

Handling Emergencies:

A Guide to Personal Safety & Emergency Management

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About this guide

This Guide will help you – a person receiving in-home waiver services – handle emergencies and make them less likely to happen. It will also prepare you to work with your personal agent or case manager to make sure your services address your health and safety concerns. Part of your personal agent’s or case manager’s job is to help you prevent emergencies, and be prepared if an emergency occurs.

An **emergency** is a situation or event that places your health or life in danger and requires immediate action or medical attention to prevent physical harm or hospitalization.

The purpose of the guide is to help you:

- ✓ Think about your health and safety concerns;
- ✓ Prevent and prepare for emergencies; and
- ✓ Talk to your personal agent or case manager to get the most from your waiver services.

The guide is divided into six sections:

1. Medications
2. Medical conditions
3. Preventing abuse, neglect and exploitation
4. Backup supports
5. Home safety
6. Preparing for disasters

You can use this guide by yourself or with assistance from someone else. You can also bring it to meetings with your personal agent or case manager to help you talk about your services or supports. To use the guide, we recommend that you follow these steps.

Steps to using the guide:

1. *Read the guide by yourself or with help from someone else.* You can read the guide all at once or read it little bits at a time. It’s up to you.

2. *Complete the sections that apply to you. Skip sections that don't apply.* Look through the guide to choose the sections that are most important to you. It's not necessary to complete these sections all at once. In fact, it's easier when you do little bits at a time.
3. *Complete the Emergency Information Form on page 3 and post it on your refrigerator.* It's helpful to share this form with your family or people who provide support in your home – just in case you need help in an emergency. *Instructions for completing this form are on page 4 of this guide.*
4. *Share your health and safety concerns with your personal agent or case manager.* Information in this guide will help you talk about your concerns when you meet with your personal agent or case manager. That way you can make sure you receive the supports you need to stay safe and healthy and reduce your risks of experiencing an emergency.
5. *Regularly review your Emergency Information Form (page 3) and Medications Chart (page 6).* Update the forms when you move or your information or medications change.

Throughout the guide, we suggest that you tell your family members or support persons/caregivers about your health and safety concerns and your needs for support in case of emergency. However, *this is your choice!*

Family members and support persons/caregivers will likely provide assistance to you in an emergency. The more they know about your health and safety concerns, the better they will be able to assist you when you need it most. That's why we're encouraging you to share some personal information.

Also, we recommend that you share your health and safety concerns with your personal agent or case manager. Your personal agent or case manager knows what services you are eligible to receive. He or she can help you make the best choices about your services so that you're getting the services you need to stay safe and healthy and prevent emergencies.

Emergency Information Form

Personal Information

Name _____ Birth date _____

Home address _____

Health Insurance company name and ID number: _____

Medicaid / Medicare #: _____

Emergency Contacts

#1 friend or family member Phone Cell

#2 friend or family member Phone Cell

Support person/caregiver Phone Cell

Support person/caregiver Phone Cell

Case manager/Personal agent Phone Cell

Medical Information

Primary Care Physician Phone

Specialist Phone

Pharmacy Phone

See back side for other important information

Other Important Information

Diagnosed medical conditions:

Warning signs:

Allergies:

Communication needs:

Equipment needs:

My Shelter Kit is located here:

My Emergency Kit is located here:

Post this form on your refrigerator

Instructions for using the Emergency Information Form

Complete this form and post it on your refrigerator for easy access. By doing so, you can tell family members, support persons/caregivers, paramedics and/or physicians how to care for you if you are unable to direct them. We recommend that you update this form when things like your address, phone number, or emergency contacts change.

Personal Information

- ✓ Include your name, current address and phone number and birth date.
 - ✓ Include your health insurance and Medicaid/Medicare information. This will be helpful if you need medical care in an emergency.
-

Emergency Contacts

- ✓ List the names and numbers of two people you trust (usually friends or family members) that you would call if your support person/ caregiver does not show up. See the Backup supports section on page 12 for tips about who to list on the Emergency Information Form.

List the names and numbers of:

- ✓ Your support persons or caregivers
 - ✓ Your personal agent or case manager
-

Medical Information

- ✓ Primary care physician – List the doctor you visit for most of your medical needs.
- ✓ Specialist – List the doctor you see only for certain medical conditions. For example, if you have heart disease, you might see a Cardiologist.
- ✓ Pharmacy – List the place where you regularly get your prescriptions filled.

