

Emergency Planning for Students with Special Needs

Region 10 Low Incidence Projects

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The information contained in this document will assist school administrators, teachers, special education staff, parents, and students in planning for the support that may be required for students with special needs in the event of an emergency. For the purposes of this document, students with special needs are those who cannot comfortably or safely access and use the standard resources offered in disaster preparedness, relief and recovery, whether their disability is chronic or temporary.

**Adapted from the Marin County School District*

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Region 10 Schools Emergency Management Plan For

Students With Special Needs

The Region 10 Schools Emergency Management Plan consists of several components including; Checklists, Forms, Identification Cards, sample templates, etc. The Emergency Evacuation Plans for Students with Special Needs is an incident management strategy that serves to augment the your schools Emergency Management Plan. In order to ensure efficient and effective emergency management, the model Plan must be implemented in its entirety.

Purpose Of The Plan

The information contained in this document will assist school administrators, teachers, special education staff, parents, and students in planning for the support that may be required for students with special needs in the event of an emergency. For the purposes of this document, students with special needs are those who cannot comfortably or safely access and use the standard resources offered in disaster preparedness, relief and recovery, whether their disability is chronic or temporary.

Presidential Mandate

On July 22, 2004, President George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13347, Individuals with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness, which adds to existing legislation policy to ensure that the safety and security of individuals with disabilities are appropriately supported and requires public entities to include the unique needs of individuals with disabilities in their emergency preparedness planning.

Planning Needs and Assumptions

For individuals with special needs, physical environments become a great deal more hostile and difficult to deal with during and after an emergency. The ability to get to accessible exits and personal items may be reduced. Communication may be impeded at a time when clear and rapid communication is crucial to safety and survival.

To comply with statutes involving students with special needs, individuals responsible for evacuation and emergency operation plans, notification protocols, shelter identification, emergency medical care and other emergency response and recovery programs must:

- Have sound working knowledge of the accessibility and nondiscrimination requirements applicable under Federal disability rights laws.
- Know the special needs demographics of the students attending classes on site.
- Involve students with different types of disabilities and staff in identifying the communication and transportation needs, accommodations, support systems, equipment, services, and supplies that they will need during an emergency.
- Consider emergency accommodations for those with temporary disabilities.
- Identify existing resources within the school and local community that meet the special needs of these students.
- Develop new community partners and resources, as needed.
- Inform parents about the efforts to keep their child safe at school.

- Identify medical needs and make an appropriate plan.
- Determine transportation needs, special vans and buses for students.
- Identify any necessary tools such as personal response plans, evacuation equipment or visual aids;
- Include local responders and establish a relationship with individual students with disabilities and their teachers

MITIGATION AND PREVENTION

Mitigation is the action districts and schools take to identify barriers students with special needs may face during an emergency and eliminate or reduce their adverse effects. A hazards and vulnerability assessment (see appendix C) of the site will help in preparing the emergency plan and identifying improvements for safety.

Teacher/Student Information- Students Needing Special Assistance:

At the beginning of each year, teachers should provide to the main office the name(s) of students/staff that will require special assistance in the event of an emergency (See Appendix A). The type of assistance needed as a result of an injury is also required (i.e. broken leg during the year).

- Review how an emergency may impact the daily routine of students with special needs
- Know who is on your school site: Identify students and staff on the site with special needs and disabilities. The school principal must be aware of all students with special needs using school facilities and services
- Identify the students who are severely handicapped and who might need extra support in emergency crises
- Make a list of the students on the school site who are on medication and their medication schedule
- Maintain a list of all resources regularly relied upon and determine how a disaster might affect the use of them. Examples include (use of mobility aids, communication devices and electrically-dependent equipment)

- Identify all the stakeholders who should be considered in the plan (family, friends, service providers, personal attendants, physicians and others)
- Determine what short term accommodations to provide for students with temporary disabilities (e.g., broken leg)
- Assess potential hazards (Hazards Vulnerability Assessment)
- Review evacuation equipment (Annual Checks should be completed and documented on a district/school form)
- Have a team discussion about transportation procedures

Medication Management/Important Considerations:

