Tips for Making an Emergency Evacuation Plan

There is a responsibility to make sure emergency information is clear and usable for everyone. People process information in different ways with some needing visuals, step-by-step instructions, or extra time to understand what's happening.

In an emergency, these differences matter. That's why tools like evacuation exit maps for things like a fire or gas leak must be created and shared in ways that are truly accessible. This helps people navigate an emergency in a way that is safe and makes sense to them.

These tips can be used to create a new plan or add information to existing plans.

Tips

- Create a simple visual map that illustrates how to get out of the home.
- Make a digital copy, ideally something that is also compatible with a mobile phone.
- Keep it short and easy to follow. Write one step at a time.
- Use pictures or icons to show what to do, for people who process images more easily.
- Be clear and direct, saying exactly what you mean. For example, "Go to the door on the left" is better than "head toward the exit."
- Break actions down into small parts.

Making it easy to read and use

- Use dark text on a light background.
- Pick simple fonts like Arial or Aptos, size 12 or bigger.
- Don't use all caps or italics. Bolded text is best for important info.
- If using images, add text descriptions so screen readers can explain them.

Pair it with complementary products

- Include a customizable identification card someone can fill out and have in their home with pertinent information such as sensory needs, communication preferences, and contact information.
- Provide a list of who to contact in an emergency like a fire or gas leak.
- Create a door sticker to let responders know if extra support is needed.