



Emergency Response Checklist for First Responders and Emergency Management Agencies

PREPAREDNESS

- Identify medical personnel in your area with specific brain injury expertise and have contact information available
- In planning for sheltering, designate a specific area for individuals with brain injuries and their family members or caretakers
- Ensure space can accommodate durable medical equipment: wheelchairs, oxygen tanks, bedside commodes
- Designate the brain injury specific area of the shelter in a calmer, less stimulating area of the facility if possible. Areas farthest away from food service lines, restrooms, exits/entrances is the best option if possible
- Educate staff and volunteers regarding communication methods in people with a brain injury. Interaction will depend upon the person's level of cognitive and emotional functioning

RESPONSE

- Designate a staff member that demonstrates a good understanding of the needs of a person with a brain injury to be in charge of the brain injury specific area
- Notify all staff members and volunteers if people with a brain injury are being housed at the shelter in order to increase awareness and communication
- Have written instructions/guidelines of how the shelter will operate to provide to the evacuees in order for the person with the brain injury to refer to in case of short term memory deficits

TIPS ON WORKING WITH SOMEONE WITH A BRAIN INJURY

- Minimize sensory overload as it may cause anxiety, anger or emotional outbursts by designating a specific area for people with a brain injury that has less traffic and disruptions
- Establish and maintain a regular schedule
- Give concrete and simple instructions
- People with a brain injury may have short term memory deficits. Have the person write down the instructions and be prepared to repeat your instructions frequently
- Interact with the person with a brain injury in an age appropriate manner
- Redirect in a non threatening and positive way if a person becomes disruptive or is displaying inappropriate behavior
- Model calm behavior at all times
- Allow time for rest as fatigue is common in a person with a brain injury
- Memory loss, attention deficits, impulsivity and impaired problem solving are common problems after a brain injury. Help the person succeed while in the shelter by understanding their individual differences and allow the person extra time for processing information