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# People with Special Needs

## Persons with Disabilities

### Before an earthquake:



- Write down any specific needs, limitations, and capabilities that you have, and any medications you take. Make a copy of the list and put it in your purse or wallet.
- Find someone (a spouse, roommate, friend, neighbor, relative, or co-worker) to help you in case of an emergency. Give them the list. You may wish to provide a spare key to your home, or let them know where they can find one in an emergency.

### During an earthquake:

- If you are confined to a wheelchair, try to get under a doorway or into an inside corner, lock the wheels, and cover your head with your arms. Remove any items that are not securely attached to the wheelchair.
- If you are able, seek shelter under a sturdy table or desk. Stay away from outer walls, windows, fireplaces, and hanging objects.
- If unable to move from a bed or chair, protect yourself from falling objects by covering up with blankets and pillows.
- If you are outside, go to an open area away from trees, telephone poles, and buildings, and stay there.

### After an earthquake:

- If you are trapped, try to attract attention to your location.
- Turn on your battery-operated TV or radio to receive emergency information and instructions.
- If you can, help others in need.

# Children's Needs



Fear is a normal reaction to danger. A child may be afraid of recurrence, injury, or death after an earthquake. They may fear being separated from their family or being left alone. Children may even interpret disasters as punishment for real or imagined misdeeds. Children will be less likely to experience prolonged fear or anxiety if they know what to expect before, during, and after an earthquake. Talking to children openly will also help them overcome fears.

## Here are some suggestions:

- Explain that an earthquake is a natural event and not anyone's fault.
- Talk about your own experiences with natural disasters, or read aloud books about earthquakes.
- Encourage your child to express feelings of fear. Listen carefully and show understanding.
- Your child may need both verbal and physical reassurance that everything will be all right. Tell your child that the situation is not permanent.
- Include your child in clean-up activities. It is comforting to the child to watch the household begin to return to normal and to have a job to do.

**NOTE:** Symptoms of anxiety may not appear for weeks or even months after an earthquake, and can affect people of any age. If anxiety disrupts daily activities for any member of your family, seek professional assistance through a school counselor, community religious organization, your physician, or a licensed professional listed under "mental health services" in the yellow pages of your telephone directory.