

LET'S OVERCOME DISABILITIES
TOGETHER AGAINST DISASTERS

AFETLERE KARŞI ENGELLERİ
BİRLİKTE AŞALIM



FLOOD PREPAREDNESS FOR THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED





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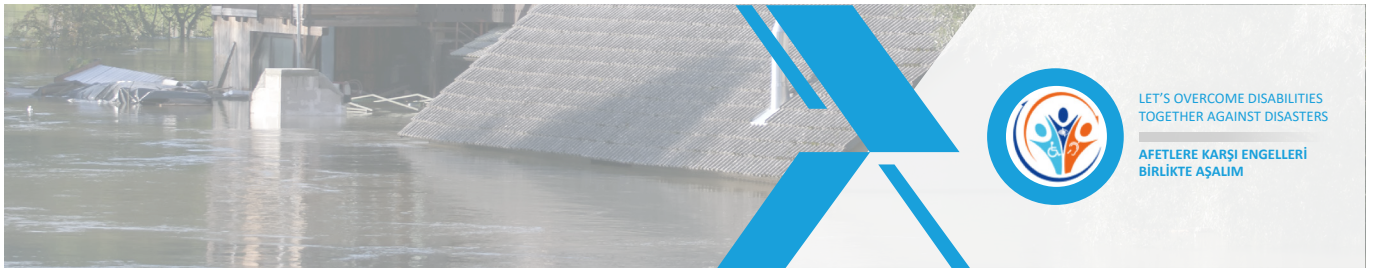
INTRODUCTION

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!



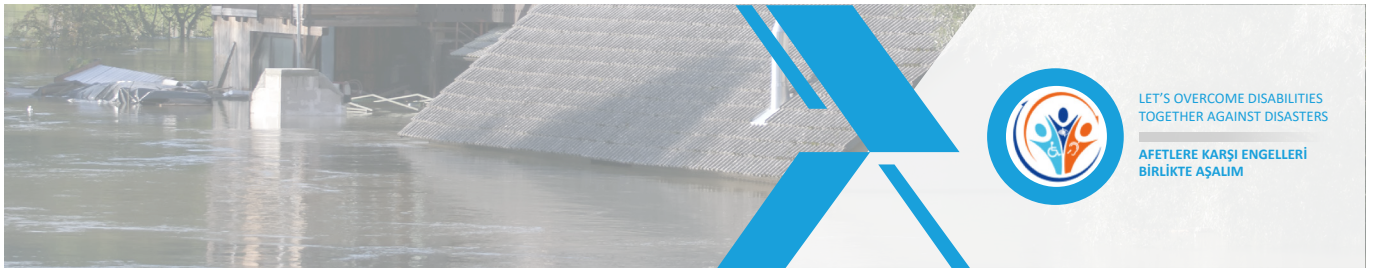
BEFORE A FLOOD

- ◆ First, find out about the flood risk of the place you live in.
- ◆ Secure your home or office, corridors, stairwells, doors, 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

- ◆ If the disabled person is confined to bed, the location of the bed must be chosen well. The bed should be put away from windows and there should be durable and fixed items around it. The disaster and emergency kit should also be in this section.
- ◆ 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 escape/evacuation plan. High and safe places to meet family members after a flood should be determined with their alternatives. 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.



Image 2: Disaster Plan

- If you use a wheelchair or electric wheelchair, make sure that, in your disaster plan, all the corridors and evacuation ways to the exit are accessible for wheelchairs. If not, make them accessible.
- 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 the support equipment and necessary documents.
 - If you use a wheelchair or an electric wheelchair and need to evacuate a multi-storey building, keep an evacuation chair or a stretcher available at the stairwell of the same floor where you work or live. In this way, the people in your personal support network and rescue teams can easily reach you for evacuation.
 - 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 the officers to reach you and actively intervene 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 the people on your support network during a flood. Drills should include both what to do during the flood and evacuation after the flood, and they should be practised in all places (home, school, workplace) where you are frequently present.
 - 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.

