

## Begin WITH GOOD MAINTENANCE!

- A disaster could hit at any time – so make sure your chair is in good working order!
- Keep on-schedule with routine maintenance, fresh tires and batteries, etc.
- Learn about how your chair works and how to do quick repairs.
- Purchase basic tools, such as a wrench, a hex-wrench set, and screwdrivers
- Get a new wheelchair when insurance lets you: this is usually every 5 years or so.
- If you have one or more backup wheelchairs, keep them in good working order.

## Take INVENTORY OF YOUR WHEELCHAIR(S) AND SUPPLIES

- How many of each kind of wheelchair do you have?
  - Power wheelchair
  - Folding, traveling power wheelchair
  - Manual, folding wheelchair
  - Manual, fixed-frame wheelchair
  - Shower wheelchair or bench
  - Power scooter
- What other supplies do you have for your wheelchair(s)?
  - Pressure-relieving cushions & air pumps
  - Plug-in chargers (home or travel size)
  - Specialized padding or foam
  - Lights and other electronic add-ons
  - Straps, seatbelts, and other securement items
  - Replacement parts & tools
- Write down the details: if your equipment gets lost or damaged, this may help with finding a quality replacement
  - What are the dimensions of your wheelchair(s)?
  - Are there any special features, like tilt/recline?
  - Any specialized controls or joysticks, like sip-and-puff tubes?
- Do you have any wheelchairs you use as a “backup”? This could be an old wheelchair you keep around, or a manual backup in case your power wheelchair breaks.
  - If possible, try to have a backup at home. This should be a wheelchair you can use for several days or weeks.
  - Keep this wheelchair in good condition. If it is a power wheelchair, charge the battery one night per week so it does not stop charging correctly.

## Arrange YOUR WHEELCHAIR(S) FOR SAFE EVACUATION:

- Locate the exits of your home: in an emergency, it’s useful to have 2 exits.
- Keep your backup wheelchair(s) near exits so you can grab them quickly.
- Ensure that wheelchairs and supplies do not block emergency exits.
- If your house, condo or apartment building has an elevator, the elevator may not work in an emergency or even a small power outage. If you have an elevator:
  - Consider a backup chair on the ground-floor. This will help in case you must be carried downstairs during an evacuation: somebody could put the backup wheelchair next to the stairs at the ground level, rather than carrying your regular wheelchair down.
  - If you have a power wheelchair at ground level, remember to charge it once a week!
  - If you live in a condo or apartment building, talk to management about where your spare wheelchair could be downstairs. For example, you could secure it to a bike rack or near the accessible parking spot.
  - If you have more than one backup, keep one upstairs. This helps if you need to reach your home when an elevator is out of order: just be careful if others carry you up or down stairs.
- Don’t forget your shower chair! If you have a backup, keep it folded near an exit. If you only have one, remember to bring it during an evacuation.

## Pack IMPORTANT ITEMS TO GRAB ON-THE-GO:

- Experts recommend a “go bag” of basic supplies in an emergency. You can build a “wheelchair go bag” of supplies for your chair; you can also put wheelchair supplies in a larger “disability go bag” with personal care other disability-related items.
- A “wheelchair go bag” could be in your house near an exit or kept in your vehicle.
- Consider what you may need to keep your wheelchair working and comfortable.
  - Wrenches, screwdrivers, and spare parts if need be (including screws, washers, etc.)
  - Strong tape, glue, Velcro straps and other adhesives.
  - Spare seat cushions or other padding
  - Chargers (consider a smaller “travel” charger)
  - Pumps for air cushions or tires
  - Other important replacement parts

