



Now That We've Met What Do I Say

The Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a Federal civil rights law. It was signed into law by President George Bush on July 26, 1990. It gives Federal civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age and religion.

The Americans with Disabilities Act

Title II of the ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in State and local government's service, program, and employment. Emergency Management agencies are covered because they are programs of State or local government, regardless of whether they receive Federal grants or other Federal funds.

Definition of Disability

An individual is considered to have a “disability”:

- He/she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- Has a record of such an impairment
- Being regarded as having such an impairment

Definition of Disability

Major Life Activities include:

- Caring for one's self
- Performing manual tasks
- Walking
- Seeing
- Hearing
- Speaking
- Breathing
- Learning
- Working

To be substantially limited means that such activities are restricted in the manner, conditions, or duration in which they are performed in comparison with most people.

Definition of Special Needs

Before, during and after an incident, members of the special needs population may have additional needs in one or more of the following functional areas:

- Maintaining independence
- Communication
- Transportation
- Supervision
- Medical Care

Definition of Special Needs

Individuals in need of additional response assistance may include those:

- Who live in institutionalized settings
- Who are elderly
- Who are children
- Who are from diverse cultures
- Who have limited English proficiency or who are non-English speaking
- Who are transportation disadvantage

Understanding People with Disabilities

Key Principles

- **Self-Determination** – People with disabilities are the most knowledgeable about their own needs
- **No “One Size Fits All”** – People with disabilities do not all require the same assistance and do not all have the same needs
- **Equal Opportunity** – People with disabilities must have the same opportunities to benefit from emergency programs, services, and activities as people without disabilities
- **Inclusion** – People with disabilities have the right to participate in all emergency programs, services, and activities provided by government, private businesses, and nonprofit organizations

Understanding People with Disabilities

Key Principles (continued)

- **Integration** – People with disabilities must be provided services in the most integrated setting.
- **Physical Access** – People with disabilities must be able to access locations where emergency programs and services are provided.
- **Equal Access** – People with disabilities must be able to benefit from emergency programs equally with the general population through accessible means.
- **Effective Communication** – People with disabilities must be given the same information provided to the general population using a method that is understandable and timely.

Understanding People with Disabilities

- Approximately 54 million people in the United States have some type of disability.
- Whether a disability comes about from birth or by accident not all disabilities can be seen with the naked eye.
- Some people may feel uneasy being around a person with a disability, however people with disabilities are simply people and need to be treated as such.
- Focus on the person, not on his or her disability .

Communicating with People with Disabilities

- When talking with a person with a disability, speak directly to that person rather than through a companion or sign language interpreter.
- When introduced to a person with a disability, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands.
- If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions.
- Treat adults as adults.
- Ask how you can assist. Listen for response and then assist.
- Watch body language.
- Be patient and repeat phrases.
- Relax and treat a person as a person.

People First Language

People First Language recognizes that individuals with disabilities are – first and foremost- people. It emphasizes each person’s value, individuality, dignity and capabilities. The following examples provide guidance on what terms to use and which ones are inappropriate when talking or writing about people with disabilities.

People First Language to Use Instead of Labels that Stereotype and Devalue.

Use:

- People/individuals with disabilities **instead of** the handicapped.
- an adult who has a disability **instead of** the disabled.

People First Language

Use:

- a child with a disability
- a person

- people/individuals without disabilities **instead of** normal people/healthy individuals.
- typical kids **instead of** atypical kids.

- people with mental retardation **instead of** the mentally retarded; retarded people.
- he/she has a cognitive impairment **instead of** he/she is retarded; the retarded.
- a person who has Down syndrome **instead of** he/she is a Downs kid; a Mongoloid; a Mongol.

People First Language

Use:

- a person who has autism **instead of** the autistic.
- people with a mental illness **instead of** the mentally ill; the emotionally disturbed.
- a person who has an emotional disability **instead of** is insane; crazy; demented; psycho.
- with a psychiatric illness/disability **instead of** a maniac; lunatic.
- a person who has a learning disability **instead of** he/she is learning disabled.
- a person who is deaf **instead of** the deaf.
- he/she has a hearing impairment/loss.
- a man/woman who is hard of hearing.

People First Language

Use:

- a person who is deaf and cannot speak **instead of** is deaf and dumb.
- a person who has a speech disorder **instead of** mute.
- a person uses a communication device.
- a person uses synthetic speech.
- a person who is blind **instead of** the blind.
- a person who has a visual impairment.
- a man/woman who has low vision.
- a person who has epilepsy **instead of** an epileptic.
- people with a seizure disorder **instead of** a victim of epilepsy.

People First Language

Use:

- a person who uses a wheelchair **instead of** a person who is wheelchair bound.
- people who have a mobility impairment **instead of** a person who is confined to a wheelchair.
- a person who walks with crutches **instead of** a cripple.
- a person who has quadriplegia **instead of** a quadriplegic; people with paraplegia instead of paraplegic.
- he/she is of small or short stature **instead of** a dwarf or midget.
- he/she has a congenital disability **instead of** he/she has a birth defect.
- accessible buses, bathrooms, etc. **instead of** handicapped buses, bathrooms, hotel rooms, etc.
- reserved parking for people with disabilities **instead of** handicapped parking.