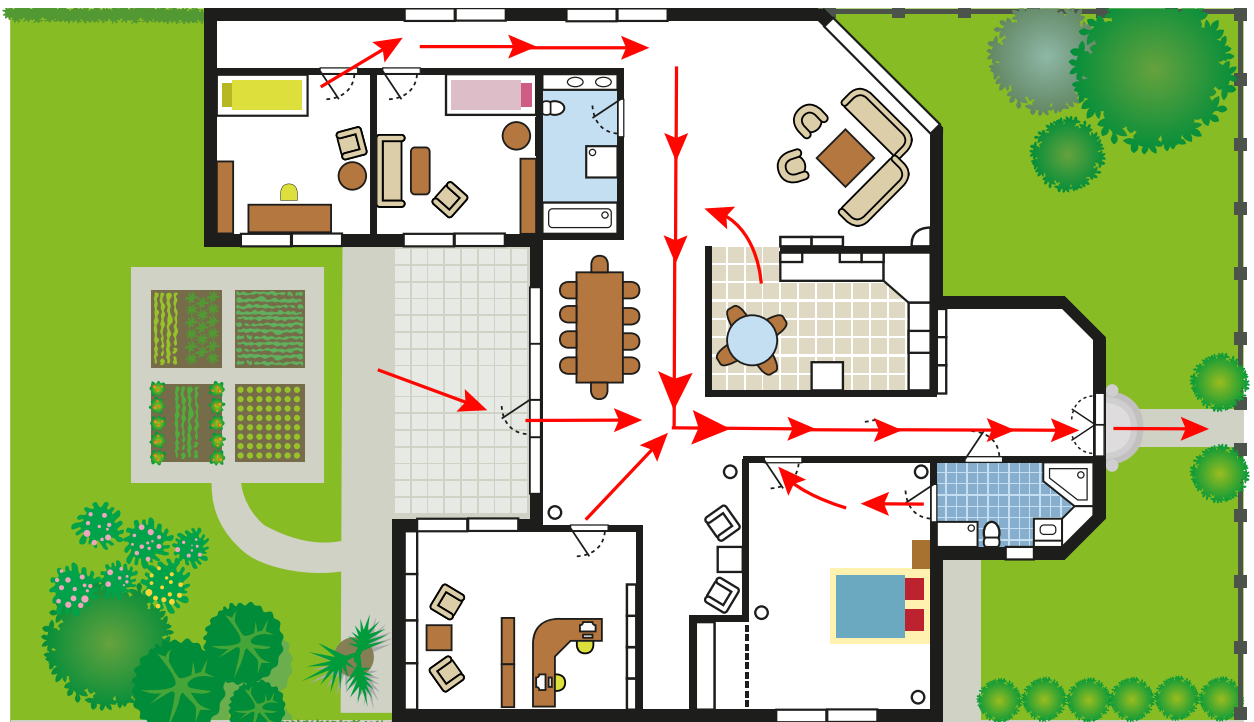


Image 3: Evacuation/exit plan

- The attendant person in the support network should take responsibility for evacuating the physically disabled person with a very limited ability to move or who is confined to bed.
- ◆ Depending on your disability, keep your assistive equipment such as shoes, prostheses, wheelchair, walker or walking cane near you or your bed.
- ◆ Before a flood risk, keep your important documents, prostheses and other support equipment at a higher level to protect them against flood damage.
- ◆ Make sure that the exit and evacuation doors open outwards.



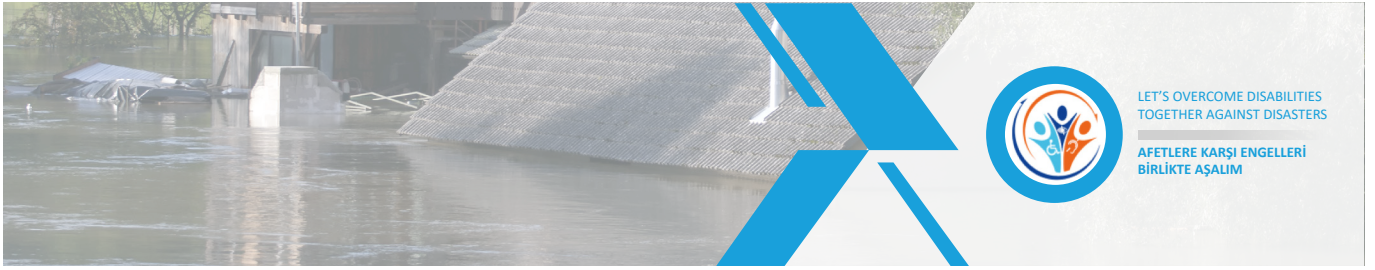
◆ **Prepare a Disaster and Emergency Kit;**

- 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.