Other Important Information

- ✓ Medical conditions – List any medical conditions that you have been diagnosed with. See the Medical conditions section on page 8 for more information.
- ✓ Warning signs – List symptoms that show your medical condition is getting worse. See the Medical conditions section on page 8 for more information.
- ✓ Allergies – If you have any food, medication, or environmental allergies list them here.
- ✓ Communication needs – List specific communication needs like sign-language interpreting or communication technologies that you use.
- ✓ Equipment needs – List the types of adaptive equipment you rely on like a wheelchair, a communication device or a service animal.
- ✓ Shelter Kit and Emergency Kit – Describe where these kits are located. See the Preparing for disasters section on page 16 and 17 for more information.

Extra copies of the Emergency Information Form and Medications Chart can be found at the end of this booklet.

Medications Chart

See instructions on the next page

Medications	Dose	Frequency	Who prescribed	Taken for	If I miss a dose:

Post this chart on your refrigerator... Update it when medications change

MEDICATIONS

The list of tips below can help you stay safe and healthy with your medications and help you prevent emergencies.

If you do not take medications, skip this section

Tips:

- ✓ If you take one or more medications, we recommend that you complete the **Medications Chart** on the preceding page. Here's how to complete the chart:
 1. List each of the medications you take in the "Medications" column.
 2. Write how much you are supposed to take in the "Dose" column.
 3. Write when you are supposed to take your medications in the "Frequency" column.
 4. In the "Who prescribed" column, list the doctor who prescribed each one.
 5. Write the reason you take each medication in the "Taken for" column.
 6. In the last column, write what to do if you miss a dose for each medication.
- ✓ Share your Medications Chart with family members and support persons/caregivers just in case they need to help you in an emergency.
- ✓ Take your medications exactly as prescribed. If you take medications incorrectly, you could get sick or experience an emergency.
- ✓ Know which medications can be dangerous if you take them incorrectly. If you're unsure, call your doctor or pharmacy.
- ✓ Always get your prescriptions filled at the same pharmacy so your pharmacist can check for harmful drug interactions when you order prescriptions.
- ✓ If a medication makes you feel uncomfortable, your doctor may be able to prescribe a different medication with fewer side effects.
- ✓ Talk with your family members or support persons/caregivers about how they can support you to take your medications correctly. Support could include reminders to take medications, pre-pouring, or someone to pick up your refills.
- ✓ If you don't have enough support to take your medications correctly, call your personal agent or case manager or talk about it during an upcoming meeting.

Medical Conditions

A medical condition is a health issue that requires ongoing medical care to maintain your health. Common conditions include diabetes, high blood pressure, or heart disease.

Medical conditions are diagnosed, or identified, by a doctor. Most people who have one or more diagnosed medical conditions see their doctor regularly and follow his or her advice to stay safe and healthy. The following tips will help you manage your medical conditions and prevent emergencies.

Note: If you do not have a diagnosed medical condition but think you may have a health issue, consider making an appointment to see your doctor today.

If you do not have a diagnosed medical condition, skip this section

Tips:

- ✓ On the Emergency Information Form: list your medical conditions and “warning signs” that tell you your condition is getting worse.
- ✓ If you don’t know about warning signs for your condition ask your doctor. Things like chronic constipation, chronic dehydration, chronic aspiration (breathing food or liquid into your lungs) or frequent falls can tell you that something is wrong.
- ✓ Ask your doctor what to do when you experience warning signs to prevent an emergency. Tell family members and support persons/caregivers.
- ✓ See your doctor on a regular basis so he or she can monitor your health. And follow his or her advice about how to care for your medical conditions.
- ✓ If you can’t remember how to care for your medical conditions, consider calling your doctor today. Ask for his or her advice in writing.
- ✓ If you have not seen your doctor in six months or more, consider making an appointment today.
- ✓ Tell family members and support persons/caregivers how they can support you to follow your doctor’s advice. Support to stay healthy could include transportation to and from an appointment or preparation of special diets.
- ✓ If you are not getting enough support to manage your medical conditions, call your personal agent or case manager about the support you need.

Preventing Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

As a person receiving in-home services, you should know how to recognize abuse, neglect, and exploitation and what you can do to stay safe. Read this section to learn how to recognize abuse and warning signs, what you can do to prevent abuse, and what to do if something happens to you.

