

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Facing an emergency, fire or natural disaster can be an overwhelming and frightening experience for anyone. When one is blind or vision impaired, these events can seem even more challenging.

There are many steps you can take in advance to prepare yourself and your family to face an emergency, including preparing a disaster kit, compiling a list of emergency numbers, and planning your escape route and nearby shelter options.

To get started on your disaster kit, find or purchase a plastic bin or large bag. Think about and gather key health supplies, such as a first aid kit and prescription medications, that you or your family members will need for a short period of time. Add in nonperishable canned food with pull tabs and bottles of water. Tools and gear, such as a battery powered flashlight and emergency radio, are also important parts of a disaster kit. If you have a service animal, include items necessarily for care of that animal.

Also, create an emergency contact list to keep in an easily accessible place in your home that you can also take with you if the case of an evacuation. It is important to have this information in formats that each member of the household can read. If you have the list brailled for you, make a print copy for sighted folks in your home too. Emergency numbers to include could be: medical information (such as the phone numbers of your doctors, local hospital, and pharmacy) and community resources (such as the police and fire department).

Finally, think about planning a safe route out of your home in the case of an emergency such as a fire. Locate the nearby shelters in the case of a natural disaster, and think about how to get there.

For additional information on emergency preparedness, please reach out to your local case manager.

This is a quarterly publication published by VisionCorps

CONTACT: 1-866-876-6550, option 1 for Rehabilitation

NEW: ZOOMAX SNOW 12

Low vision technology is a hot topic right now, and there are always new devices coming out on the market. One of the latest is a portable video magnifier called the Zoomax Snow 12. This device is a great hybrid of a portable video magnifier and a desktop video magnifier. It can be placed on a reading stand which hold it up a foot off the table and allows you to put reading material under it with ample space to be able to write.

The device has a 12" HD touchscreen with impeccable clarity. It has the standard magnification up to 19x and 5 color modes. One feature of the Zoomax that is rare to find on a video magnifier is the fact that it has OCR (optical character recognition) capability. This means that if you place a document under it and press a button, it will read the document out loud to you. This is especially helpful if there are longer documents to read or if your eyes are fatigued by the end of the day and need to read something.

Video magnifiers are a great tool to use for reading recipes, directions and labels on boxes, mail, cards, price tags, books, newspapers, and many more written materials! The Zoomax comes with an HDMI cable that can be plugged in to a TV monitor for even larger viewing area. The OCR capabilities come in 20 languages so can be used by many cultures.

Battery life is about 2.5-3 hours of continuous use. It takes 2 hours to fully recharge. The device weighs approximately 3 pounds when not on the reading stand, and comes with a carrying case for easy and safe transport. It can be purchased with or without OCR and with or without the folding reading stand.

For the 12" Zoomax Snow, with OCR and the reading stand, it is \$1295. There is a smaller version that has a 7" screen and OCR for \$879. This one does not come with a separate reading stand to turn it in to a desktop video magnifier style, however, the device itself has a base that opens up so you can read at an angle for better ergonomics on your neck and back.

For more information or to have a Zoomax Snow 12 demonstration, contact Taylor Newswanger by calling 717-205-4145.



INSIDE:

- Zoomax Snow 12 – learn more about this new magnification device
- Emergency Preparedness – learn how to make advance arrangements
- Enjoying the Theater – learn about audio descriptions of shows

ACCESSIBILITY IN TV'S

Since the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) was signed into law in 2010, it is mandated that TV manufacturers, video content providers and developers include accessibility features in televisions and video playing devices to make them accessible to all.

Smart TV's, cable TV boxes and other add-on devices all come out of the box with accessibility features like screen reader, virtual assistant, audio description and color inversion software built into them. TV apps on smart phones, tablets, iPads and computers are also accessible using accessibility features installed on them.

If you are struggling with accessibility features on your entertainment devices, VisionCorps can help! Contact Benjamin Brenya for more information by dialing 717-205-4144.

ENJOYING THE THEATRE WHEN YOU ARE VISION IMPAIRED

Being able to enjoy the arts, specifically a high-level theater production, is something everyone should enjoy. For those that have vision loss, sometimes going to a show is not as entertaining as it could be. That's why several of our local theaters now offer accessible performances through audio description. When requested, the theater provides a special headset that allows the user to hear a specially trained volunteer verbally describe the visual elements of the action taking place on stage during pauses in dialogue.

The describer also uses a headset microphone to communicate the most important visual details that the user might be missing. Many of the productions also provide a special backstage touch tour during which one can tactually feel props and costumes as they are described while exploring the background sets.

In our area, the Fulton Theater in Lancaster, People's Light in Malvern, and Dreamwrights Center for Community Arts in York all schedule performances which utilize an audio describer.