Be prepared to assist in an emergency

Assisting people with disabilities





Approximately 4.4 million people living in Canada report having a disability.* 14.3 per cent of the total population in Canada has either a visible or non-visible disability.

Approximately 171,030 people living in Peel report having a disability.* 14.8 per cent of the total population in Peel has either a visible or non-visible disability.

In a large-scale emergency, such as a tornado, flood or blackout, people with disabilities may require additional assistance.

Read on to learn more about proper assistive procedures and communication techniques to help ensure that you know how to assist in any emergency situation.

In an emergency:

- Ask the person if they need your assistance.
- Be calm, receptive and listen carefully as to how you can best assist the person.
- Obtain permission to touch the person, their service animal, equipment and/or assistive devices.
- Follow instructions posted on equipment and/or assistive devices.
- Make a list and communicate all actions taken, including the location of the person's service animal and/or assistive devices to the next care provider.

Do not:

- × Rush, create obstacles or distract service animals.
- Let the person be separated from their equipment and/or assistive devices, unless necessary.
- Attempt to lift or assist in moving someone or their equipment and/or assistive devices unless you are familiar with the procedure and have obtained permission.
- X Give food or liquids to an unconscious or unresponsive person.



Communication is key

Mobility disability refers to reduced function of limbs such as legs and feet. It can range from having difficulty moving to the use of assistive devices such as wheelchairs or canes.

When assisting someone with a mobility disability:

- Speak at eye level; sit down to communicate, if needed.
- Ask if they require assistance; some people may only need assistance getting out of their assistive devices.
- Be sure that you have understood the individual and that the individual has understood you, by repeating what they have said.
- Inform the individual regarding the location of their assistive devices.

Sensory disability refers to individuals experiencing varying levels of vision and/or hearing disability.

When assisting someone with a vision disability:

- Touch their shoulder to let them know that you are there to help.
- Be descriptive when giving directions.
- Speak slowly and carefully.
- Advise the person of any obstacles.
 - e.g. "There's water on the floor to your left."



When assisting someone with hearing disability:

- Trace letters with your finger on the palm of the hand of the person to facilitate communication.
- Face the person when speaking since they may rely on lip reading.
- Communicate in close proximity.

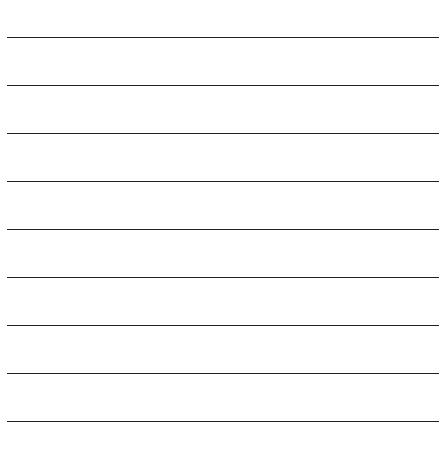
Cognitive/non-visible disabilities refers to people who may have difficulty reading or who process information differently.

When assisting someone with a cognitive/non-visible disability:

- Use simple phrases when providing information about the emergency, including areas affected and what steps need to be taken.
- Speak carefully and slowly using a normal tone of voice.
- Communicate with pictures such as universal symbols, if necessary.
- Try to decrease noise and other distractions that may impair the person's understanding.
- If the person asks you to repeat something, do so.



Notes



8

be ready. be prepared.

For more information on emergency preparedness, visit www.peelregion.ca/prep

For more information on accessibility planning, visit www.peelregion.ca/accessibility

