

LET'S OVERCOME DISABILITIES
TOGETHER AGAINST DISASTERS

AFETLERE KARŞI ENGELLERİ
BİRLİKTE AŞALIM



FIRE PREPAREDNESS FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED





This study has been conducted within the scope of the project numbered 2016-1-TR-KA204-034345 “Let’s Overcome Disabilities Together Against Disasters”, which was financed by Turkish National Agency.

The parts of this study cannot be copied without reference. If used, the title of the study and the project have to be mentioned.

October, 2017

“Funded by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union. However, European Commission and Turkish National Agency cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.”



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union





INTRODUCTION

The number of disasters occurring in the world and in our country has significantly increased recently and these disasters have brought about social, cultural and economic losses. The most effective way to protect yourself from disasters is being prepared against them and turning it into a lifestyle. For a safe life, Be Informed, Make a Plan, Be Prepared and Take Action!

Although disasters are impossible to prevent, minimizing their damage is possible only with a society that is informed, educated and organized. Aiming for each individual to be prepared against disasters and emergencies, this study presents the disadvantaged groups' proper actions within their own means and capabilities.

You can prepare yourself and your loved ones against disasters and emergencies better by evaluating your own personal needs and by preparing an emergency plan that fits these needs.

Do not forget that no one knows your needs, preferences and skills better than you. YOU ARE the expert of YOURSELF!

BEFORE A FIRE

- ◆ There are some simple measures that you can take for fire safety precautions. These are;
 - Using fireproof materials of construction or materials which are difficult to burn,
 - Using illuminated smoke and gas detectors,
 - Having an active fire extinguisher which you can easily reach,
 - Not plugging many electrical appliances into a single socket,
 - Checking electricity and natural gas installations frequently,
 - Setting up an emergency alarm and lighting system,
 - Separating igniting and combustible material sources.



- ◆ Depending on your disability, by making an evaluation with your family, relatives or support person, and if necessary, by getting help from them;
 - Secure your home or office, corridors, windows and other areas in such a way that you can easily leave the building in an emergency. Fix or remove furniture that may block your way out.



Image 1: Fixing items

- ◆ Create a **Disaster Plan** and **Personal Support Network** (People who can help you);
 - Create a Disaster Plan with the people in your support network and decide on how to communicate and to evacuate during emergencies.
 - Create an escape/evacuation plan. Identifying open and safe areas to meet family members after a fire, choose a meeting point near frequently visited places such as home, school or workplace.
 - One of the first steps of disaster preparedness for the disabled individuals is to decide on the people they can trust for support. A personal support network includes people who know you and help you.
 - A Personal Support Network consists of at least three people such as your family, neighbours and colleagues, those who are in walking distance from you.



Image 2: Disaster Plan

- Create your Personal Support Network at home, at work and in the places you spend most of your time.
- People in your support network need to know how to enter your home to check you in case of danger and how to reach you when they cannot hear from you.
- In this way, people in your personal support network and rescue teams can easily reach you for evacuation.
- Make sure the people in your personal support network are aware of your plan. Inform them about the devices you frequently use.
- Perform evacuation drills on a regular basis.
- Inform the staff or administrators in your building or workplace about your disability. This is important for the officers to reach you in case the warnings go unnoticed during a possible fire.



- ◆ Perform **drills** based on different scenarios.
 - Do these drills considering situations in which you are alone or not during a fire. Practise for the things to do before and after a fire in places where you are frequently present.
 - The drills will allow you to develop appropriate action patterns.
 - In order to prepare for evacuation drills, an exit plan must first be made and exit routes should be determined according to the features of the place.

