



July 2005

Iowa COMPASS News

A Program of the Center for Disabilities and Development

Be Prepared for Disasters

Natural disaster can happen in Iowa. Some of the disasters we have are:

- Tornados
- Floods
- Severe winter storms

Disaster can strike quickly and without warning. The best way to stay safe and be independent is to be prepared. People with disabilities are the least ready to deal with disaster. According to the National Organization on Disability (NOD), 61% of persons with disabilities do not have plans to quickly evacuate their homes. Fifty percent do not have emergency plans at work. Here are a few things to consider for your emergency plan.

Can you hear emergency warning systems?

- Get text or email warning messages at home, work, and school.
- You can get emergency response telephones or adapted weather radio (see Product News).
- Create a network of people to help you during an emergency. It is important to identify back-up procedures for when the network person is ill or on vacation.

Do you use adapted devices for mobility, communication, or any activities of daily living?

- Include these devices on an emergency list of items to take with you if you evacuate your home.
- Have plans for extra batteries or alternative power during power outages or if you go to an emergency shelter.
- Plan for alternative or back-up devices. You may need to use a manual wheelchair for fast and safe evacuation.
- Be sure to carry pencil/paper as emergency backup to a communication device.

Do you use a service animal?

- How will they react to alarms, evacuation team members, and an emergency shelter situation?
- Have backup supplies to take in case of an emergency. This should include food, water, and bags for clean-up.

Prepare Yourself and Home for Natural Disasters

There are many resources to help you prepare for emergencies and disasters:

- The American Red CROSS has a guide called **Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities**. It is for people with all disabilities. It helps you prepare for natural disasters and the problems you may have afterward. It is at: www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/disability.html#preface
- **Assisting People with Disabilities in a Disaster** is a guide that lists some common things to think about and good solutions. You can find it at www.fema.gov/rrr/assistf.shtm
- Another guide **Preparing for Emergencies Checklist for People with Mobility Problems** is available from FEMA at www.fema.gov/pdf/rrr/mob-all.pdf.
- The Project Cope website has guides to help people and children with disabilities cope with disasters. You can find them at www.nymc.edu/wihd/projectcope/pc.

Planning Community Responses to Disasters

Is your community ready to assist you and other people with disabilities? People with disabilities need to become partners with your local emergency management. Make sure that they include people with disabilities as they plan community response activities. Take an active role

in planning and training for the emergency response activities at your work or school. Here are some resources to share with your employer, school, or community:

Emergency Preparedness Initiative Guide for Emergency Managers, Planners & Responders

is a 28-page guide that can be found at the NOD website www.nod.org. You can find it in the emergency section.

FEMA SMART PRACTICES Evacuating Individuals with Special Needs describes the Linn County program to register persons who have disabilities so they can evacuate them from their homes. Go to: www.fema.gov/pdf/preparedness/linnsmartpractice.pdf.

Funding News

Medicare Issues New Rules for Mobility Aids

The good news and the other news

The Good News

The Center for Medicaid and Medicare (CMS) has new rules for mobility aids. They call mobility aids “mobility assistive equipment” or MAE. The term MAE includes things like:

- canes
- crutches
- mobile geriatric chairs
- motorized wheelchairs
- manual wheelchairs
- power wheelchairs
- quad-canes
- rolling chairs
- safety rollers
- scooters
- special-size wheelchairs
- walkers

Medicare used to ask the question “is a person confined to a bed or a chair?” This was the way they decided if a person needed a mobility aid. Now Medicare asks a number of different questions.

They want to know if a person needs a mobility aid for daily living. They look at:

- toileting
- feeding
- dressing
- grooming
- bathing

They now ask, “Can you get into the bathroom to use the toilet?” “Can you get into the kitchen to eat?” “Can you get around in your bedroom to get dressed?” They want to know if you can do these things without hurting yourself. They want to know if you can do these things in a normal amount of time. To learn more about the changes, go to this web site:

www.cms.hhs.gov/mcd/viewdecisionmemo.asp?id=143.

The Other News

Medicare still pays only for a mobility aid that you need in your home. Many people and organizations tried to get CMS to change this rule. They wanted the coverage to include aids you need outside of the home. This change did not happen.

The Assistive Technology Legal Project

The Assistive Technology Legal Project (ATLP) is a program of the Iowa Program for Assistive Technology. They can refer you to free legal advocacy. They can evaluate if legal advocacy can help you if you get denied for a mobility aid or any type of device. This denial can come from:

- Private insurance
- Medicare
- Medicaid
- Special ed
- Voc rehab
- Workers' comp

Jennifer Britton is the Coordinator of the ATLP. You can talk to her if you have any questions about a denial. Her number is 800-779-2001. You also can email her at jennifer-britton@uiowa.edu.

If you have any questions about funding assistive devices, be sure to call Iowa COMPASS. You can email them at compassfunding@uiowa.edu or call them at 800-779-2001. Be sure to ask for Sue Deets, she is the Funding Information Specialist.

Product News

Here are a few products that can be used in emergency situations. For information on these and other assistive technology, please contact Iowa COMPASS at compassproducts@uiowa.edu or toll-free at 800-779-2001.

CLARITY®, a Division of Plantronics, Inc ER “Emergency Response” System (ER-18800)



This phone is designed for persons with both mobility and moderate hearing disabilities. It can be used as both an amplified and hands-free phone.

Features:

- In an emergency, automatically calls pre-programmed contacts until reaching a live person or pager
- Light, water-resistant remote transmitter can be worn and works from up to 80 feet away
- Speakerphone for loud, clear hands-free conversations

LS&S Group Inc. Emergency Telephone Dialer Description



Whatever the emergency, unit calls the selected individuals and informs them of the emergency. The small wireless pendant, carried in a pocket or worn around the neck, will signal for help from anywhere in the home. Four pre-programmed emergency numbers are automatically dialed and a pre-recorded help message is sent. No installation fee and no monthly service charge.

Silent Call Weather Radio



Where weather safety is concerned, seconds count. The Weather Alert System features three warning lights that indicate the level of alert (statement, watch or warning), and the LCD readout identifies the specific warning, such as a tornado watch.

An external jack connects optional accessories for the transmitter, vibrator, or light. Also from Silent Call:

Weather Alert Radio with Transmitter

The Weather Alert Radio with Transmitter sends a signal up to 100 feet away, to a Silent Call receiver, to alert you when a weather signal is received.

UERS

USED EQUIPMENT REFERRAL SERVICE

*from Iowa COMPASS, a program of the
Center for Disabilities and Development*

Do you or someone you know have adapted equipment collecting dust in an attic, garage, or basement because it's not being used?



Then call Iowa COMPASS, because the UERS is a **FREE** resource for buying and selling used adapted equipment.



It's as simple as a phone call.

800-779-2001

(toll-free voice)

877-686-0032

(toll-free TTY)

www.iowacompass.org



Iowa COMPASS is a project of the Center for Disabilities and Development, Iowa's University Center for Excellence on Disabilities. CDD is a component of the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, University of Iowa Health Care. No endorsement of products or services is intended.

Support for Iowa COMPASS is provided by:
Iowa Department of Education
Center for Disabilities and Development
Iowa Program for Assistive Technology
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Iowa Department of Human Services
Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council

Iowa COMPASS News is published bimonthly.

Iowa COMPASS

800-779-2001 (toll-free)

877-686-0032 (toll-free, TTY)

319-353-8777 (local)

www.iowacompass.org



Iowa COMPASS
Center for Disabilities and Development
University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics
100 Hawkins Drive, Rm S295
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1011

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit Number 45
Iowa City, Iowa