Disability-Specific Tips for Disaster Preparation | CPD

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Photo courtesy of Oregon Health & Science University.
The “Great Utah Shake-Out” Earthquake drill is scheduled for Wednesday, April 17 at 10:15 a.m. Will you be ready? The following information, compiled by the Earthquake Country Alliance, can help people with disabilities create their own personal preparedness plan. For more detailed information, visit www.earthquakecountry.org/roots. (Did you miss steps 1-7? See Monday’s blog here and Wednesday’s blog here.)

Disability-Specific Tips For Developmental/Cognitive/Intellectual Disabilities: Use simple, short and clear language for instructions. Have a written or visual reminder checklist with short, easy steps. Include communication tools in your kit that each person knows how to use. If you are nonverbal, include pictures, written phrases, or Kwik Points. If you use a portable communication device, store extra batteries. Practice Drop, Cover, and Hold On and all steps in your plan – regular practice will help you remember what to do and remain calmer when a disaster occurs. For Deaf or Hearing Impaired Have more than one method to receive warnings and evacuation information. If you use any hearing or communication devices, store extra batteries and supplies in your disaster kits. Keep pen and paper in your kits for receiving and communicating information. Ask a PST member to keep you up to date on any emergency information. Advocate for yourself and develop your PST so you do not become information-isolated or left behind. For Blind or Visually Impaired Earthquakes can cause items to fall and furniture to shift making navigating the room more difficult. Sound clues may not be available. If you need to evacuate, move slowly and check for obstacles in the way. Consider shuffling your feet if there is a lot of debris on the ground. Store extra canes, batteries and supplies for your communication devices. Label emergency supplies using large print, fluorescent tape, Braille, or other methods that work for you. For Service Animals Keep license and ID tags on service animals at all times. Keep copies of any service animal certification or documentation—immunization records, medications, and veterinarian’s contact information—in your disaster kit. Store extra animal food, water and feeding bowls. Keep an extra harness and/or leash with your disaster supplies. Your service animal may be frightened or injured and may not be able to work after the earthquake. Their paws might be injured by broken glass or debris on the ground. Be prepared to use alternate equipment if your animal cannot provide its normal services. As an example, if you are visually impaired, store extra canes. Arrange for your PST to check on you and your animal. Service animals are allowed in shelters, pets are not. Be prepared to explain what services your animal performs for you.