- See [Minnesota Department of Health](#)
- Most students with special needs have very individualized medication schedules. If the schedules are not followed correctly, there can be serious consequences
- Determine who is going to gather and transport the medications, supplies and equipment needed for the students
- Medicines or medical devices may not be available in emergency shelters; therefore, it is important to make alternative arrangements to meet the needs of the students
- Consider how medicines can be stored in an emergency. Heat waves and power outages can affect the potency and integrity of some medications. Include an ice chest and cold packs among the school emergency supplies. If there is a power outage, the ice packs can extend the safe temperature range of medications requiring cold storage until the power is restored
- Carry contact and medical information for all students and provide individual medical information on a laminated card with a lanyard

Important Factors to Assure Access to Communication:

Communication access enables effective interaction with all individuals. It plays a vital role for people who are deaf or blind or who have speech, vision or hearing limitations:

- Make written materials available in alternative formats (e.g., Braille, large print, disks, and audio cassettes) and provide hearing- assistive technologies such as amplified phones
- Include auxiliary aids and services such as sign language interpreters
- Alarm systems for fire, etc. will benefit most people if they incorporate both audible and visual elements. The hearing impaired students may be best alerted by flashing light alarms
- Give clear, succinct verbal instructions
- Communicate important information through gestures
- Pictorial representations, where appropriate, can provide quick and easily understood instruction to many individuals with limited English proficiency, and some individuals with cognitive disabilities
- Guide students with low vision or blindness
- Utilize electronic variable messaging boards, short message systems (SMS), teletypewriters (TTY) or telecommunications display devices (TDD), if you have them
- Identify staff with foreign language skills, if needed
- Have aides, buddies, volunteers and evacuation assistants practice basic American Sign Language for emergency words and instructions such as:
 - Important
 - Emergency
 - Keep Calm
 - Must Leave Now

- Fire
 - Fire Exit
 - Elevator Closed
 - Stairs There
 - Okay
- An emergency is not the time to learn how to work a rarely- used assistive technology device(s). The most effective communication systems are those used daily

Time Management:

- Children with special needs are likely to respond to any form of stress following a crisis with more extreme reactions. Allow extra time for them and others to make necessary preparations in an emergency
- Some students with special needs will need more time to comprehend the emergency. The earlier the notification, the better the chances are for a successful evacuation
- Consider what are the triggers and cues for these students and anticipate rather than react
- Prepare students for changes in routine
- Some students may need to be more protected or isolated to minimize distractions and sources of agitation during the height of a crisis and adult supervision may need to be more intense for a while
- Allow time for discussion of the traumatic events in a safe and familiar setting; provide choices in activities to the extent feasible to give these students some sense of control over even a small part of their live

Considerations During an Emergency Evacuation:

- + For students with Special Education, it is important to consider all aspects of their unique needs**
- + There is no one-size-fits-all approach. However, there are key practices that should be considered for certain impairments**
- + It is helpful to consider effective potential impacts and strategies that can be used to help prepare all special education students**

Potential Impacts:

- Students may not comprehend the nature of the emergency and could become disoriented or confused about the proper way to react
- Students may have difficulty reading complicated directions for evacuation or response plans
- Students may not be able to hear emergency warnings
- Limited mobility may impair egress and access to locations
- Disaster debris may obstruct evacuation
- Students with respiratory impairments may have difficulty breathing when walking distances or descending stairs. Smoke, dust, fumes, chemicals and other odors often exacerbate such limitations
- Many illnesses can be aggravated by stress. In the event of a disaster that requires students to be at school for an extended period of time, medication may need to be administered to students with a healthcare plan
- Students may not be able to communicate
- Those students with Visual Impairments may have to depend on

others to lead them to safety during a disaster and may be reluctant to leave familiar surroundings

- Some students may need to be physically transported

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER:

Autism Spectrum Disorders:

- Social Narrative or Social Memo, include what to do and what not to do (i.e. Don't take your books, coat, backpacks etc.)
- Have a bag of comfort/sensory items
- Use of Five Point Scale
- Use of visuals (i.e. visual communication instructions)
- Emergency preparedness packet from AUSM

