Earthquake Drill on April 17
Sue Reeves
04/01/2013

Will you be ready if disaster strikes? Read the blog all this week for tips on preparing for disaster when you have a disability. 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.

STEP 1 – Secure Your Space
When you enter a room, look for safe places to “Drop, Cover, and Hold On.” Safe spaces are places where heavy or falling objects and breaking glass won’t injure you, such as under tables or desks, along inside walls, etc. The more limitations you have, the more important it is to create safe spaces for yourself, especially if you cannot Drop, Cover, and Hold On under a desk, table, etc. Create safe spaces by bolting heavy furniture to wall studs, moving heavy items to low shelves, securing hanging art to walls with closed hooks, or taking other measures found here. Secure essential equipment such as oxygen tanks or other life support devices, so they won’t fall and be damaged or cause injury. When you are in public places, be aware of your surroundings and identify your safe spaces.

STEP 2 – Plan to be Safe
Include your family and personal support team (PST) when creating, reviewing and practicing your family disaster plan. Develop your PST at home, work and every place where you spend a lot of time. A PST is made up of at least three people who are within walking distance and can assist you immediately, such as neighbors and co-workers. Team members will need to know how to enter your home to check on you in case you are injured or cannot answer the door. You will need to familiarize your team with your schedule, how best to assist you, how to operate any necessary equipment, etc. Also, inform your PST if you go out of town. Label all your adaptive equipment with your current contact information. Identify an out-of-area contact. An out-of-area contact should live out of state or at least 100 miles away who is your main point of contact and should be the one person family and friends call to report their status. Make sure your PST has your contact’s information. Have an evacuation plan. Identify a meeting place just outside your home where you can make sure everyone has gotten out safely. Identify a second meeting place just outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home. Make sure every family member and your PST know the location of both meeting places. If you have pets, make a care plan for their care, as they will not be allowed in shelters. Only service animals are allowed in shelters.

STEP 3 – Organize Disaster Supplies
Create a kit specific to your needs and think about things you may want or need to include, such as: Food Water Extra medications and medical supplies Medical information and medication list Emergency contact information Communication supplies Flashlight with extra batteries Extra supplies for your specific needs Hearing aid batteries, walking stick, oxygen or nebulizer supplies, blood glucose tester, special equipment or hygiene and catheter supplies, feeding equipment, VNS magnet, etc. A radio with extra batteries (consider also getting a NOAA weather radio) Extra cash An extra pair of clothes A pair of heavy gloves Hygiene supplies First aid kit Face mask to protect from dust & debris A copy of a recent color photo or I.D. card and utility bill for identification & proof of address (which may be needed if you must go to a shelter or to re-enter an evacuation area) Include supplies for service animals and family pets Attach a “GO BAG” to your bedpost or bed frame with flashlight, batteries, sturdy close-toed shoes, heavy gloves, a whistle or noise maker, and your emergency information list For more emergency preparedness tips for people with disabilities, see Wednesday’s blog.