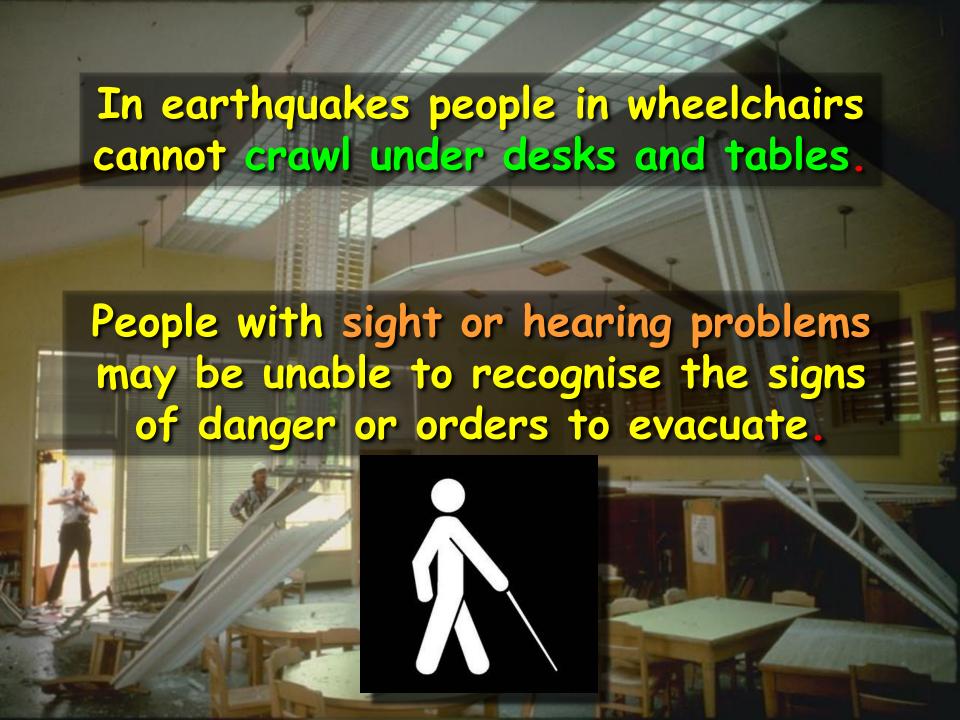




In emergencies people with disabilities may encounter physical barriers, obstacles to communication and other barriers that stop them from reacting efficiently and using the various services offered in the recovery period.



Evacuation problems:

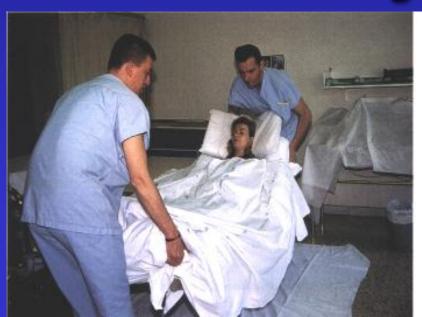
- · difficulties of movement
- orientation difficulties
- perception of hazards and warnings
- emergency response co-ordination.





Difficulties of movement:

- · distance to be travelled
- passageways not wide enough
- · presence of steps or other obstacles
- unsuitable lifts or ramps
- doors not wide enough.





Disabled people who depend on electrically-powered life-support equipment may find themselves in difficulty if there is no current during the emergency. Moreover, emergency equipment must be accessible to the disabled.



According to recent studies in the USA:

- 19.3% of the U.S. population suffers from some form of disability
- 80% of emergency managers have no procedures for people with disabilities
- 57% of emergency managers do not know how many people with disabilities live in their areas



 only 27% of emergency managers have taken a FEMA course on helping disabled people in disasters. In emergencies it is easy not to recognise the type of disability of a person and thus offer the wrong kind of assistance.

Disasters and their aftermaths can put people with disabilities more at risk than the general population and may create new barriers.

Guide Dogs

People with disabilities need, not only particular procedures, but also special preparations and plans to help them face disasters.

However: "in some ways, disabled people who manage to live with a certain degree of independence are more able to face disaster than people who are not disabled. They have a 'psychological advantage'..."

Douglas Lathrop 1994.

Mainstream Magazine, California.



Organisations that respond to disaster are used to thinking in terms of providing assistance to large groups of people, and less about the special needs of single individuals such as people with disabilities. But they are, in the fullest sense, part of society...







In emergency planning and management the needs of people with disabilities have not been sufficiently taken into consideration, and their points of view have not been listened to.

Typically, civil protection systems are designed for people who do not have disabilities: usually, evacuation plans require, in some measure, the ability to walk, drive, see and hear.

These are some of disabled people's needs in major emergencies:

- personal care materials and equipment
- high dependence on essential services (water, electricity, etc.)
- how to manage when there is chaos or debris at home?
- transport and mobility
- evacuation and assistance with mobility
- resupply with essential goods
- how to ask for assistance
- · the needs of guide dogs.







Some basic principles:

- procedures and services accessible in normal times and emergencies
- emergency communications to be accessible and reliable
- associations for people with disabilities involved in civil protection and emergency planning
- preparation, training, exercising
- involve the mass media in the transmission of warnings to people with disabilities.



Conclusions















Emergency

Disabilities
volunteer
organisations

Civil protection volunteer organisations

People with disabilities

Social services of local authorities

Social services
of local
health districts

Planning

"VERONA CHARTER"

on the rescue of persons with disabilities in case of disasters

Declaration of the participants in the Consensus Conference held in Verona on 8-9 November 2007



Providing safe conditions for people with disabilities during and after disaster is not a problem: it is a challenge to excel.

David. Alexander@ucl.ac.uk www.slideshare.net/dealexander