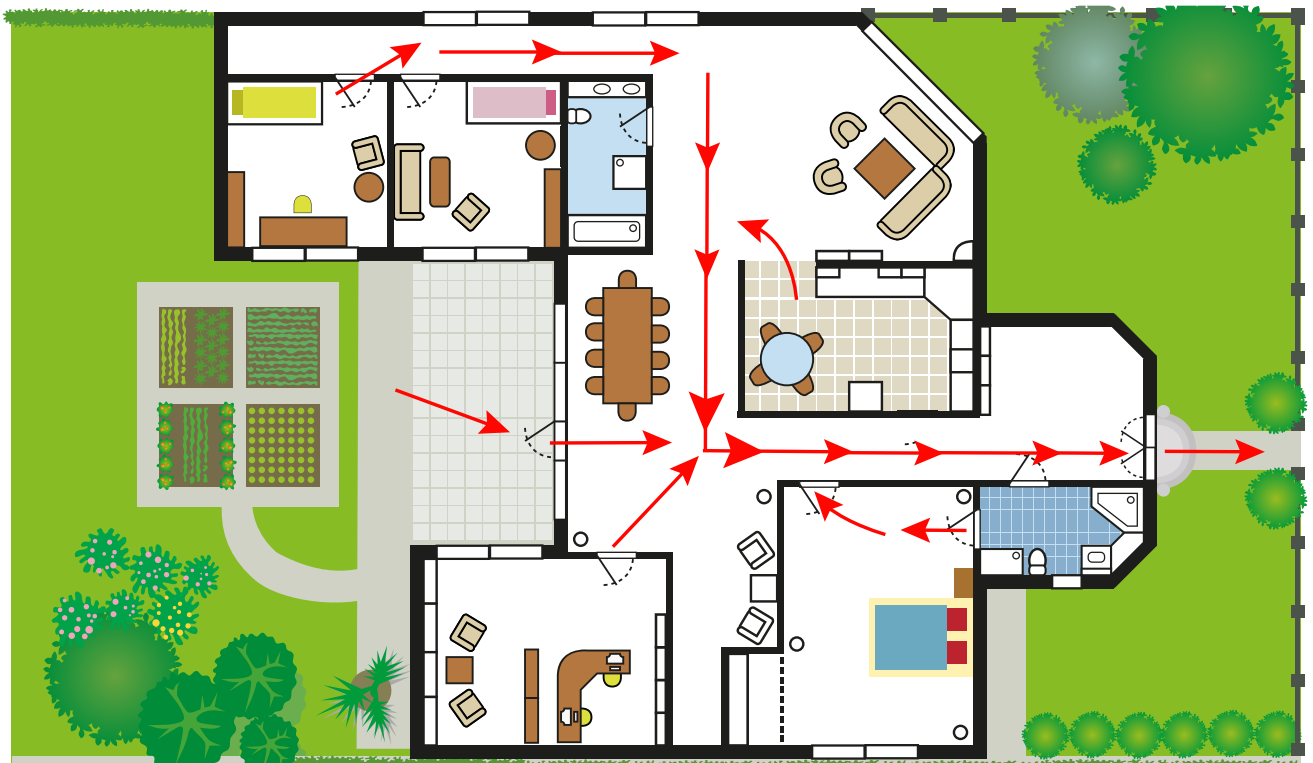
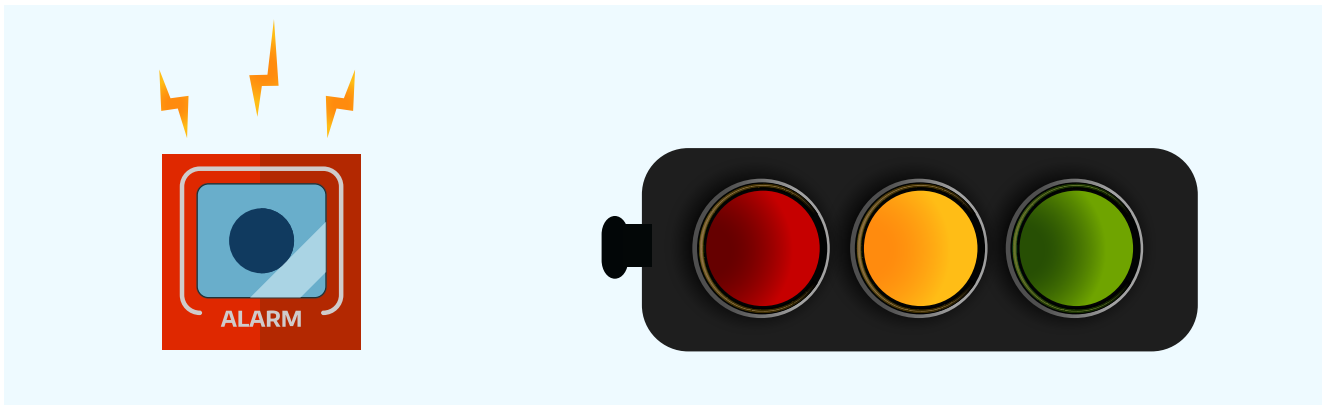