Examples of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation:

- Unsafe transfers
- Frequent falls and injuries
- Physical abuse – hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, or pushing
- Emotional abuse – words or actions that make you feel sad, afraid, or ashamed
- Verbal abuse – threats, scolding, insults, or guilt trips
- Sexual abuse – inappropriate touching, exposure, or unwanted sex talk
- Being denied your meals or medications
- Being over medicated so that you feel sleepy all the time
- Support persons/caregivers not showing up when expected or missing work without telling you
- Support persons/caregivers drinking or doing drugs while providing your care
- Theft - stealing your money, medications or other things

Warning signs – when someone you know:

- Ignores your instructions or requests for help
- Blames their mistakes on others
- Asks too many personal questions unrelated to your care
- Wants to know about your checking account or how much money you have
- Tries to keep you from talking to people who are close to you
- Makes unwanted comments about your weight, appearance, clothing, speech, or disability
- Places things out of your reach
- Wants to work all your shifts
- Wants to control your choices like how you spend your time or what you eat

Other warning signs:

- Unfamiliar charges to your checking account or credit cards
- Your belongings or valuables turn up missing
- You find less money in your wallet than you expected

What to do if you see warning signs:

- ✓ Tell someone you trust immediately
- ✓ Call your personal agent or case manager
- ✓ Don't ignore warning signs! If you feel unsafe or uncomfortable something is probably wrong
- ✓ If you feel that you are in danger, call **911** immediately

Dealing with strangers:

- When a stranger follows you in a public place, tell a bus driver, shop keeper or security guard immediately and call **911**.
- When a stranger acts suspiciously or makes you feel uncomfortable, avoid eye contact and move away from him or her.
- When someone knocks on your door, look through a window or peep hole to see who it is. Don't open the door if you don't know the person.
- If you're meeting someone for the first time, meet them in a public place like a coffee shop, a library, or a restaurant. Never go anywhere alone with a stranger.
- Never tell someone you've just met where you live.
- Never leave a public place with someone you've just met or invite them to your home.

Tips to prevent abuse, neglect or exploitation:

- ✓ Remember that YOU ARE THE SUPERVISOR. You have the authority to fire someone if they mistreat you, or don't show up when expected.
- ✓ Before hiring someone, check his or her references and run a background check.
- ✓ Do not allow someone to make choices for you. Know that you always have the right to say "NO" or "STOP" if anyone is doing something wrong or making you uncomfortable.
- ✓ Maintain close relationships with people you trust (like your family members and friends) so that you can ask for help or advice if you think something is wrong.
- ✓ Don't leave your wallet, check book, credit cards, or cash lying around.
- ✓ Make a list of your valuables such as jewelry, antiques, or silverware and keep it in a safe place.
- ✓ Always keep your doors locked when you're home alone.
- ✓ Trust only those people who earn your trust.

If you have been abused or feel you are in danger:

- ✓ Immediately tell someone you trust or call **911**.
- ✓ You can also call the Oregon Department of Human Services Office of Investigations and Training at **866-406-4287** to make a report.
- ✓ If you're uncomfortable filing a report by yourself, ask a person you trust for support.

Adapted from *Emergency Backup & Safety and Prevention Strategies* written by the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing.

Backup Supports

Reduce your risks of experiencing an emergency by asking people you trust to be your backup supports. You can call these people if your support persons/caregivers do not show up when expected or ask them to help in an emergency when your support persons/caregivers are not available. The following tips will help you choose your backup supports.

Tips:

- ✓ Know the schedule of each support person/caregiver who provides services to you at home. List their names and phone numbers on the Emergency Information Form under “Emergency Contacts.”
- ✓ Think of at least two people you can count on to be reliable backup supports. They should:
 - Be easy to reach,
 - Be able to get to your home quickly,
 - Be able to provide your daily support needs, and
 - Agree to be your backup supports when you need them.
- ✓ Tell your backup supports about your daily support needs and discuss whether or not they can safely support you.
 - Do they know about your medications or medical conditions?
 - Are they strong enough to help you transfer if necessary?
 - Are they familiar with specialized equipment you use?
 - What else do they need to be able to do?
- ✓ Ask one person to be the first person you call. List his or her name under “#1 friend or family member” on the Emergency Information Form. List the second person you would call under “#2 friend or family member.”
- ✓ Know how long you can comfortably and safely be alone without assistance. For example, if you are comfortable being alone for four hours, ask your backup supports to arrive within that time.
- ✓ Know your next door neighbors. They may be able to help you in an emergency faster than anyone else.

