



#### .....MANAGING SHELTERS

Recommendations on making emergency shelters more accessible:

- Some cots should be available that are high enough for mobility impaired people to use comfortably and safely.
- Be prepared to provide extra food and water to disabled people with service guide animals.
- In neighborhoods where familiar landmarks are altered or missing due to an earthquake, some visually impaired people may need personal assistance to travel about.
- Some people are non-vocal but still capable of thinking and making their needs known. Shelter staff need to be aware, patient and creative.
- Avoid using outdoor areas that are muddy, sandy, or covered by thick grass.
- Shelter personnel should know how to use the California Relay Service to make and receive phone calls with hearing and speech impaired individuals.
- Permit people with mobility impairments the option of going to the head of long lines.
- Train staff to realize that some people have the physical ability to ride buses, but do not have the cognitive ability to learn new routes established because of a disaster.
- Train staff to know how to contact disability agencies, such as sign interpreter agencies and agencies that help families with at-risk infants with disabilities.
- Train staff to realize that some service animals may temporarily not be able to provide their owners with service as fully effective as before the disaster.
- Train staff about the difference between the medical model and the independence model of disability. Train staff not to see a disabled person as only a person needing medical services.
- Shelters should have telephone books for the local area.

- Shelters should have information about transportation resources and disability service agencies.
- Disabled people and out-of-area emergency volunteers should not have to vie for hotel accommodations.
- Portable telephones should be ordered that have volume controls.
- Public phone stations need power sockets nearby to supply power to portable TDDs used by deaf, hearing impaired, and speech impaired people.
- Train staff to know that even normal amounts of background noise may prevent a person with a hearing impairment from understanding spoken directions and instructions.
- Train staff to know that some disabilities may give a person the appearance of intoxication.
- Train staff to know that some disabilities in certain circumstances leads to disruptive behaviors; and to how to respond appropriately when such behaviors occur.
- In the early days after a disaster, locations of shelters need to be well publicized so that family and friends can search more effectively for disabled people and vice versa.
- Stock writing tablets and pencils for hearing impaired people to use.
- At the accessible entrance to a shelter, have signage providing information about features of the shelter that are less than fully accessible.
- Insure that the shelter's address is clearly visible from the nearby street.
- The approach to outdoor toilets is free of stones, rubble, steps, tree roots, mud, and loose sand.
- Stock simple tools and patch kits for repairing flat tires on wheelchairs.
- Establish contact with local agencies that supply personal care attendants for people with disabilities.
- Train staff to realize the large number of hard of hearing people and their needs.
- All shelters need information boards with notices about announcements that disabled people may not hear or where not present when the announcements were made.