Image 3: Evacuation/exit plan

- Find out the ways to the fire safety corridor, which means the safe area in your location.
- Keep your hearing aids in a place near you or your bed.



- ◆ Have a fire extinguisher in an area that is easily accessible and get support from your local fire brigade and AFAD officers on their use when necessary.
 - Depending on the size of the fire, intervene the initial fire if you can.
- ◆ Make sure that the procedures for construction, use or modification of buildings are based on the “Regulation on the Protection of Buildings from Fire”.
- ◆ Have illuminated and audible alarm systems set up in your house and workplace. (The alarm should have a warning light that you can see, and it should be audible for the people in your support network).



- If possible, get a battery-operated fire alarm. You can set up an alarm system with flashing lights to draw your attention. Check the system’s operation at regular intervals.
- ◆ Make sure that the exit and evacuation doors open outwards.

◆ **Prepare a Disaster and Emergency Kit;**

- Prepare a disaster and emergency kit containing special needs and essential life support materials depending on your disability and keep your kit in easy-to-access locations for you.

- **Recommended content:** Medical supplies, water, dry food, prescription samples, emergency communication information, flashlights and batteries, clothes, whistles, blankets, current photographs of family members, gloves to clean up the ruins, a dust mask and glasses, a spare key for home and car, first aid kit, hygiene materials, baby food, diapers, a feeding bottle, a pacifier etc., a copy of ID, a pen and a notebook, a note including key words about your needs and communication difficulties.

- **Special needs:** Spare hearing aids, hearing aid batteries, etc.

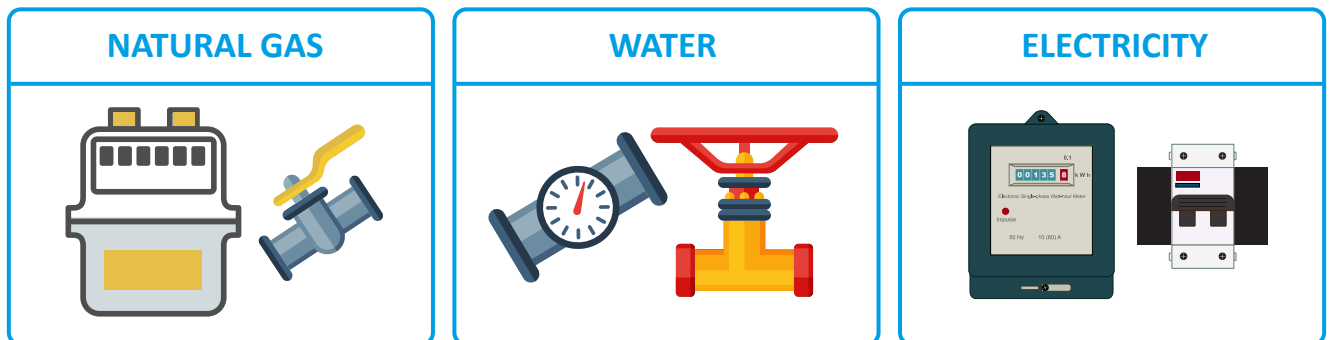
These materials are the recommended content. You can create your kit according to your special needs.

- Check all items in the disaster and emergency kit periodically and renew if necessary (Renewing water, food and batteries regarding their expiration dates and changing the clothes appropriate to the season).