Home Safety

Your home can be unsafe if, for example, there are poorly lit areas, missing handrails on stairs or smoke detectors that don't work. Your neighborhood may also be unsafe due to illegal drug use or other criminal activity. By taking simple precautions and planning ahead, you can stay healthy and safe and know when to leave home if an emergency occurs. The following checklists and tips will help.

Home Safety Checklist:

How safe is your home? If you answer "Yes" to a question, that part of your home is safe. If you answer "No", that part of your home may be unsafe.

Yes No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The path to my front door is even. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There is a handrail at the front and back door. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All outdoor walkways are well lit. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Outdoor lights turn on automatically at night from movement outside. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My house/apartment number is clearly visible from the street. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My front and back doors and windows have locks that work. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All stairways have plenty of light. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There is a light switch at the top and bottom of each staircase. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have good lighting in each room, and nightlights to see at night. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I try not to use extension cords to prevent electrical fires. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have at least one smoke detector on each floor of my home. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have at least one smoke detector outside each bedroom. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I change my smoke detector batteries at least twice a year. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I know what to do when the smoke alarm goes off. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a fire extinguisher on each floor of my home. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There is no clutter on my floors to prevent tripping or falls. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I store my cleaning supplies in a cabinet away from my food. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There are sturdy grab bars around my toilet and bathtub or shower. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My bathtub or shower has a non-slip surface. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The water temperature is 120 degrees or lower to prevent burns. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My phone is easy to reach. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My Emergency Information Form is posted on the refrigerator. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My First Aid Kit is in an easy-to-reach place. |

This Checklist is not intended to cover every safety detail of your home. For more information about home safety visit this website: www.homesafetycouncil.org or call them at 202-330-4900.

The following tips will help you stay healthy and safe at home.

Tips:

- ✓ Ask someone to help you fix unsafe conditions in your home or discuss them with your personal agent or case manager.
- ✓ The Red Cross recommends storing a “first aid kit” in an easy-to-reach place at home. You can buy a simple kit at the store or make your own. The checklist below lists what you need to make your own first aid kit.

First Aid Kit Checklist:

- Band-Aids in assorted sizes
- Adhesive tape
- Gauze pads and roller gauze in assorted sizes
- Antiseptic ointment (like Neosporin)
- Two hot/cold packs (for use in the microwave and in the freezer)
- Waterless hand sanitizer (like Purell)
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Small flashlight with extra batteries

For more information about first aid kits go to www.redcross.org or call you local Red Cross Chapter.

- ✓ Check your first aid kit every six months or so. Make sure your flashlight batteries work and replace any used or out-of-date items.

What to do in an emergency:

- ✓ If there is an emergency, call **911** immediately. An operator will tell you what to do and help you decide whether or not to leave your home.
- ✓ Plan and practice an emergency escape route from your home so you can leave safely.
 - If you need assistance to leave your home, discuss this with your backup supports or your neighbors.
 - Plan to use a back door or window to escape from if you cannot use the front door for some reason.
 - Make plans with a neighbor to go to their house if you must leave your home.

- Pick another place close by, like a park or a store, where you will go if your neighbor is unavailable. Choose a place where you can use a phone.
- If you have time, leave a note saying where you can be found.
- Grab your ID and Emergency Information Form from the refrigerator so you can make phone calls.

Preparing for a Disaster

Disasters such as fires, floods, or earthquakes may occur in your community. If a disaster does occur, it's important to be prepared to leave your home temporarily, or to stay at home safely while you wait for help to arrive. The following tips and checklists will help you prepare for a disaster.

Tips for evacuation (leaving home temporarily):

- ✓ Prepare a "Shelter Kit" to take with you. Ask someone for assistance to make your kit if you need it. Describe where your kit is located on the Emergency Information Form.

Shelter Kit Checklist:

- Medications (at least a three-day supply of each if possible)
- Copy of my Medications Chart
- Copy of my Emergency Information Form
- Extra eye glasses or contact lenses
- Extra personal care items like a tooth brush, deodorant, or shampoo
- Comfort items like a blanket, a book, or puzzles
- Food for service animal (these are the only animals allowed at shelters).
- Small amount of coins for phone calls

Store these items in an easy-to-carry water resistant container with a lid.

