

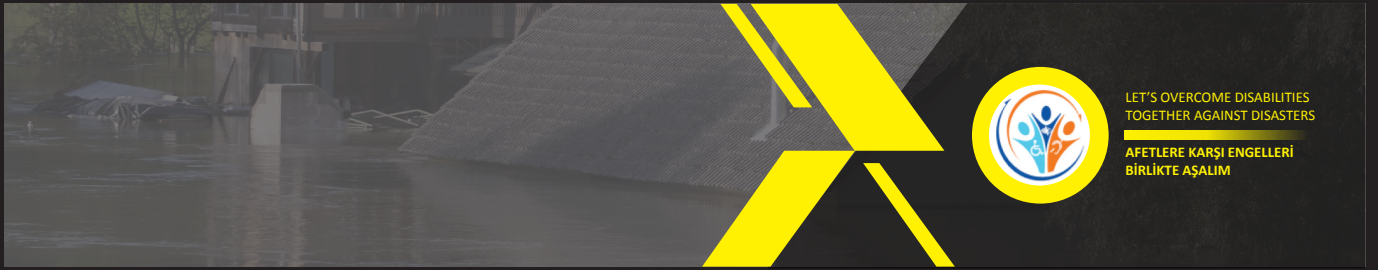
LET'S OVERCOME DISABILITIES
TOGETHER AGAINST DISASTERS

AFETLERE KARŞI ENGELLERİ
BİRLİKTE AŞALIM



FLOOD PREPAREDNESS FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED





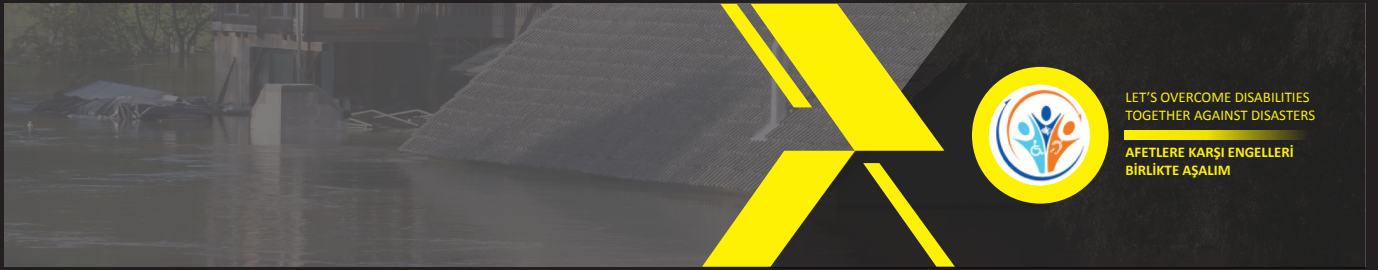
This study has been conducted within the scope of the project numbered 2016-1-TR-KA204-034345 “Let’s Overcome Disabilities Together Against Disasters”, which was financed by Turkish National Agency

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

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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!**



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BEFORE A FLOOD

Depending on your disability, by making an evaluation with your family, relatives or support person, and if necessary, by getting help from them;

- ◆ First, find out about the flood risk of the place you live in.
 - Make your home or office, corridors, stairwells, doors, windows, and other areas safer by checking/having it checked not to prevent you from leaving the building during a possible flood. Ensure that the furniture that can block your way out is fixed or removed.



Image 1: Fixing items

- ◆ **Create a Disaster Plan and a Personal Support Network;**
 - Create a Disaster Plan with the people in your support network and decide on how to communicate and to evacuate during emergencies.
 - Create an evacuation/ escape plan. High and safe places to meet family members after a flood should be determined with alternatives. For this, the chosen meeting point should be close to the places frequently visited like home, school and workplace. In case of being somewhere else other than these places during a flood, where and how the family members will meet should also be determined.



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- 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 can contact you, check if you are well and help you when you are in need during emergencies.
- 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.
- Create your Personal Support Network at home, at work and in the places where 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.
- Make sure the people in your personal support network are aware of your plan. Inform them about your support devices and necessary documents.



