

A QUICK GUIDE

Communicating with People with a Disability: National Guidelines for Emergency Managers

COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

- Always put the person before the disability
- Avoid using patronising or demeaning phrases, labels or stereo types
- Provide relevant information in a range of formats (e.g. Easy English, pictures, video and audio visual)
- Face and speak directly to the person, even if they have an interpreter or carer
- Make sure there is enough time for the person to absorb information and respond on their own
- Always respect the person's dignity, individuality and desire for independence
- Always ask before providing assistance

PHYSICAL

- People with a mobility disability (inc. temporary), may find access to information and/or travel limited
- Provide information in multiple formats for example:
 - the Internet
 - radio
 - audio podcast
 - video / DVD or disk
- Consider accessibility issues, including at community meetings before a disaster, and evacuation / recovery centres

HEARING

- Signage alerts, announcements and instructions need to be visually accessible and in well lit areas
- Provide information in multiple formats for example:
 - Auslan interpreters
 - SMS phone updates
 - Easy English versions
 - demonstrations
 - pictures
 - flash cards
 - picture exchange
 - communication whiteboards

VISION

- Provide auditory announcements and instructions with some descriptive information to orientate someone who is vision impaired or blind, for example: "Please move towards the fire exits. These are located at the opposite end of the main corridor to the lifts on each floor."
- Provide information in Large Print versions

GENERIC

- Only provide or send necessary and relevant information
- Use multiple formats
- Verbalise visual information, including phone numbers and web details
- Keep information consistent, accurate, short and sharp
- Use clear language and uncomplicated sentences
- Use pictures or simple photos to support written information
- Use positive or value-neutral language