Navigator’s Guide For
“My Emergency Readiness Plan”

We welcome your decision to become a Navigator to help persons with disabilities in Delaware to develop personalized emergency readiness plans. The work you are doing with them is very important. Always remember that the plans they develop—with your assistance—can help them to survive future emergencies they may face!

1 Learning to Be a Navigator

1.1 What are Navigators?

Within the disability supports and services field, the term “Navigator” has been used to describe individuals who are knowledgeable about available supports and services for persons with disabilities and how these supports and services can be accessed. For example, Navigators can: 1) assist persons with disabilities with identifying what their needs are in a particular area; 2) identify the available services/supports that can address those needs; and 3) assist them with accessing those services/supports. As a Navigator for this program, your activities will reflect those that are listed above, but your primary goal is to assist them with developing their own emergency readiness plans.

As a Navigator, you should also consider the persons with disabilities that you work with, along with their family, friends or support persons, to be part of an extended Navigator system for Delaware. Their greater familiarity with disability services in Delaware, and the impact of disability on their day-to-day lives, makes them important intermediaries in the emergency system navigation process.

1.2 Being a Successful Navigator

It is very important that all persons with disabilities in Delaware develop their own emergency readiness plans, and YOU can help them by being a successful Navigator. The ingredients for being a successful Navigator include the following:
• Possessing knowledge and experience in living and/or working with persons with disabilities with respect to their strengths and daily needs.

• Understanding the importance of being personally ready and prepared for emergencies and disasters that can happen.

• Knowing how to use the “My Emergency Readiness Plan” tool for personal emergency readiness planning by completing a plan for yourself (and hopefully your family too!).

• Asking for training from an experienced Navigator or Emergency Manager experienced with emergency planning for persons with disabilities.

• Learning about emergency planning activities in Delaware and around the country. Please visit and read about the activities of agencies and organizations involved in emergency planning on the Web, including:
  - Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) at http://dema.delaware.gov/
  - PrepareDE at http://www.preparede.org/
  - Delaware Citizen Corps at http://www.delawarecitizencorps.org/
  - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at http://www.fema.gov/
  - American Red Cross of the Delmarva Peninsula at http://www.redcrossdelmarva.org/

2  How to Connect with Persons with Disabilities

2.1  First Contact

As a Navigator, your contacts with persons with disabilities may consist of:

• Initiating a phone call to schedule an emergency readiness planning meeting;
• Providing emergency readiness planning information prior to the meeting (e.g., via mail or email) for them to read/consider; and
• Conducting an in-person meeting to assist with developing their plan. Meeting in-person can facilitate the process of developing and completing personalized emergency plans.

You may also want to contact them prior to the emergency readiness planning meeting (e.g., by phone or email) to remind them about the upcoming meeting.

2.2 Initial Navigator Phone Call

Your first contact with persons with disabilities will most likely be an initial phone call you will make to schedule an in-person visit to assist them with their emergency readiness plan. Below are a few things to keep in mind during this contact:

• When you call to schedule your visit, take a little time in the beginning to discuss the importance of the planning process and that you will be assisting them to develop a plan of their own. This will help ease any worries they may have about the planning process.

• During the call, discuss the location where you will be meeting them. Though it is ideal to assist them with planning where they live, you can agree to meet them at another location that is more comfortable for them.

• Should you ever have concerns of your own about meeting with a particular person, please be sure to discuss these concerns with another Navigator or your supervisor before the meeting occurs. It is important that meeting sites are selected that are both safe and convenient for everyone involved.

2.3 Navigator In-Person Visit

Your in-person visit is an important part of the planning process because it increases the likelihood that plans: 1) are as complete as possible, and 2) make sense. Remember that the time you have to personally assist persons with disabilities on their plan is limited (i.e., two hours), so please use your time wisely!

Below is a basic time frame you can use to plan your Navigator In-Person visit:
• Getting Comfortable (5-10 minutes)
  o Thank the person for participating in the planning process.
  o Take a few minutes to allow them to get to know you better before talking about the Plan. For example, ask them about their favorite activity, and then spend a few minutes discussing the activity. This dialog will help them to be more comfortable.

• Introduction (15 minutes)
  o Tell them it is very important to have a plan for emergencies.
  o Explain that after completing the planning process, they will have a personalized plan that will help them to be safe during emergencies.
  o Answer any questions they may have before proceeding to Step 1.
  o Explain that it is okay to skip over any topics in the Plan that may be hard for them to discuss (e.g., because the topic causes anxiety, etc.). They can always return to the topic when they are ready to do so.