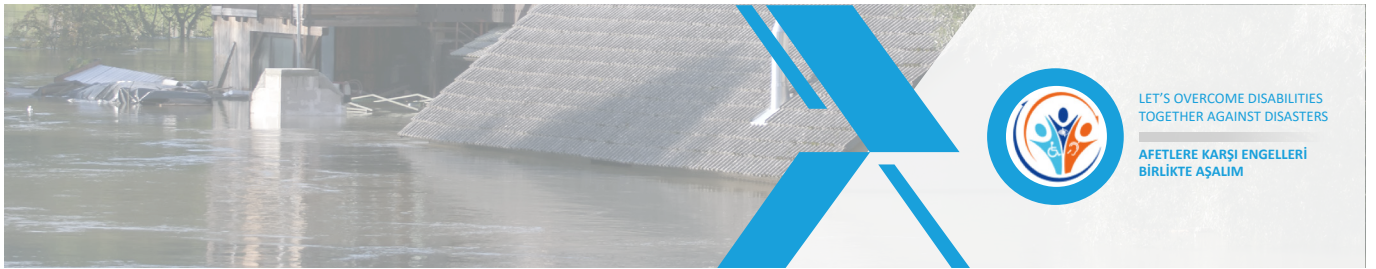
- **Recommended content:** Medical supplies, water, dry food, emergency contact information, a note on the difficulties in communication, a copy of important documents (insurance, title deed, ID, passport, prescriptions etc.) and contact details of people in your support network, a flashlight and batteries, a radio, clothes, a whistle, work gloves to move the wheelchair safely and to clean the ruins, hygiene supplies, first aid kit, dust mask and goggles, a blanket, current photos of family members, spare keys of your car and home, baby food, diapers, a feeding bottle, a pacifier etc.



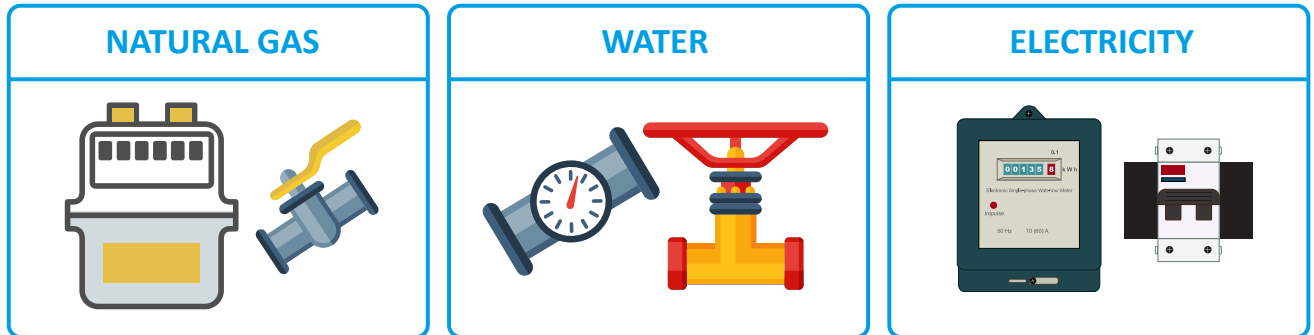
Image 4: Disaster and Emergency Kit



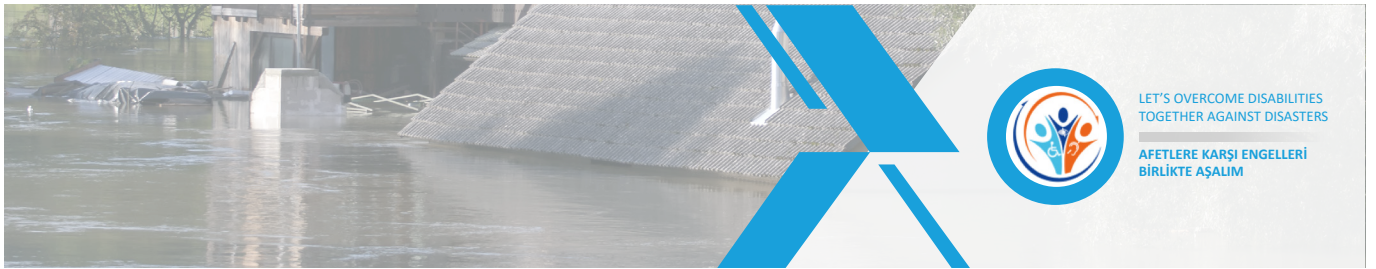
- **Special needs:** a foldable cane, a portable crutch, an oxygen mask, a wheel repair kit if you use a wheelchair, a spare battery for electric wheelchairs etc. depending on your need. These materials are the recommended content. You can create your kit according to your special needs.
 - Check all 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 bags.
 - When preparing the disaster and emergency kit, make sure it has an appropriate shape and weight, which makes it easy to carry.
 - If the devices and equipment used are of such a size that they cannot be put into the kit, keep them in a safe place and always make sure they stand side by side with the kit.
 - Keep your disaster and emergency kit next to or attached to your walker, wheelchair or electric wheelchair.
- ◆ **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.
- ◆ If you are using a tool or device, make sure you have a written document that explains how it works, and if necessary, have contact information of the places it can be obtained from.
- ◆ If you are using an electric wheelchair, also keep a lightweight manual chair in an easily accessible place in case of an emergency. Apart from its size and weight, also make sure that it is portable and foldable.



