turn off air conditioners, heaters or other ventilation systems. Stay where you are, watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet for official news as it becomes available.
4. To limit the amount of radiation you are exposed to, think about shielding, distance and time.
 - **Shielding:** If you have a thick shield between yourself and the radioactive materials more of the radiation will be absorbed, and you will be exposed to less.
 - **Distance:** The farther away you are away from the blast and the fallout the lower your exposure.
 - **Time:** Minimizing time spent exposed will also reduce your risk.

Use **available information** to **assess the situation**. If there is a significant radiation threat, health care authorities may or may not advise you to take **potassium iodide**. Potassium iodide is the same stuff added to your table salt to make it iodized. It may or may not protect your thyroid gland, which is particularly vulnerable, from radioactive iodine exposure. Plan to **speak with your health care provider in advance** about what makes sense for your family.

Radiation Threats

A radiation threat, commonly referred to as a “dirty bomb” or “radiological dispersion device (RDD)”, is the use of common explosives to spread radioactive materials over a targeted area. It is not a nuclear blast. The force of the explosion and radioactive contamination will be more localized. While the blast will be immediately obvious, the presence of radiation will not be clearly defined until trained personnel with specialized equipment are on the scene. As with any radiation, you want to try to limit exposure. It is important to avoid breathing radiological dust that may be released in the air.

If There is a Radiation Threat or “Dirty Bomb”

To limit the amount of radiation you are exposed to, think about shielding, distance and time.

1. If you are outside and there is an explosion or authorities warn of a radiation release nearby, cover your nose and mouth and quickly go inside a building that has not been damaged. If you are already inside check to see if your building has been damaged. If your building is stable, stay where you are.
Close windows and doors; turn off air conditioners, heaters or other ventilation systems.
2. If you are inside and there is an explosion near where you are or you are warned of a radiation release inside, cover nose and mouth and go outside immediately. Look for a building or other shelter that has not been damaged and quickly get inside.
Once you are inside, close windows and doors; turn off air conditioners, heaters or other ventilation systems.
3. If you think you have been exposed to radiation, take off your clothes and wash as soon as possible.
4. Stay where you are, watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet for official news as it becomes available.
5. Remember: To limit the amount of radiation you are exposed to, think about shielding, distance and time.
 - **Shielding:** If you have a thick shield between yourself and the radioactive materials more of the radiation will be absorbed, and you will be exposed to less.
 - **Distance:** The farther away you are away from the blast and the fallout the lower your exposure.
 - **Time:** Minimizing time spent exposed will also reduce your risk.

As with any emergency, local authorities may not be able to immediately provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet often for official news and information as it becomes available.

All of the information on the “Be Informed Threat Series” on the topics of Biological, Chemical, Explosion, Nuclear, Radiological and Natural Disasters were taken from the “Ready.Gov – U.S. Department of Homeland Security Web Site. Please visit their site for additional information.

Lamar University

