

Emergency Preparedness



At the recent **Institute on Disabilities Expo** at the Capitol in Harrisburg, PA, George Heake explains some products he displayed for Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities.

This issue of AT Focus provides information about devices in Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Lending Library designed to prevent an emergency (e.g. smoke and fire detectors/alarms) or alert individuals with disabilities to an impending weather emergency. Our feature article is designed to get you thinking about how to prepare, and where to go for more information.

Since the events of September 11 and Hurricane Katrina, the topic of emergency preparedness has been discussed, debated, scrutinized, and argued from many different sides and points of view, especially in how it relates to members of the vulnerable or "special populations" (people with disabilities, senior citizens, children, etc.). "Special populations" includes anyone who needs help or assistance in time of an emergency or disaster. The reality is, during a disaster there are more people who need help than there are people responding to or managing the help itself. The key message here is not "be scared" but "be prepared." You must empower yourself and your family/support system to be prepared in the event of an emergency or disaster. Currently, the time frame to be prepared for in a disaster or emergency

situation is 72 hours. If you were stuck at home, you should have food, water, medication and other essentials to last 72 hours. And, don't only think about at home— if you got stuck at work and could not get home do you have those essentials on hand? The "other essentials" referred to could be called "my essentials". This could be anything from an extra pair of glasses, to medications, a spare cane, walker, and so forth.

In terms of assistive technology, the "my essentials" concept could also cover a wide range of devices, from low tech to high tech. If you are using an augmentative communication device, do you have spare batteries, cables, or connectors for it? Do you have the make, model, and serial number written down in your emergency information? Do you have an emergency low tech "survival" communication board made from laminated paper or cardboard?

Weather and emergency alert system radios are also good to have in the event of an emergency. There are several accessible weather/emergency alert system radios available. The following is a link to the National

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Shake-Up Smoke Detector with Bed Vibrator, Silent Call

This is a wireless portable battery-operated smoke detector system. When smoke is detected, a signal is transmitted within a 100-foot radius to a receiver that is connected to a bed vibrator. The bed vibrator vibrates to wake someone asleep in the bed.

Note: the smoke detector is battery operated and



wireless, but the receiver gets plugged into an outlet.

Inventory code:
HP-SMOKEVIB
Cost: \$260
EnableMart
888-640-1999
www.enablemart.com

Shake-Up Smoke Detector with Strobe, Silent Call

This is a wireless portable battery-operated smoke detector system. When the system detects smoke, it transmits a signal within a 100-foot radius to a receiver that is connected to a strobe light. The strobe light then flashes as an alert that the smoke detector has activated.

Note: the smoke detector is battery operated and wireless, but the receiver gets plugged into an outlet.



Inventory code:
HP-SMOKEST
Cost: \$260
EnableMart
888-640-1999
www.enablemart.com

The key message here is not “be scared” but “be prepared.” You must empower yourself and your family/support system to be prepared.

Wireless Smoke Alarm and Sounder

The Kidde Wireless Smoke Alarm is a battery-powered alarm that transmits a signal to the same kind of smoke alarms in the same home to create an interconnected smoke alarm system. When one alarm is triggered,



Alarm

Sounder

it transmits a signal so that the other alarms sound. This smoke alarm is also used with the Wireless Smoke Sounder.

The Kidde Wireless Smoke Sounder provides additional warning for those who may not wake to the sound of traditional alarms, especially people who are hard of hearing. When activated, a loud voice announces “Danger! Fire! Wake up! Follow the escape plan!” and is accompanied by a lower frequency tone, which is designed to wake children and older adults. This is NOT a smoke detector and must be used along with the Wireless Smoke Alarm.

Inventory code:
HP-SMOKE-DT
Cost: \$112
Harris Communications
800-825-6758 (Voice)
800-825-9187 (TTY)
www.harriscomm.com

Gentex Portable Smoke Detector with Strobe

This portable smoke detector is plugged into a wall outlet. When smoke is detected, it emits a 90dB audible signal and activates a high intensity strobe light that will flash 60 times per minute. The unit also contains a battery back-up, but this is for the audible alarm only.



Inventory code:
HP-GENTEX
Cost: \$160
Harris Communications
800-825-6758 (Voice)
800-825-9187 (TTY)
www.harriscomm.com



Krown KA300 Monitor System with Weather Alert Radio

The KA300 Monitor System is a 3-channel alert system for people who are deaf or hard of hearing that is designed to be used with a smoke detector, carbon monoxide detector and weather alert radio. This kit includes: the Midland WR300 Emergency Alert Weather Radio, a weather transmitter, a wireless transmitter, an audible/strobe receiver, a bed shaker, and a receiver.

The Weather Alert Radio with color-coded lights continuously monitors information from the National Weather Service and can be programmed to give early warning information from any of 30 different counties within the

reception area of the user. The AM/FM radio has battery backup and automatically switches to

emergency mode when an alert warning is broadcast. The wireless transmitter attaches to the siren of a smoke detector or carbon monoxide detector. When an alarm sounds, the alert is made by the connected strobe light, 95 dB audible alarm, and the vibrating bed shaker, which is placed under the mattress.

