

Best practices for accessible face-to-face communication during emergencies



- Use sign language interpretation, if that is the person's preferred means of communication.
- Use an intervener to communicate auditory and visual information to people who are deaf-blind.
- When speaking to a person who lip or speech reads:
 - Face the person in a well-lit area.
 - Speak clearly.
 - Use short and simple sentences.
 - Maintain eye contact when you speak.
 - Use facial expressions.
- Keep a supply of masks with a clear plastic window that shows the mouth to allow lip and speech reading.
- Write on a small portable dry erase board or have a pen and paper available to exchange messages.
- When communicating with a person who is blind or has low vision:
 - Introduce yourself.
 - Speak clearly.
 - Use precise and descriptive language.
 - Let the person know when you are leaving a group conversation.

**X**

Important

The universal sign for an emergency, like an evacuation, is an X on the back.

For more information, check our guide [Accessible communication during COVID-19 and other emergencies: A guideline for federal organizations.](#)