- ✓ Call your local Red Cross or fire department to ask:
 - What disasters are likely to occur or have occurred in your community?
 - What evacuation plans or shelter locations exist in your community?
 - How you will be notified to leave your home in a disaster? (Your community may have special signals to let people know they need to evacuate.)
 - Which emergency responders should you give your contact information to for assistance during a disaster?
- ✓ Emergency responders need to know: your current address and phone number, means of communication, specialized equipment needs, and if you have a support animal. Write this information on the Emergency Information Form. Be sure to let emergency responders know when you move or get a new phone number.

- ✓ Call the agency you receive services from to find out how they plan to help you in a disaster.
- ✓ Tell your support persons/caregivers and your backup supports about your community or agency emergency plans so they will know what to expect in a disaster.
- ✓ If your community or agency does not have emergency plans, talk with your support persons/caregivers and your backup supports about who will help you evacuate or stay at home safely during a disaster.
- ✓ If you have enough time before evacuating, wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes and leave a note saying where you will be.
- ✓ If you have pets, plan ahead by making a list of places that may take pets in a disaster before a disaster occurs. Shelters only accept service animals. They **cannot** accept pets due to health and safety concerns.
 - Ask friends or relatives who live out of town if they will shelter your pets.
 - Call local animal hospitals, veterinarians, animal shelters or animal boarding facilities to ask if they plan to take care of pets during a disaster.
 - If possible, go to a pet-friendly hotel and take your pets with you.
 - For more information about caring for pets during a disaster go to <http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/animalsafety.html>.

Tips for staying home safely:

- ✓ Prepare an “Emergency Kit.” Ask for assistance to make your kit if you need it. Describe where your kit is located on the Emergency Information Form.

Emergency Kit Checklist:

- Three gallons of water (one gallon per day)
- A three day supply of ready-to-eat non-perishable foods like peanut butter, energy bars, or canned foods
- Hand-operated can opener
- Battery operated radio and spare batteries
- Flash light and spare batteries
- Comfort items like a blanket, a book, or puzzles
- Food and water for pets/service animals
- Small amount of coins for phone calls

Store these items in a plastic container with a lid and keep the water close by.

- ✓ If necessary, contact your support persons/caregivers or backup supports to find out when or if they will arrive.
- ✓ If you are unsafe or have an injury, call **911**.
- ✓ Listen to the radio for disaster updates and information about when you can safely leave your home.

For more information about preparing for a disaster go to www.redcross.org or call your local Red Cross Chapter.

Emergency Information Form

Personal Information

Name _____ Birth date _____

Home address _____

Health Insurance company name and ID number: _____

Medicaid / Medicare #: _____

Emergency Contacts

#1 friend or family member Phone Cell

#2 friend or family member Phone Cell

Support person/caregiver Phone Cell

Support person/caregiver Phone Cell

Case manager/Personal agent Phone Cell

Medical Information

Primary Care Physician Phone

Specialist Phone

Pharmacy Phone

See back side for other important information

Other Important Information

Diagnosed medical conditions:

Warning signs:

Allergies:

Communication needs:

Equipment needs:

My Shelter Kit is located here:

My Emergency Kit is located here:

Post this form on your refrigerator

Emergency Information Form

Personal Information

Name _____ Birth date _____

Home address _____

Health Insurance company name and ID number: _____

Medicaid / Medicare #: _____

Emergency Contacts

#1 friend or family member Phone Cell

#2 friend or family member Phone Cell

Support person/caregiver Phone Cell

Support person/caregiver Phone Cell

Case manager/Personal agent Phone Cell

Medical Information

Primary Care Physician Phone

Specialist Phone

Pharmacy Phone

See back side for other important information

Other Important Information

Diagnosed medical conditions:

Warning signs:

Allergies:

Communication needs:

Equipment needs:

My Shelter Kit is located here:

My Emergency Kit is located here:

Post this form on your refrigerator

Medications Chart

Medications	Dose	Frequency	Who prescribed	Taken for	If I miss a dose:

Post this chart on your refrigerator... Update it when medications change

Medications Chart

Medications	Dose	Frequency	Who prescribed	Taken for	If I miss a dose:

Post this chart on your refrigerator... Update it when medications change