Visual Impairments:

(Blind-Visually Impaired/Deaf-Blind)

- Employ Braille signage or audible directions
- Emergency back-up lighting systems, especially in stairwells and other dark areas
- Mark emergency supplies with large print or Braille
- Students should know where the nearest telephones and alarm boxes are located and how to describe their location
- Preparedness kits should include: extra folding white cane, heavy gloves for feeling the way over glass or debris, colored poncho worn for visibility, comfort items

Hearing Impairments:

(Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Deaf-Blind)

- Provide sign language training to some staff for students who may not be able to hear emergency warnings
- Have teachers practice basic hand signals with hearing impaired students for emergency communications
- Alerting devices, such as strobe lights and vibrating pagers can be used to supplement audible alarms
- Install both audible and visual smoke alarms in the classroom and building
- Preparedness kits should include: pen and paper, flashlight to communicate in the dark, extra hearing aid batteries and batteries for TTY and light phone signaler

Developmental Cognitive Disabilities/Developmental Delay:

- Provide simple diagrams or pictures
- Practice evacuation route(s) with students regularly
- Check that evacuation routes have directional signs that are easy to follow
- Preparedness kits should include: comfort items, pen and paper and visual communication instructions

Mobility Impairment:

(May include students who are physically impaired, students on crutches or in a wheel chair)

- Store a lightweight manual wheelchair, if available
- Train the staff the proper way to move an individual in a wheelchair
- Mobility impaired students should practice moving their wheel chairs or having them moved into doorways, locking their wheels and covering their heads with a book or with their arms or hands
- Provide staff with a transfer sling (i.e. Tuc-N-Kari) or Evac
- Chairs (Staff should consider how many people it may take to transfer the student using the sling. Also where will the student be sitting once the student is transferred out of the sling?)
- May want to have an extra lightweight manual wheelchair stored on the first floor to transfer students from a sling
- Preparedness kits for those who are in wheelchairs should include: heavy gloves for making way over glass or debris, extra battery for electric wheelchairs recommended but may not be practical, patch kit for punctured wheels, flashlight, whistle, and Mylar space blanket

Speech or Language Impairments:

- Determine in advance the best way for the student to communicate with others during an emergency
- Provide written emergency and evacuation instructions on a card, carried at all times and placed in an easy to see location
- Preparedness kits should include: extra batteries for communication equipment, note paper and pen, comfort items

Other Health Disabilities

(May include students with respiratory impairments)

- Include emergency evacuation masks and respirators in classrooms
- Have oxygen and respiratory equipment readily available
- Students and staff should practice putting on and removing this equipment as part of an emergency drill
- Preparedness should include: medical schedule and dosages, medical mask, if student can wear one, any medical equipment needed for 72 hours, note paper and pen

Medically Fragile:

- Designate who is going to administer medications to the students when a nurse is not available
- Keep medications, authority to administer the medication forms, and healthcare plans in the vicinity of the medically fragile student
- It is the parent's responsibility to maintain medical supplies, notify the school of changes and provide new doctor's orders
- It is the nurse's responsibility to remind the parent to provide medications and update orders when notified

Strategies to consider for all special education students:

- Staff and students should routinely practice the route(s) and procedures
- Staff should establish a plan and communicate with emergency responders to prepare for the emergency evacuation
- Consider name tags with photos and brief information kept by the classroom door
- Consider having a bag of comfort/sensory items
- Teach to the different types of emergencies (i.e. fire, severe weather, lock down, active/violent intruder, evacuation, environmental emergencies)
- Make cheat sheets for each type of emergency
- Review or create Emergency Plans yearly
- Teach students 'Plan B' (a slightly different plan)
- Staff should discuss transportation procedures
- Provide preparedness kits for all staff
- Train staff on how to de-escalate students in a time of crises
- Review behavior management strategies with students and staff (i.e student expectations)
- Keep directions simple and clear
- Remain with the special needs student after the evacuation
- Recognize that the fine details are unique to each student

Implement Evacuation - Response

- Carry all medication, supplies, equipment and dietary needs with student, including the 72-hour disaster kit that has been prepared ahead of time for individual student needs
- Ask the student how he/she would like to be assisted
- Inform emergency personnel of intended destination and type of assistance needed. If unable to contact emergency personnel, ask others to make the notification for assistance
- Move to designated evacuation area - the path should be unobstructed
- Be careful of falling debris as you leave the building
- Provide priority assistance to wheelchair users with electrical respirators
- Evacuate mobility devices with the person if possible (i.e. crutches, wheel chairs, etc...