• Completing the Steps in the Plan (15-20 minutes to complete each step)
  o Review any information that was previously mailed to them.
  o Work through each Step in the Plan.
  o Use prompts (giving cues or assistance) whenever possible to encourage their involvement in generating ideas or solutions to include in their plans.

• Wrapping Up (15 minutes):
  o Review the newly-completed Plan with them and their support person(s).
  o If any Steps in the Plan were not completed during the visit, discuss possible strategies for completing the Steps as soon as possible.
3 Design and Features of “My Emergency Readiness Plan”

3.1 Overview of the Plan

The Plan is comprised of four “Steps” that represent different aspects of the emergency readiness planning process. Your goal is to assist persons with disabilities to navigate through each of these Steps until they have a completed emergency readiness plan—a personalized plan that contains their important information and their plans for being ready for emergencies. The Steps in the Plan are:

- **Step 1**: My Important Information
- **Step 2**: My Plan For Taking Care Of My Needs
- **Step 3**: Should I Stay Or Should I Go?
- **Step 4**: After Emergencies are Over

As you go through the Plan, give them sufficient time to think through their responses to items in the Plan, but also remember to be time-efficient! In addition, encourage them to complete all of the Steps in the Plan during the meeting; however, keep in mind that they may not be able to complete everything due to lack of time, fatigue, or other reasons.

Remember that the Plan tool is for them to keep! Tell them to keep their Plan within easy reach where they live, and encourage them to make extra copies to keep anywhere they spend time during the day.

3.2 Navigating through the Steps in the Plan

- **Step 1**: My Important Information (pages 2-5)
  - Step 1 includes the following sections:
    - My Contact Information
    - My Health Information
    - My Important Documents or Papers
  - Filling in all of the information in Step 1 will take time! To save time, persons with disabilities and their support persons can be asked to
complete Step 1 before they meet with you (if the Plan is given to them beforehand at a workshop or sent to them through the mail).

- If needed, include Health Information inserts for others living at home.
- Persons with disabilities are encouraged to make copies of important documents/papers and include this information in the Plan itself. They may wish to scan this information and copy to a flash drive or other electronic device.
- Important: To maintain confidentiality, do not review (or ask to review) any confidential documents or papers that they choose to include in their Plans!
- Review and amend information as needed.

- **Step 2: My Plan For Taking Care Of My Needs (page 6 plus “My Needs” inserts)**
  - An important feature of the Plan, and an important part of your work as a Navigator, is to help persons with disabilities (and people who support them) to think about the impact emergencies could have on how they usually take care of their daily needs. In Step 2 you will ask them to:
    - Place checks next to any area of need they care for every day (page 6);
    - Locate work sheets for areas of need checked, and insert sheets into Step 2;
    - List their daily needs on each work sheet, then list how they take care of these needs;
    - Identify and list extra challenges to taking care of their daily needs if they needed to shelter at home during an emergency, then list how they would take care of these extra challenges; and
    - Identify and list extra challenges to taking care of their daily needs if they needed to evacuate from home during an emergency, then list how they would take care of these extra challenges.

- **Step 3: Should I Stay Or Should I Go? (pages 7-13)**
  - List area emergency radio sources (page 8) by using the “EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN...
DELAWARE” (included in tool kit file). Use a highlighter pen to mark the stations that broadcast in their area.

- Make sure that you understand the various sources of emergency information and the different registries that are listed (page 8) before assisting them with their plans.
- “Shelter-at-home Kit” or “Go-Bag”: Use a highlighter pen to highlight items on either list. Take time to discuss what items to include; for instance, it may be unrealistic for them to include heavy or bulky items in their Go-Bag.

- **Step 4: My Post Emergency Plan (page 14)**
  - Review any post-emergency information that they would be interested in learning more about.
  - Encourage them to review information included on FEMA’s Web site.

4. **Respecting Privacy and Confidentiality of Personal Information**

In your work as a Navigator, it is extremely important for you to:

- Respect the privacy of persons with disabilities during and after the planning process.
- Ensure the confidentiality of any personal information (e.g., personal documents or papers, etc.) they may decide to include in their Plans.

5. **Forms/Documents Used During the Planning Process**

Please familiarize yourself with all documents and resources included in the Tool Kit for the Plan. These include:

1. **My Emergency Readiness Plan** tool.
2. Step 1 “Information About My Family’s Health & Medications” insert for adding health and medication information for additional family members.
4. **Emergency Preparedness Resources For Persons With Disabilities In Delaware.**
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