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



- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Identify accessible places in a hotel or asylum centre in your immediate vicinity or outside your area in case of a possible need for temporary accommodation after a disaster.
- ◆ **The guide/assistant animals and dogs** are not only companions in daily life, but also in an emergency. The guide/assistant animals can help to safely escape from the danger and to guide the physically disabled individual during evacuation. If you have a guide/ assistant animal;
 - While preparing your disaster and emergency kit, consider their care needs 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. As evacuation may be necessary, make sure that your disaster and emergency kit is accessible and easy to carry.



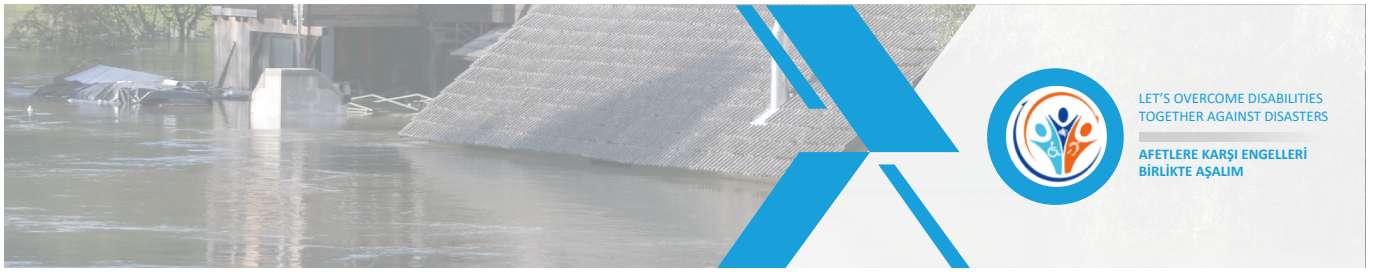
Emergency kit contents for animals: Sufficient bottled water, animal food, spoon, a collar and leash, a harness, a blanket and toys, plastic bags, paper towels, bags, sterile gloves, a copy of the report card (ownership information, identity information, veterinary documents), manual tin-opener, medications 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.



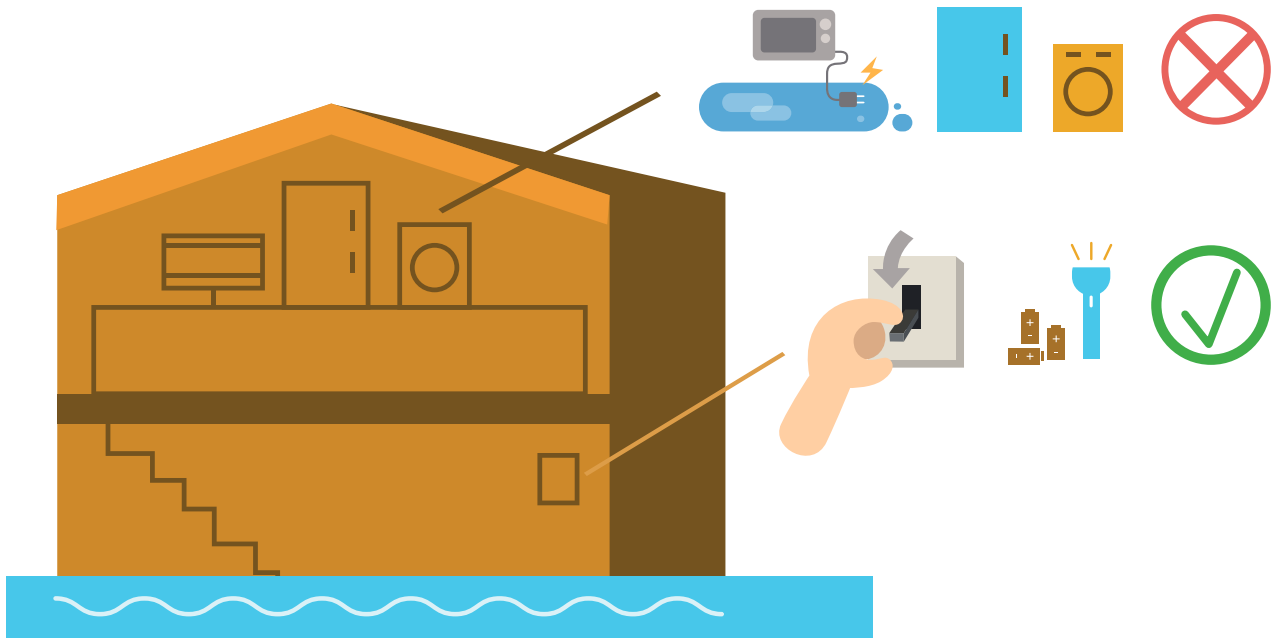
Image 5: Emergency kit contents for animals.

