

### ***People with Disabilities***

Estimates vary, but as many as one in four people live with some type of disability. Sometimes signs are obvious, a wheelchair, a guide dog or a cane. However, many times a disability is not obvious. Whether obvious or not, awareness and sensitivity toward persons with disabilities makes good sense.

Practicing disability etiquette is an easy way to help people with disabilities feel more welcome and comfortable. Here are a few things anyone can do to make a person with a disability feel more at ease in any situation. Remember, a person with a disability is a person first. Ask before you help. Don't assume a person with a disability needs your help with a task. If you are asked for help, be sure to ask what kind of assistance is needed. Be sensitive regarding personal space and physical contact. Respect personal space and remember that people often consider their equipment part of their person. Think before you speak. Speak to the person, not their aide or companion. Converse with a person with a disability as you would any other person. Get permission from a parent or guardian before interacting with children.

People with disabilities must assume personal responsibility and be prepared for an emergency. The basic steps of a personal safety plan are the same for everyone. Where will you go? How will you get there? What will you take? How much time will you need? How will you communicate with those who need to know? With minor modifications, the information in this Guide is applicable to everyone. You must take responsibility for yourself in an emergency. Part of any plan is to identify and use all available resources. If you need help or have questions, contact your local Emergency Management agency. There are people and tools to help you become better prepared.

### ***People with Special Needs***

Some people have medical issues that cannot be accommodated in a regular public shelter. For those people whose health would quickly and dramatically deteriorate in a public shelter and have no other safe place to go, there are Special Care shelters available.

There are specific criteria and requirements to be eligible for the Special Care shelter, which may vary somewhat from town to town. You must have a caregiver with you during your stay at the Special Care shelter. During an emergency we have very limited staff working in the shelters, so your caregiver is critically important for your health and safety.

There is limited hospital sheltering for people who are extremely high risk and cannot survive outside a hospital environment. Your physician must recommend hospital sheltering and give specific details of your medical situation. You may be responsible for fees associated with hospital sheltering. As at any other shelter, you must bring your emergency supplies with you. In any emergency situation you should have a plan for where you will go if you cannot return to your home because of damage. Emergency Management can help you answer any questions.