To Evacuate Persons Using Wheelchairs:

If the person wants to be moved in his/her chair, keep the following considerations in mind:

- Turn off the wheelchair's power before lifting
- Turn the wheelchair so it is lowered down the stairs backwards (person facing up the stairs), so the occupant cannot slip forward out of the chair and down the stairs
- Powered wheelchairs have very heavy batteries; an evacuation chair for stairs may be needed with the powered chair to be retrieved later
- If a seatbelt is available, use it. If the person needs to be removed from his/her wheelchair for an evacuation, ask the following:
 - How he/she prefers to be moved from the chair
 - Whether pain or harm will result from moving extremities
 - If any equipment is needed for immediate safety of life-support (e.g. backup generator for respirator)

APPENDIX A

Emergency Medical Information Card

Laminate this card and affix it to a lanyard for the special needs student to wear during an emergency:

Front

Emergency Medical Information Card	
Student Name:	Photo
School: Grade:	
Medical Condition:	
Parent / Guardian:	Home Phone:
Home Address:	Cell Phone: Work Phone:
*Parents are responsible for updating the student's emergency information and medications.	

Back

Emergency Medical Information Card	
Student Name:	Birth Date:
Blood Type:	Allergies:
Physical Limitations:	
Communication Difficulties:	
Adaptive Equipment:	
Primary Care Physician:	Emergency Phone:
Specialty Physician:	Emergency Phone:
Insurance Company:	Policy Number:
Medication:	Dosage / Frequency:
Parents are responsible for updating the student's emergency information and medications.	

School Emergency Evacuation Planning Checklist

Date:	YES	NO	N A	Person Responsible
Do you have a roster of your students with special needs?				
Have you identified students with special needs on site from other school districts?				
Have you identified the medical needs of your students with special needs and their medication schedule?				
Have you walked the evacuation paths and exits looking for potential obstacles?				
Has an evacuation site been identified that is accessible to students and staff with special needs?				
Has the team identified alternate locations for students and staff with special needs (i.e. Safe Room)?				
Is the primary evacuation path marked to clearly show the route?				
Is there sufficient oxygen for 72 hours?				
Have transportation needs been identified for the students with special needs, such as special vans and buses for students?				
Do you have contract(s) in place with your transportation service provider(s) in case of an emergency?				
Is there a master list of bus drivers?				
Have you identified any necessary tools such as personal response plans, evacuation equipment or visual aids for students with special needs?				
Have you identified communication needs with students who have limited English proficiency or alternate communication mode?				

School Emergency Evacuation Planning Checklist Continued

Date	YES	NO	N A	Person Responsible
Have you considered emergency accommodations for those with temporary disabilities?				
Have you encouraged a relationship with students and the local responders?				
Have you reviewed your plan with emergency responders?				
Have you identified an evacuation site that is accessible to students and staff with special needs?				
Have you identified a secondary evacuation site?				
Has a "buddy system" been developed for each student?				
Have you trained the staff on proper lifting techniques?				
Have staff, students and families been encouraged to provide 72 hour medications?				
Has evacuation route information been compiled and distributed to staff?				