Image 2: Disaster Plan



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- When there is no accessible exit and you need to evacuate the building you are in, determine the most appropriate way of evacuation with alternatives and practise with the people in your support network.
- Especially if you are staying in a multi-storey apartment, a building complex or a large workplace, provide the staff and administrators with a list about your disability, your special needs, your building and living space. This is important for active intervention by officers in the case of a possible disaster or emergency.
- ◆ Perform **drills** based on different scenarios.
 - In these drills, consider situations such as the presence and absence of persons on your support network during a flood. Drills should both include what to do during the flood and the evacuation after the flood and should be practised in all places where you are frequently present (home, school, workplace). Tatbikat sırasında karşılaşılabilecek sorunlar ve zorluklar planınızı revize etmenizi ve uygun davranış şekilleri geliştirmenizi sağlayacaktır.
 - Problems and difficulties encountered during the drills will allow you to revise your plan and develop appropriate action patterns.
 - In order to prepare for evacuation drills, first an exit plan must be made. While making this plan, the possibilities of being alone and being with the people in the support network during the flood should be considered. The plan should be applied with the people in the support network, and the exit routes should be determined with their alternatives by evaluating the features of the place where you are during the flood.
- ◆ Keep your contact lenses, glasses, assistive devices, prostheses or your cane near you or your bed.
- ◆ Depending on your vision, place safety lights that automatically switch on to the rooms and corridors to illuminate the evacuation route in the event of a power failure.
- ◆ Make sure that the exit and evacuation doors open outwards.



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- ◆ Before a flood risk, keep your important documents and support equipment at a higher level to protect them against flood damage.

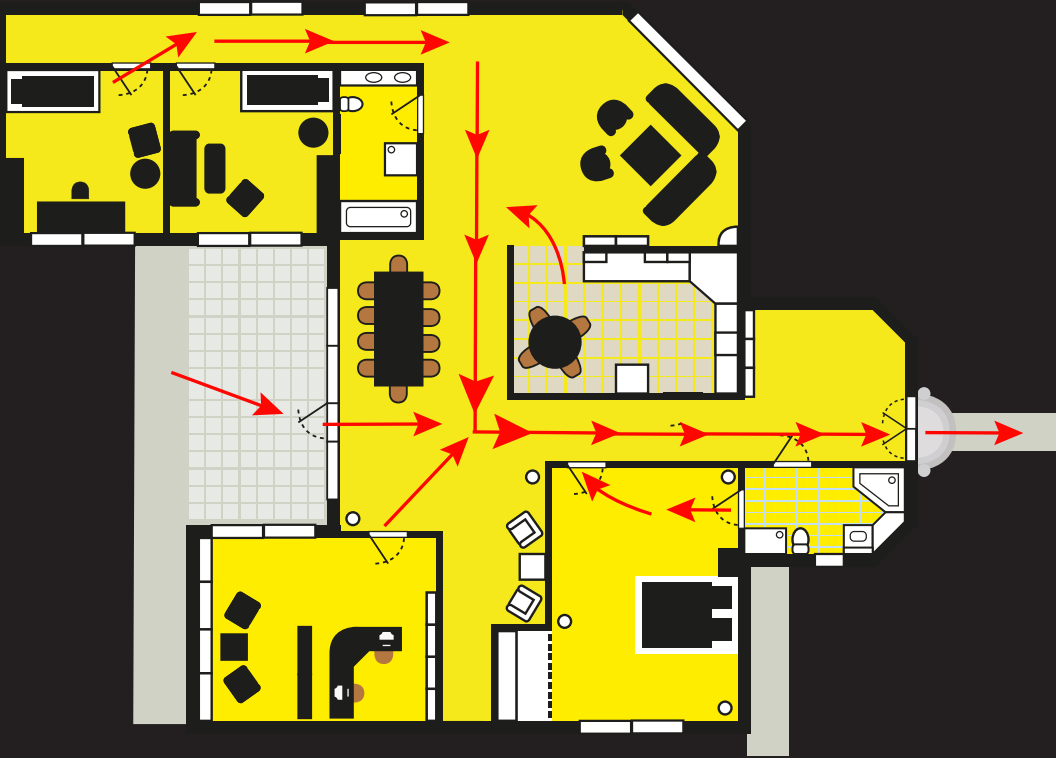


Image 3: Evacuation/exit plan

- ◆ Prepare a **Disaster and Emergency Kit**.
 - Disasters and emergencies can happen anytime anywhere, and you may not find an opportunity to search for or get the supplies you need. 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, hygiene materials, emergency contact information, a copy of important documents and contact details of people in your support network, blankets, current photos of family members, a magnifying glass, batteries, clothes, a whistle, work gloves to clean the ruins, first aid kit, a photocopy of identification, a dust mask and glasses, a spare key for your home, baby food, diapers, a feeding bottle, a pacifier etc.



