



# National Network

Information, Guidance and Training on the  
Americans with Disabilities Act

Call us toll-free  
1-800-949-4232 V/TTY

Find your regional center at  
[www.adata.org](http://www.adata.org)



Provided By:  
Pacific ADA Center  
1-800-949-4232 (Voice/TTY)  
(510) 285-5600 (Voice/TTY)  
[adatech@adapacific.org](mailto:adatech@adapacific.org)  
[www.adapacific.org](http://www.adapacific.org)

## Emergency Power Planning for People Who Use Electricity and Battery Dependent Assistive Technology and Medical Devices

This emergency power planning checklist is for people who use electricity and battery dependent assistive technology and medical devices. Electricity and battery-dependent devices include:

- breathing machines (respirators, ventilators),
- power wheelchairs and scooters, and
- oxygen, suction or home dialysis equipment.

Some of this equipment is essential to your level of independence while other equipment is vital to keeping you alive! Use the checklist to make power-backup plans.

Review and update this checklist every six months (one way to remember to do this is when you set your clocks forward in the spring and back in the fall).



# Emergency Power Planning for People Who Use Electricity and Battery Dependent Assistive Technology and Medical Devices Checklist

Date Complete	Does not Apply	Item
<b>Planning Basics</b>		
		Create a plan for alternative sources of power.
		Read equipment instructions and talk to equipment suppliers about your backup power options.
		Get advice from your power company regarding type of backup power you plan to use.
		Regularly check backup or alternative power equipment to ensure it will function during an emergency.
		Teach many people to use your backup systems and operate your equipment.
		Keep a list of alternate power providers.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask your nearby police and fire departments and hospital if you could use them as a backup for your equipment power if your backup systems fail.</li> </ul>
		Label all equipment with your name, address, and phone number. Attach simple and clear instruction cards to equipment and laminate them for added strength.
		Keep copies of lists of serial and model numbers of devices, as well as important use instructions in a waterproof container in your emergency supply kits.
<b>Life-Support Device Users</b>		
		Contact your power and water companies about your needs for life-support devices (home dialysis, suction, breathing machines, etc.) in advance of a disaster.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many utility companies keep a “priority reconnection service” list and map of the locations of power-dependent customers for use in an emergency. Contact the customer service department of your utility companies to learn if this service is available.*</li> </ul>
		Let your fire department know that you are dependent on life-support devices.
		All ventilator users should keep a resuscitation bag handy. The bag delivers air through a mask when squeezed.
		If you receive dialysis or other medical treatments, ask your provider for the plans in an emergency and where you should go for treatment if your site is not available after an emergency.



Date Complete	Does not Apply	Item
		<b>Oxygen Users</b>
		Check with your provider to determine if you can use a reduced flow rate in an emergency to extend the life of the system. Record on your equipment the reduced flow numbers so that you can easily refer to them.
		Be aware of oxygen safety practices:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid areas where there are gas leaks or open flames.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post "Oxygen in Use" signs.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always use battery powered flashlights or lanterns rather than gas lights or candles when oxygen is in use (to reduce fire risk).</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep the shut-off switch for oxygen equipment near you so you can get to it quickly in case of emergency.</li> </ul>
		<b>Generator Users</b>
		Make sure use of a generator is appropriate and realistic.
		A 2,000 to 2,500-watt gas-powered portable generator can power a refrigerator and several lamps. (A refrigerator needs to run only 15 minutes an hour to stay cool if you keep the door closed. So, you could unplug it to operate other devices.)
		Operate generators in open areas to ensure good air circulation.
		Safely store fuel.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The challenge when you live in an apartment is knowing how to safely store enough gasoline.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store a siphon kit.</li> </ul>
		Test generators from time to time to make sure it will work when needed.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some generators can connect to the existing home wiring systems; always contact your utility company regarding critical restrictions and safety issues.</li> </ul>

\* Even if you are on the “priority reconnection service” list, your power could still be out for many days following a disaster. It is vital that you have power backup options for your equipment.



Date Complete	Does not Apply	Item
		<b>Rechargeable Batteries</b>
		Create a plan for how to recharge batteries when the electricity is out.
		Check with your vendor/supplier to find alternative ways to charge batteries. Examples include:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting jumper cables to a vehicle battery.</li> <li>• Using a converter that plugs into a vehicle's cigarette lighter.</li> </ul>
		If you substitute a vehicle battery for a wheelchair battery, the charge will not last as long as a charge for a wheelchair's deep-cycle battery.
		If you use a motorized wheelchair or scooter, if possible store a lightweight manual wheelchair for emergency use.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stored extra batteries require periodic charging even when they are unused. If your survival strategy depends on storing batteries, closely follow a recharging schedule.</li> </ul>
		Know the working time of any batteries that support your systems.
		When you have a choice, choose equipment that uses batteries that are easily purchased from nearby stores.
		<b>When Power is Restored</b>
		Check to make sure the settings on your medical device have not changed (medical devices often reset to a default mode when power goes out).
		<b>Other Backup Plans</b>



### Sources for More Information

Emergency Preparedness: Taking Responsibility for Your Safety - Tips for People with Activity Limitations and Disabilities

[www.espfocus.org](http://www.espfocus.org)

Power-Dependent Equipment

<http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/power-outage>

Home Use Devices: How to Prepare for and Handle Power Outages for Medical Devices that Require Electricity

<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/HomeHealthandConsumer/UCM252812.pdf>

Disaster Resources for People with Disabilities and Emergency Managers

<http://www.jik.com/disaster.html>

Videos regarding generators:

- Generator Buying Advice - Consumer Reports' tests reveal the pros and cons of portable generators and the advantages of more expensive alternatives.

<http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/video-hub/home--garden/tools--power-equipment/generator-buying-advice/17037617001/5030179001/>

Portable Generators - When your power goes out, a portable generator can be a big help. But these generators can also pose hazards.

<http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/search.htm?query=generators&isTypeAhead=false>

For more information, call and speak to an ADA specialist at **1-800-949-4232**. All calls are confidential.

Content was developed by the Pacific ADA Center, and is based on professional consensus of ADA experts and the ADA National Network.



555 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1030  
Oakland, CA 94607  
Toll Free: 800-949-4232 V/TTY (AZ, CA, HI, NV,  
Pacific Basin)  
Local: 510-285-5600 V/TTY  
Fax: 510-285-5614  
<http://www.adata.org/>

This information product was developed under grants from the Department of Education, NIDRR grant numbers H133A110014 and H133A1100XX. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.



© Copyright 2014 ADA National Network. All Rights Reserved.

May be reproduced and distributed freely with attribution to ADA National Network  
([www.adata.org](http://www.adata.org)).