Notification Form

Notification Form

This form is to be provided to the School Nurse and Secretary at the start of each year for students who require an Evacuation Plan

District		Date	
School			
SpEd Admin		Email	
School Nurse		Email	

<u>Student Last</u>	<u>Student First</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Disability</u>	<u>Case Manager</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Last Name	First Name	01	DCD-MM	C.Manager	cmanager@Schooldistrict1.k12.mn.us	(100) 123-4567

IEP Team Emergency Evacuation Planning Checklist

IEP Team Emergency Evacuation Planning Checklist			
	YES	NO	Person Responsible
Does this child require a student specific evacuation plan - if NO stop here			
If YES, consider what is required above and beyond the district crisis plan:			
Did you identify Evacuation Considerations for:			
Severe weather: Tornado, Flood, Earthquakes, Blizzard, Ice Storms			
Fire			
Lock Down: Threat in/out Building, Bomb Threat, etc.			
Chemical			
Nuclear Meltdown			
Procedures - See Evacuation Plan			
Relocation			
Transportation			
Any special training for staff?			
Medical devices			
Lifting procedures			
Seizures:			

Emergency Evacuation Plan Template

Year: _____

Case Manager: _____

Student: _____

Classroom Teacher: _____

Student Description (include information regarding communication mode,):

Physical / Safety Concerns (include information regarding medical considerations, vulnerability, other health information, weather related needs, transportation, allergies, etc.):

Procedures for each scenario (steps required during evacuation):

Severe Weather (Tornado, Flood, Earthquakes, Ice Storms):

Fire (indicate designated 2nd floor room and secondary room for evacuation):

Lock Down (Threat in/out of building, Bomb Threat, Etc.):

Chemical:

Nuclear Meltdown:

Seizures:

Staff Specific Training Needs (medical devices, lifting procedures, etc.):

Need: Person(s) Responsible: Date completed:

APPENDIX B

Lifting and Evacuation Training

Infinitec Training:

- [A Look at Lifting and Transferring](#) This will assist staff in knowing how to remain safe during lifting and transferring students.

Cradle Lift or One Person Carry

1. Lock wheelchair brakes - undo belts and other restraints.
2. Stand beside the student with your feet apart.
3. Bend at your hips and knees, keeping your back straight.
4. Place one arm around the student's opposite arm.
5. Place another arm under student's thighs.
6. Lift student by straightening you legs.
7. Hug student close to your body.
8. Turn by moving your feet. DO NOT TWIST!
9. Lower student to the ground/surface by bending your hips and knees, keeping your back straight.

Two Person Lift from the Wheelchair

1. Lock wheelchair brakes - undo belts and other restraints.
2. Place the student's arms over his/her chest.
3. One person stands behind, or if not possible, beside the wheelchair and puts his/her arms under the student's arms and grasps the student' forearms (lifter crossing his/her arms if possible, i.e. cross chest hold as above). If unable to grasp the student's forearms, lifter should grasp his/her own wrist.
4. The other assistant stands in front of the student and lowers self by bending hips and knees.
5. The person in front grasps the student under the knees with both arms.
6. The person lifting the upper body counts: "1-2-3-lift".
7. On "lift", the student is lifted out of the wheelchair.
8. Lower student to the ground/surface by bending your hips and knees, keeping your back straight while counting "1-2-3-down".

Emergency Preparedness Supplies

Classroom Supplies. A classroom that is used for teaching students with special needs should store disability-related supplies, assistive equipment and tools that may be required in an emergency. Parents should provide for students with dietary restrictions. Among the basic supplies to have in the classroom are:

- Batteries in different sizes, for adaptive equipment
- Lockdown kit, including portable toilet, privacy screen, toilet paper, toilet bowl liners disinfectant, and plastic bag for disposal
- Water pouches for drinking
- Water for hygiene purposes
- Copies of all students' Emergency Information Forms (secured)
- Backup copies of medical prescriptions (secured)
- Hand tools (e.g., screwdriver, wrench, pliers)
- Heavy work glove
- Whisk broom
- Tarp
- Solar/crank/battery radio
- Cell phone and phone charger
- Flashlight and extra batteries or crank flashlight
- First aid kit
- Small ice chest for refrigerated medications
- Evacuation assistive equipment
- Protein bars (without nuts or nut oil)
- Canned fruit
- Carbohydrate-free foods for meals (e.g. canned meat, nuts, jerky)*
- Feminine hygiene supplies
- Household chlorine bleach to kill bacteria or antibacterial soap
- Facial tissues
- Whistle/noisemaker
 - *for diabetic students

Go Kits

Portable preparedness supplies individualized for each student's needs, called "Go Kits", are an integral part of preparedness planning. Ask parents and caretakers to provide Go Kits at the beginning of the school year. Plan for a child with special dietary needs. Designate which staff members are responsible for reminding parents to replenish their child's kit and notify the school of changes.