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Image 4: Disaster and Emergency Kit

Special needs: Eyeglasses, a foldable cane, prostheses being used, a talking clock, a strong and wide beamed flashlight for those with low vision, contact lenses and solution if you use them.

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*).
- Keep copies of important documents and belongings that might be damaged by water in waterproof materials.
- When preparing the disaster and emergency kit, make sure that it is at an appropriate weight and is easy to carry for everyone, especially regarding the disabled individual's condition.



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- If the devices and equipment used are of such a size that they cannot be put into the bag, be careful to keep them in a safe place and always make sure they stand side by side with the kit.
- Keep your disaster and emergency kit ready for easy access.
- Mark the items in your disaster bag using coloured tape, embossed print or braille alphabet.

◆ **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. In this way, after a disaster or emergency, the staff can understand better your needs depending on your disability and intervene more effectively.

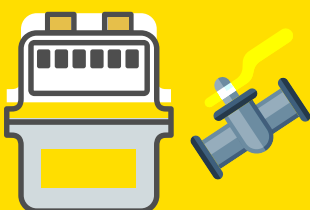
◆ **Identify accessible places in a hotel or asylum centre in your immediate vicinity or outside your area for a possible temporary accommodation after the flood.**

◆ **Use emergency whistles in the case of being stuck or trapped in somewhere.**

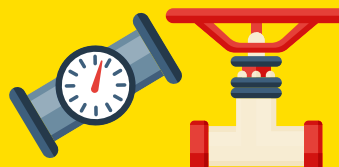
◆ **Find out where your gas, water and electricity sources are located in your home and learn how to turn them off. Have the installations made accessible.**

- Identify gas, water, and electric shutoff valves with bright coloured tape, large printed labels, or Braille text.
- Turn off the electricity only if there isn't flood hazard yet and the area around the fuse box is completely dry.

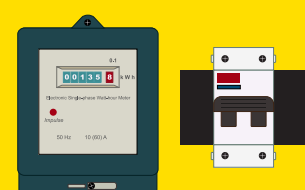
NATURAL GAS



WATER



ELECTRICITY





- ◆ Before you sleep, place your glasses or visual aid devices in a container that is fastened to your bedside. This will make it easier to have quick access to the devices when awakened with panic.
- ◆ Participate in training programs for flood fighting. Get first aid training.
- ◆ Have your building and workplace insured against flood risks.
- ◆ If a flood risk is predictable, ensure that basement floors, basement entrances and doors are protected with sandbags or barriers.
 - Have the drainage channels and toilet connections on the basement covered with a wooden stopper.
- ◆ **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 visually impaired individual during evacuation. If you have a guide/assistant 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 bag to meet the needs of your guide/assistant animal or pet in an emergency. As evacuation may be necessary, make sure that your disaster and emergency kit is accessible and easy to carry.

Emergency bag contents for animals: Sufficient bottled water, animal food, spoon, a leash and a collar, a harness, blankets and toys, plastic bags, paper towels, bags, sterile gloves, a copy of the report card (ownership information, identity information, veterinary documents), manual tin-opener, medications that 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 special needs..
- Do not forget to check and renew the items that need changing every 6 months.



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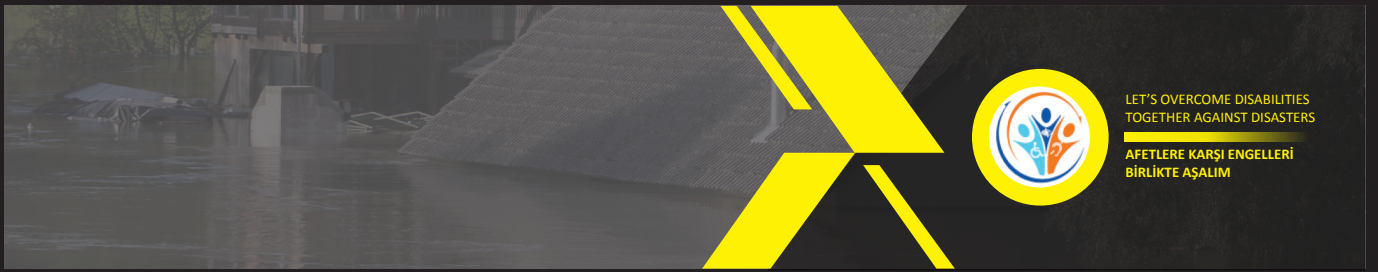


Image 5: Emergency kit contents for animals.

