Preparedness Tips for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Hearing aids

- Store hearing aid(s) where you can easily find them after a disaster. For example, you could keep them in a container by your bedside and attach the container to a nightstand or bedpost using a string or Velcro. Missing or damaged hearing aids will be difficult to replace or fix immediately after a major disaster.

Batteries

- Store extra batteries for hearing aids and implants. If possible, store an extra hearing aid with your emergency supplies.
- Keep your pager, captioned telephone and other communication equipment charged.
- Maintain batteries and store extras for your TTY and other communications equipment. Check the owner's manual for proper battery maintenance.

Communication

- Know how to communicate with emergency personnel if there is no interpreter or if you don’t have your hearing aids. Store paper and pens for this purpose.
- Consider carrying a pre-printed copy of important messages with you, such as:
  - “I use American Sign Language (ASL) and need an ASL interpreter.”
  - “I do not write or read English.”
  - “If you make announcements, I will need to have them written or signed.”
If possible, get a battery-operated television that has a decoder chip for access to signed or captioned emergency reports.

Determine which broadcasting systems will be accessible in terms of continuous news that will provide continuous captioned and/or signed news.

Alarms

Install smoke alarms that give signals that can be both seen and heard. At least one should be battery-operated.

Advocacy

Recruit interpreters to be Red Cross emergency volunteers.

Encourage TV stations to broadcast all news and emergency information in open caption format.

Encourage TV stations to plan to provide interpreters for on-camera duty during emergencies.

When you travel, be sure hotels have services for deaf and hearing-impaired persons, including visual alarms. Ask for them when you check in.

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