



National Network

Information, Guidance and Training on the Americans with Disabilities Act

Call us toll-free
1-800-949-4232 V/TTY

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Emergency Power Planning for People Who Use Electricity and Battery- Dependent Assistive Technology and Medical Devices

This emergency power planning checklist is for people who use electricity and battery dependent assistive technology and medical devices, including:

- Breathing machines (respirators, ventilators).
- Power wheelchairs and scooters.
- Oxygen, suction or home dialysis equipment.

Some of this equipment is essential to your level of independence while other equipment is vital to keeping you alive! Use the checklist to make power-backup plans.

Review and update this checklist every six months. (One way to remember to do this is when you set your clocks forward in the spring and back in the fall.)

Emergency Power Planning Checklist

Date Complete	Does not Apply	Item
		Planning Basics
		Create a plan for alternative sources of power.
		Read equipment instructions and talk to equipment suppliers about your backup power options.



Date Complete	Does not Apply	Item
		Get advice from your power company regarding type of backup power you plan to use.
		Regularly check backup or alternative power equipment to be sure that ensure it will work during an emergency.
		Teach your neighbors and caregivers how to use your backup systems and operate your equipment.
		<p>Keep a list of alternate power providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask your nearby police and fire departments and hospital if you could use them as a backup for your equipment power if your backup systems fail.
		Label all equipment with your name, address, and phone number. Attach simple and clear instruction cards to equipment and cover them with clear packing or mailing tape.
		Keep copies of instructions for each piece of equipment, along with serial and model numbers, in a waterproof container or in your emergency supply kits.
		Life-Support Device Users
		<p>Contact your power and water companies about your needs for life-support devices (home dialysis, suction, breathing machines, etc.) in advance of a disaster.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many utility companies keep a "priority reconnection service" list and map of the locations of power-dependent customers for use in an emergency. Ask the customer service department of your utility companies if this service is available. Note that even if you are on the "priority reconnection service" list, your power could still be out for many days following a disaster. It is vital that you have power backup options for your equipment.*
		Let your fire department know that you are dependent on life-support devices.



Date Complete	Does not Apply	Item
		All ventilator users should keep a resuscitation bag handy. The bag delivers air through a mask when squeezed.
		If you receive dialysis or other medical treatments, ask your health care provider for the plans in an emergency and where you should go for treatment if your usual clinic is not available after an emergency.
		Oxygen Users
		Check with your health care provider to see if you can use a reduced flow rate in an emergency to extend the life of the system. Label your equipment with the reduced flow numbers so that you can easily refer to them.
		Be aware of oxygen safety practices:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid areas where there are gas leaks or open flames.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post "Oxygen in Use" signs.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always use battery powered flashlights or lanterns rather than gas lights or candles when oxygen is in use (to reduce fire risk).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the shut-off switch for oxygen equipment near you so you can get to it quickly in case of emergency.
		Generator Users
		Make sure use of a generator is appropriate and realistic.
		A 2,000 to 2,500-watt gas-powered portable generator can power a refrigerator and several lamps. (A refrigerator needs to run only 15 minutes an hour to stay cool if you keep the door closed. So, you could unplug it to operate other devices.)
		Operate generators in open areas to ensure good air circulation.



Date Complete	Does not Apply	Item
		Safely store fuel.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The challenge when you live in an apartment is knowing how to safely store enough gasoline.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Store a siphon kit.
		Test your generator from time to time to make sure it will work when needed.
		Some generators can connect to the existing home wiring systems; always contact your utility company regarding critical restrictions and safety issues.
		Rechargeable Batteries
		If you use hearing aids, keep a supply of hearing aid batteries on hand.
		Create a plan for how to recharge batteries when the electricity is out.
		<p>Check with your vendor/supplier to find alternative ways to charge batteries. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting jumper cables to a vehicle battery. Using a converter that plugs into a vehicle's cigarette lighter or accessory outlet.
		If you substitute a vehicle battery for a wheelchair battery, the charge will not last as long as a charge for a wheelchair's deep-cycle battery.
		If you use a motorized wheelchair or scooter, try to store a lightweight manual wheelchair for emergency use.
		Stored extra batteries require periodic charging even when they are unused. If your survival strategy depends on storing batteries, closely follow a recharging schedule.
		Know the working time of any batteries that support your systems.
		When you have a choice, choose equipment that uses batteries that are easily purchased from nearby stores.



Date Complete	Does not Apply	Item
When Power is Restored		
		Check to make sure the settings on your medical device have not changed (medical devices often reset to a default mode when power goes out).
Other Backup Plans		

For more information, call and speak to an ADA specialist at 1-800-949-4232. All calls are confidential.

Original content developed by the Pacific ADA Center, and is based on professional consensus of ADA experts and the ADA National Network.



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