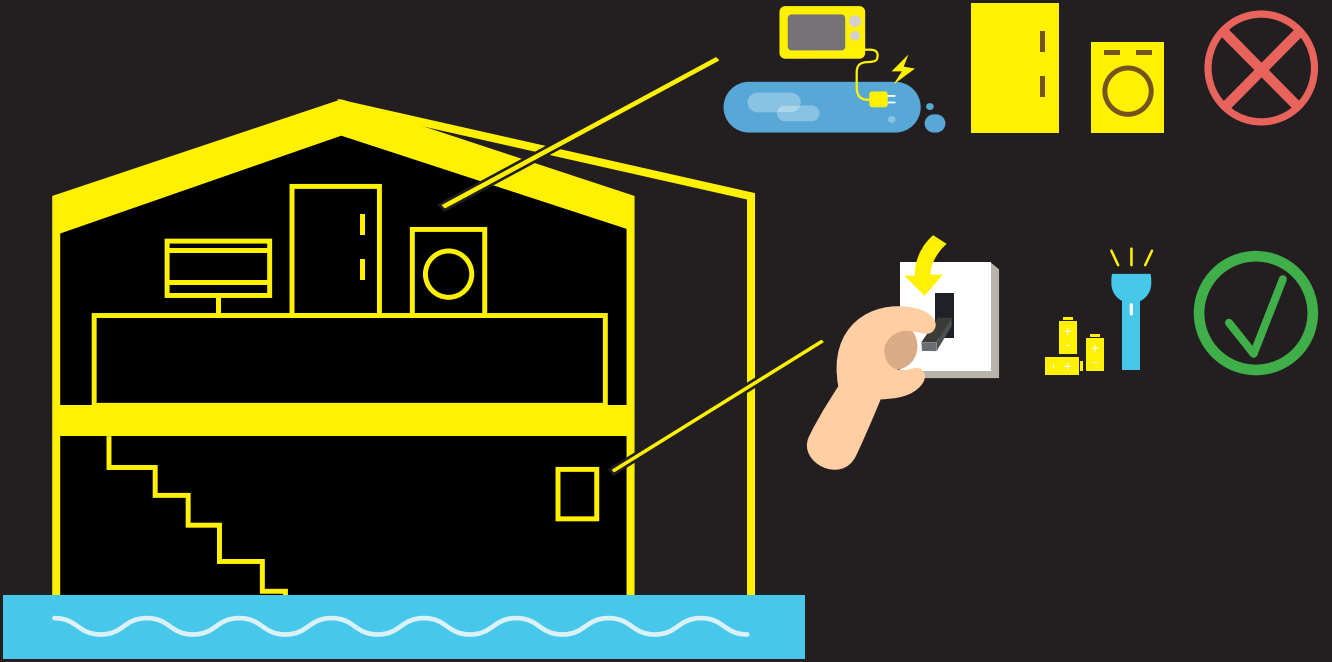
- ◆ Remember that pets and guide animals may be confused, scared, or injured during or after a flood. Keep a cage or carrier in an accessible place to transport and evacuate your animals. Do not leave them behind.

DURING A FLOOD

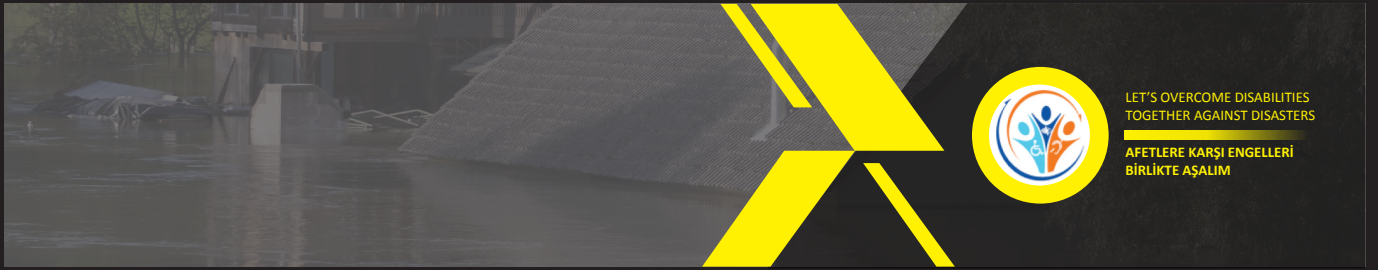
- ◆ If you are exposed to any flood risk;
 - Follow local radio and TV channels for emergency news and instructions.
 - If you detect or smell any gas leaks, turn off your natural gas valve or your gas hood. Do not use lighters and matches. Do not use electrical switches and sockets.
 - If the authorities notify that evacuation of the houses is necessary, unplug electrical appliances; switch off electrical circuits and gas lines.