Inventory code: HP-ALARM • Cost:\$400 • Harris Communications • 800-825-6758 (Voice) • 800-825-9187 (TTY) • www.harriscomm.com

Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF)

Many people with disabilities and older Pennsylvanians need to make modifications to their homes or buy equipment— such as adapted vehicles, hearing aids, seat lift chairs— but they don't have the resources to make it happen. That's how PATF can help.

PATF has a low-interest loan program so that people with disabilities can buy the devices they need. PATF also helps people learn about other potential funding resources.

Who does PATF serve?

- PATF is a program for Pennsylvania residents who need assistive technology devices and/or services.
- PATF can help people of all ages, disabilities and health conditions.
- People of *all* income levels may apply for a loan. An applicant must have an ability and willingness to repay a loan.

For information,
call 888-744-1938 or visit www.patf.us.

Emergency Preparedness *Continued from front page*

Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) site on accessible weather alert systems:

http://www.nssl.noaa.gov/users/wood/public_html/NWR/spc-nds-nwr.html

It is important to ask about the accessibility of information and technology, especially as it relates to preparing for emergencies. We need to ask our teachers, employers, law enforcement, government officials and emergency personnel for vital emergency preparedness information. We need to be aware of what our emergency plans are at home, work, school, public transportation and other areas of our life. You can never have too much information. But the wrong information is worthless. It is important that you acquire your information from a trusted source, such as your County Emergency Management Coordinator. Every county has an emergency operations center/office. To find the contact information for your county, go to <http://>

www.pema.state.pa.us/pema/ and click on "County EMA Coordinators."

Your local fire company, police, or place of worship could also be good sources of information. The important thing to remember is to keep on asking until your questions are answered.

If you have any problems getting answers please contact the Institute on Disabilities at 215-204-1356 (voice, TTY) or contact me directly at 215-204-7177 (voice) or gheake@temple.edu (email).

George Heake,
*Institute on Disabilities
Emergency Management
Coordinator*

"— if you got stuck at work and could not get home do you have [those] essentials on hand?"



SUMMER SAFETY TIPS In Case of a Blackout

Historically, most power failures occur in hot summer months. Excessive heat often brings an unstable atmosphere causing severe storms that may bring down power lines. An overload of consumption of electricity is also more likely. As the use of air conditioners, fans, refrigeration units, etc. runs high, so does the risk of a blackout. When a heat wave hints toward the possibility of a blackout, here are some tips to keep in mind when the power goes out.

- Disconnect any appliances you were using
- Leave one light on for when your power returns
- Leave refrigerator/freezer doors closed
- Listen to a portable radio for information (Use the phone or call 911 for emergency only)
- Eliminate unnecessary travel
- Remember, automated teller machines and elevators may not work during outage
- If it is hot outside, stay cool by
 - Moving to lowest level of house
 - Wearing lightweight, light-colored clothing
 - Drinking plenty of water, even if you do not feel thirsty
 - Going to a movie theater, shopping mall, or "cooling shelter"

SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- If you use a battery-operated wheelchair, or other power-dependent equipment, call your power company before rolling blackouts happen. Many utility companies keep a list/map of power-dependent customers in case of an emergency. Ask about alternatives in your area. (Contact your local utility company to learn if this service is available in your community.)
- If you use a motorized wheelchair or scooter, have an extra battery. A car battery also can be used with a wheelchair but will not last as long as a wheelchair's deep-cycle battery. If available, store a lightweight manual wheelchair for backup.
- If you are blind or have a visual disability, store a talking or Braille clock or large-print timepiece with extra batteries.
- If you are deaf or have a hearing loss, consider getting a small portable battery-operated television set. Emergency broadcasts may give information in American Sign Language (ASL) or open captioning.

Adapted from <http://www.buffaloredcross.org/Home/News/ArchivedSummerSafetyTips2006>

Related Websites

www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/

The website for the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Click on the link for the "Emergency Preparedness Guide," which is a PDF file available in English and Spanish.

www.ada.gov/emergencyprepguide.htm

This is the link to "An ADA Guide for Local Governments," published by the Department of Justice.

www.tvfr.com/Dept/em/em_links.html#SPECIAL_POP

This web page, by the Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue in Oregon, contains some useful links about emergency preparedness and special populations.

www.hearinglossweb.com

This is the link for the Hearing Loss Web. Under Issues, click Emergency Preparedness link to see more information, articles, and resources.

www.nobodyleftbehind2.org/ =

Website for Nobody Left Behind - Disaster Preparedness for Persons with Mobility Impairments. This website contains findings of research conducted on 30 randomly selected areas that have recently experienced disasters.

www.ready.gov/america/getakit/disabled.html

The national emergency preparedness site, currently highlighting information about preparing for hurricanes and related flooding. Includes links to PA state and county agencies.

PENNSYLVANIA'S ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY LENDING LIBRARY

Call toll-free:

877-PA AT LEND (VOICE/TTY)

EMAIL: atlend@temple.edu

WEB: <http://disabilities.temple.edu/atlend>

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TEL. 215-204-3370

PA's Assistive Technology Lending Library is funded by the Commonwealth of PA, with partial support from the US Dept. of Education (through PA's Initiative on Assistive Technology) and through the contributions of AT vendors, manufacturers, and users of the Lending Library.

Available in alternate formats, by request