- ◆ 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.

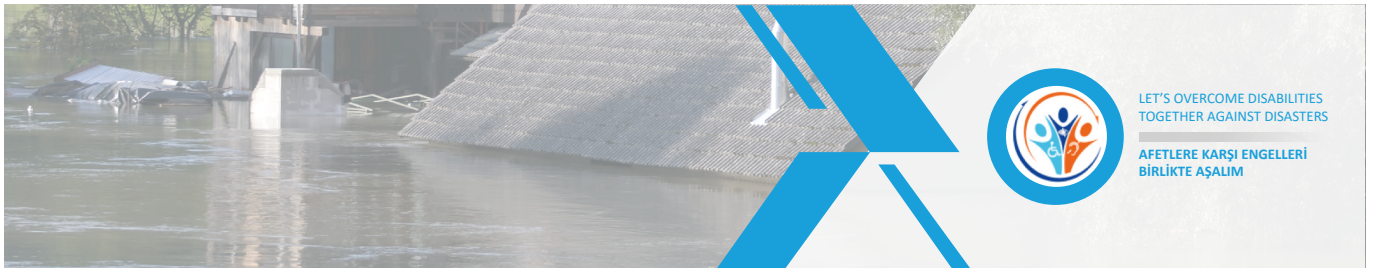


DURING A FLOOD

- ◆ 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. Turn off the electricity only if there isn't flood hazard yet and the area around the fuse box is completely dry.
 - If your vehicle stops during the flood, get off and leave it immediately.



- ◆ If you are on your vehicle during the flood, do not try to use a road covered with water. In the case of a breakdown, go up a higher altitude. Remember that the vast majority of deaths take place in the car.
- ◆ 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.



- ◆ Flowing water with a depth of 15-cm on average can move or turn over your wheelchair. Do not go into the flowing water with your wheelchair or electric wheelchair.
- ◆ 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 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 you are out during the flood, stay away from the pit areas; try to reach higher places to the extent of your ability to move.
- ◆ Do not use power tools and light in case of a gas leak. Use a battery-powered flashlight.

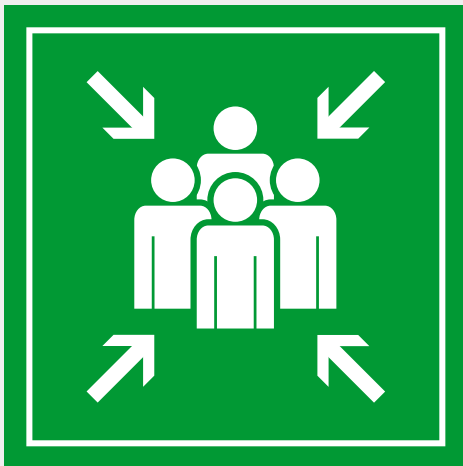


- ◆ Remember that short-term precipitation will cause intense sudden flooding and long-term precipitation will cause rivers to overflow. Places such as streambeds, rivers, ditches, valleys and canyons are exposed to sudden floods, so stay away from these places.
- ◆ If someone else is going to help your evacuation, explain them how to carry your wheelchair, electric wheelchair or walker, and how to carry you fast and safely depending on your disability and health conditions. Give clear, short and precise instructions.

For example, “Fold my wheelchair”, “My walker is beside the bed”, “Take my oxygen cylinder”, “Do not carry on your shoulder”.

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.
- ◆ Go to the emergency meeting/assembly points already set in your disaster plan and wait there.





- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Be careful for potential hazards such as holes and pits, broken glass and debris that can appear after the flood.



- ◆ Follow the instructions from the authorities on the radio and communication tools in your disaster and emergency kit.
- ◆ If you suspect from its smell, taste or colour 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.
- ◆ Check your property for damage. When checking, use battery-powered flashlight and waterproof shoes.
- ◆ Be careful with floors and stairs covered with mud. They can be slippery. Especially if you are using a cane, a walker etc., you may slip and fall down.
- ◆ Make sure the items that have been in contact with floodwaters are cleaned before using them.
- ◆ Since floodwaters can drag harmful insects and animals, check your living areas well after the flood.



- ◆ 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.