Each Go Kit should include, as a minimum:

- Lightweight uncomplicated backpack
- Emergency Information Form – see Appendix B for example
- Medication for up to 36 hours
- Emergency Medical Card, laminated and attached to a lanyard to be worn during an emergency. See Appendix C for example. Card should include:
 - Contact information
 - Medical requirements
 - Allergies and sensitivities
 - Adaptive equipment used
 - Assistance needs and limitations

Online Resources:

- American Red Cross, People with Disabilities
http://www.redcross.org/museum/prepare_org/disabilities/disabilities.htm
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended
<http://www.ada.gov/pubs/ada.htm>
- An Investigation of Best Practices for Evacuating and Sheltering Individuals with Special Needs and Disabilities, National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, Washington, DC (Oct 2008)
http://www.ncef.org/pubs/evacuating_special_needs.pdf
- California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Meeting the

Needs of Vulnerable People in Times of Disaster (May 2000)

[http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/PDF/Vulnerable%20Populations/\\$file/Vulnerable%20Populations.PDF](http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/PDF/Vulnerable%20Populations/$file/Vulnerable%20Populations.PDF)

- Center for Disability Issues in Health Profession, Evacuation Preparedness Guide <http://www.cdihp.org/evacuation/toc.html>
- Disability Preparedness Resource Center, Personal Preparedness Planning
<http://www.disabilitypreparedness.gov/ppp/index.htm>
- Federal Emergency Management Agency, Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Special Needs.
http://www.fema.gov/pdf/library/pfd_all.pdf
- Federal Register, Executive Order 13347, Individuals with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness, Volume 69, No. 142 (July 26, 2004)
http://www.fema.gov/pdf/nims/nims_executive_order_13347.pdf
- National Association of School Psychologists, Coping with Crisis – Helping Children with Special Needs
http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/specpop_general.aspx
- National Fire Protection Association, Personal Emergency Evacuation Planning Tool for School Students with Disabilities
<http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files//PDF/Fact%20sheets/EvacStudentDisabilities.pdf>
- Nobody Left Behind, Report on Exemplary and Best Practices in Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response For People with Disabilities (March 2007)
http://www.nobodyleftbehind2.org/findings/pdfs/bestpractices_3-21-072.pdf

- Talking to Children with Special Needs About Tragedy
- U.S. Department of Education, Administration for Children and Families, Coping With Disaster: Suggestions for Helping Children with Cognitive Disabilities
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/add/Sept11/addcoping.html>
- U.S. Department of Education, ERCM Express, Integrating Students with Special Needs and Disabilities into Emergency Response and Crisis Management Planning (Volume 2, Issue 1, 2006) http://rems.ed.gov/docs/Disability_NewsletterV2I1.pdf
- Autism Spectrum Disorder Emergency preparedness and response strategies. Autism Society of Minnesota. June 2011.
<http://www.ausm.org/images/docs/Emergency%20PDFs/EPGeneral%20Awareness.pdf>
- Autism Society of Minnesota Website.
<http://www.ausm.org/emergency-preparedness/99-professional-emergency-responder-essentials-kit.html>

Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorders
BVI	Blind-Visually Impaired
DB	Deaf-Blind
DHH	Deaf and Hard of Hearing
DCD	Developmental Cognitive Disabilities
DD	Developmental Delay
EBD	Emotional or Behavioral Disorders
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education
FERPA	Family Education Rights and Privacy
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual Education Program
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MDE	Minnesota Department of Education
OHD	Other Health Disabilities
PI	Physically Impaired
SLD	Specific Learning Disabilities
SLI	Speech or Language Impairments
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury

APPENDIX C:

- [Educational Facilities Vulnerability / Hazard Assessment Checklist](#)
- [A Guide to School Vulnerability Assessments](#)