- Do not use power tools and light in case of a gas leak. Use a battery-powered flashlight.



- ◆ If you are told not to go out by the authorities, go upstairs in your building and stay in the middle of the building, away from the windows. If necessary, get help from support people like family members, co-workers or your neighbours.
- ◆ If the vehicle in which you are stops during the flood, get off immediately, leaving the vehicle where it is, and go up a higher altitude. Remember that the vast majority of deaths take place in vehicles.
- ◆ Do not try to go into the floodwater that enters the basement or garage.
- ◆ Do not go through the flowing water. If you need to get into the water, make sure the water is not flowing and check how deep it is with a stick, bat or cane.
- ◆ The water at the level of your ankle is strong enough to drag you while the water at the level of the knee can drag vehicles. Do not enter the floodwaters.



- ◆ If you are out during the flood, stay away from the pit areas with the assistance of people around you. Go to high places.
- ◆ Remember that short-term precipitation will cause intense sudden flooding and long-term precipitation will cause rivers to overflow. Places such as streambeds, rivers, ditches, valleys and canyons are exposed to sudden floods, so stay away from these places.

AFTER A FLOOD

- ◆ Carry out a condition evaluation.
 - Try to be calm. Evaluate the way you are affected by the flood, your health condition, and the situation around you.
- ◆ If you cannot reach the person in your support network, ask someone else for help.
 - Report them that you are visually impaired.

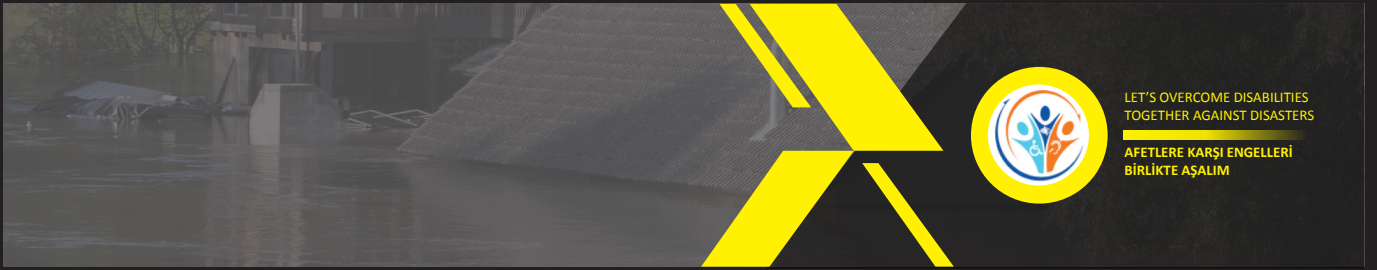


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- ◆ If your building is exposed to flood waters, do not attempt to cut the electricity off. Leave your home immediately according to your evacuation plan, and do not enter the house until the warning of the authorities.
- ◆ Go to the emergency assembly/meeting areas previously determined in your Disaster Plan and wait there.



- ◆ Be careful for potential hazards such as holes and pits, broken glass and debris that can appear after the flood. Proceed by checking waterholes with a stick or a bat while moving.
- ◆ Be careful if you are moving on floors and stairs covered with mud after a flood. They can be slippery.
- ◆ Follow the instructions from the authorities on the radio and communication tools in your disaster and emergency kit.
- ◆ If you suspect from its smell or taste that your drinking water has been contaminated, do not drink it.
 - Do not use the water if you do not know its source. Be careful to use bottled water.
- ◆ Since floodwaters can drag harmful insects and animals, make sure your living areas are well controlled after the flood.



- ◆ Have your property checked for damage. When checking, make sure battery-powered flashlight and waterproof shoes are used.
- ◆ Make sure the items that have been in contact with floodwaters are cleaned before using them.
- ◆ Stay away from seashores, lakeshores and riverbanks.
- ◆ Landslips and landslides may occur after the flood, so stay away from risky places.
- ◆ Stay away from natural gas pipes, electric poles and lines.