- In your bag, keep a card that explains your hearing loss and how people can communicate you. “I use sign language” or short and simple instructions should be written on the card.
 - Keep copies of important documents and belongings that water might damage in waterproof bags.
 - The disaster and emergency kit should be light to carry.
- ◆ Prepare a **Personal Evaluation List**;
 - Prepare a personal evaluation list that shows the personal skills you can and cannot perform in your daily life and keep your list in your disaster and emergency kit.
 - ◆ Find out where your gas, water and electricity sources are located in your home and learn how to turn them off. The installations should be easily accessible.



- ◆ You can keep your hearing aids in a container that is fastened to your bedside. So you have quick access to them even when you are awakened with panic.
- ◆ **The guide/assistant animals and dogs** are not only a companion in daily life, but also companions in an emergency. The guide/assistant animals can help to safely escape from the danger and to guide the hearing impaired individual during evacuation.
- ◆ Guide dogs can alert their owners to alarms, phones, sounds and warnings.



- ◆ If you have an assistant/ a guide animal;
 - Prepare your disaster and emergency kit according to the care needs of your animal and do not forget to make preparations for them as well.
 - The following list has the basic items that you must have in your kit to meet the needs of your guide/ assistant animal or pet in an emergency. Your disaster and emergency kit should be easy to carry.

Emergency kit contents for animals: Sufficient bottled water, animal food, a spoon, a collar and leash, a harness, blankets and toys, plastic bags, paper towels, bags, sterile gloves, a copy of the report card (ownership information, identity information, veterinary medicines), manual tin-opener, medications the animal uses, vitamins, newspapers, a muzzle, masks (against dust and smoke), food and water can, etc.

- These materials are the recommended content. You can make a kit according to your animal’s specific needs.
- Do not forget to check and renew the items that need changing every 6 months.



Image 5: Emergency kit contents for animals



- ◆ Remember that pets and guide animals may be confused, scared, or injured during or after a fire. Keep a cage or carrier in an accessible place to transport and evacuate your animals. Do not leave them behind.

DURING A FIRE

- ◆ If you are exposed to any fire risk;
 - If you see a flame or smoke and if you get the smell of burns, run the alarm immediately within the possibilities and ask for help by warning people around you.
 - In a widespread fire, leave your place as soon as possible and do not try to put out the fire. However, you can intervene in small fires at their initial phase if possible. Never take a risk that will put your life in danger.
 - Use the **PASS** method when using fire extinguishers to intervene in initial fires:



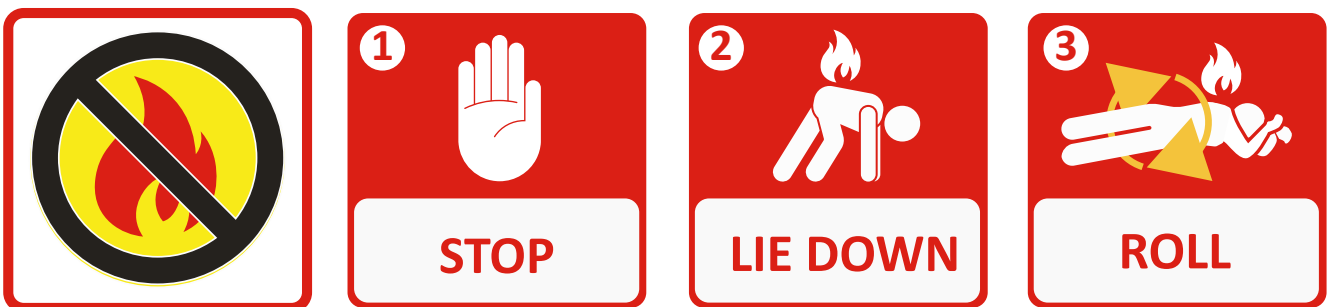
Image 6: How to use a fire extinguisher



- ◆ If you have to intervene in the initial fire, the extinguishers are sprayed aiming at the burning area. A fire extinguisher used in a closed environment will slow down the burning and reduce the flame temperature. This means that enough time will be earned to leave the place.
- ◆ As mentioned before, the fire should be intervened at the initial phase (i.e. within a minute). After that, the person should report it within the possibilities (alarm warning systems etc.) and escape to a safe place.
- ◆ The most risky areas where a fire is likely to occur in the houses are kitchens (stove and pan fires, ovens and water heaters which are left on, etc.).
- ◆ If a pan on the stove catches fire in the kitchen, do not panic and do the following respectively:
 - Switch off the stove,
 - Soak your towel under the tap,
 - Close on the burning pan,
 - Do not move the pan,
 - Never spill water on it.
- ◆ Do not intervene electric fires with water as well.
- ◆ Provide your safety with the evacuation plan you have already prepared and practised. Make sure that evacuation routes are accessible.
- ◆ Try to find alternative routes if the smoke comes from the exit direction or under the door.
- ◆ If the smoke or burning smell comes from another room, test the doors before opening them. Touch the doors with the back of your hand. Do not open the doors that give you a very warm feeling when you touch and if you smell smoke coming from underneath. Opening the door will cause the fire to grow.



- If the temperature is normal, open the door slowly, and if there is still smoke, try to move by crawling on the ground.
 - During the fire, heavy smoke and poisonous gases accumulate in the ceiling, so crouch down and move to a safe location.
- ◆ Never move away from the walls of where you are indoors. Remember that if you move away from the wall in an area with intense smoke, your risk of getting lost is higher. The walls will direct you to the exit door.
- ◆ If the fire is in the direction of escape, evaluate the size of the heat inside by not opening the door completely but opening it slightly. If it is not life threatening, open the door slightly and move to the nearest exit by leaning on the wall and crouching down, to the extent of your ability.
- ◆ If your clothes are ignited, do not try to run, **STOP** where you are, **DROP** yourself to the floor and **ROLL** on the floor to extinguish the flames, protect your face with your hands .



! SMOKE IS MORE FATAL THAN FIRE.
GO TO A SAFE EXIT BY CRAWLING.
DON'T FORGET IF YOUR CLOTHES CATCH FIRE; STOP, LIE DOWN, ROLL!

Image 7: Things to do if clothes catch fire

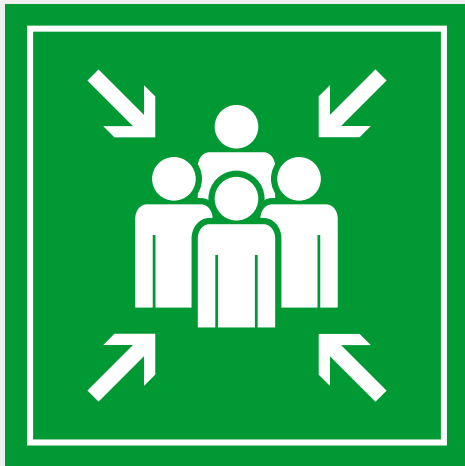
- ◆ In a place with dense smoke, breathe by covering your mouth and nose with a piece of wet wipe or cloth, if possible.



- ◆ If you cannot get out of the room, stay in a position beside a window where you can be seen from outside and ask for help. Do not take shelter under places such as cupboards or tables.
- ◆ If you have a chance, cover door openings and ventilation holes with a damp cloth to prevent outside smoke from entering.
- ◆ In an emergency, you can use the call button to alert people in your support network at home or at work.

AFTER A FIRE

- ◆ Go to the emergency assembly / meeting areas already set in your Disaster Plan and wait there.



- ◆ Carry out a condition evaluation.
 - Try to be calm. Evaluate the way you are affected by the fire, your health condition, and the situation around you.
- ◆ If you have intervened in an initial fire, cool down the area by pouring water to prevent the fire from resurfacing. Open the windows and clean the smoke inside.
- ◆ If you cannot reach the people in your Support Network, ask other people for help.
 - Let them know that you are hearing impaired.