Accommodating a Person with a Disability in an Emergency

Think Broadly. Plan specifically.

The most effective emergency planning considers the variety of functional needs of the community. Plans should address individuals who, because of a functional limitation during an emergency, need assistance with one or more of the following: communication, medication, independent living, supervision, or transportation.

Accommodating a Person with a Disability in an Emergency

Planning areas needing disability focus

- Demographics and grouping of populations
- Evacuation
- Communication/Public Information
- Transportation
- Sheltering
- Housing
- Health Services
- Exercise and Training

Accommodating a Person with a Disability in an Emergency

Communication

- Television – close captioning and voice descriptions
- Telecommunication – Telecommunication Relay Services (TRS)
- Rescue Communication – Accessible and reliable communication technology
- Using a combination of notification methods will be more effective than relying on one method alone. For instance, combining visual and audible alerts will reach a greater audience than either method would alone.
- Auto-dialed text telephone (TTY) messages to pre-registered individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, text messaging, emails, and other innovative uses of technology may be incorporated in to such procedures.
- For announcements by governmental officials on local television stations, providing qualified sign language interpreters and open captioning will ensure that all people turning in are able to access the information

Accommodating a Person with a Disability in an Emergency

Transportation

- Individuals who are blind learn specific routes that may no longer be accessible in an emergency.
- Individuals who rely on Para-transit may have no way to get home in the event of a major emergency.
- Ability of public transportation system accommodate increased numbers of individuals with disabilities and their caretakers accessing the system at once.
- Emergency plans should identify accessible forms of transportation available to help evacuate people with disabilities.
- State and local governments need to establish procedures to ensure that people with disabilities can evacuate the area of an emergency in a variety of conditions, with assistance when it is needed.

Accommodating a Person with a Disability in an Emergency

Accessible Shelters , Areas of Refuge

- Physical accessibility
- Availability of TTY lines
- Allow assistance animals to seek shelter with their owners.
- Provide/allow use of durable medical equipment (wheelchair, cane, walker, etc.)
- Provide special diets and necessary medication.
- Establish connections with disability advocacy and service organizations who can assist shelter and recovery workers.

Health Services

- Establish systems to identify health-related needs of individuals.
- Stockpile sufficient quantities of medical supplies and medications.

Accommodating a Person with a Disability in an Emergency

Health Services

- Determine ongoing needs for care and service.
- Identify vendors for replacement of assistive technology.
- Recognize and treat wide spread traumatic stress syndrome.
- Recognize and support existing medical and societal conditions exacerbated by the disaster.

Accessible Housing

- Manufactured homes provided by FEMA which are UFAS accessible and ADA compliant.
- Recommend use of universal design for post-disaster re-construction.

Accommodating a Person with a Disability in an Emergency

Public Education

- Emergency preparedness education materials available in alternate formats such as large print, Braille, CD ROM, and audiotape.
- Accessibility to emergency planning Web site.
- Accessibility of media emergency preparedness campaign inclusion of people with disabilities.

Training/Exercise

- Invite people with disabilities to participate the exercise/training.
- Write people with disabilities in the exercise/training plan.
- Assure physical accessibility of exercise/training facility.
- Assure training materials and information are available in alternative formats.
- Provide methods for effective communication for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing during training/exercise sessions.

How to Work with Personal Assistants and Devices that Accompany a Person with a Disability

Personal Assistant

- The personal assistant will stay with the person with the disability (it might not be a family member).
- The personal assistant can be a great resource and help in a emergency.
- Talk to the person who the personal assistant is assisting not to the personal assistant.

Sign Language Interpreter

- Get a qualified/certified sign language interpreter to assist in an emergency (do not rely on someone who is not, like a family member or someone who knows sign).

How to Work with Personal Assistants and Devices that Accompany a Person with a Disability

Sign Language Interpreter

- Talk to the person who is deaf not the interpreter.
- Keep communication in a well lighted area and quiet.
- Have more than one interpreter.

Service Animals

- The service animal stays with the person at all times.
- Ask the person that the service animal is assisting if you can pet or feed the animal (It is distracting and confusing when the animal is doing their job)
- There are other services animals besides dogs.
- Do not be offended if the person does not feel like discussing his/her disability or the assistance the service animal provides.

How to Work with Personal Assistants and Devices that Accompany a Person with a Disability

Durable Medical Equipment

- People that uses durable medical equipment know their equipment and are great resources on how to assist with durable equipment.
- Durable Medical Equipment must stay with the person with disability.
- If you need to see the durable medical equipment ask the person first. Do not take the equipment without asking or move it away from the person that they can not find it or use it.
- All people with disabilities are different and so is their durable medical equipment. Don't assume that all equipment is the same.

Building Relationships with Local Resources

- Invite Disability Agencies and people with disabilities to emergency planning meetings.
- Disability Agencies know the community that they serve and can assist with a registry or how to get the community with disabilities evacuated.
- Go to Disability Agencies Meetings and provide a emergency preparedness training.
- Do emergency preparedness presentation at local disability conferences.

Other Resources

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