

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NATURAL DISASTERS COULD BE DISASTROUS FOR HEARING AID USERS

Ottawa, September 13, 2005. The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association warns hearing aid users that tornados, hurricanes, blizzards and floods all have the potential of causing havoc in Canada. The next natural disaster could be in your area. Are you ready for it? If you wear a hearing aid or a cochlear implant how will you cope when the power goes out and you are unable to supply yourself with a fresh set of batteries?

Surprisingly there are a several options open to you:

If you use disposable batteries, make sure you have a fresh quantity stored away with other emergency supplies. As the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina has shown, it could be up to two weeks before emergency crews reach you. You may want to reconsider using disposable batteries all together.

If you use rechargeable batteries, you need to consider obtaining 1) an alternative power source since the electric outlet is not likely to work, 2) a recharger for your rechargeable batteries and 3) adaptor cords.

Alternative Power Sources:

1. Light weight solar powered panels that can be bought for as low as \$34.99 or as much as \$699.00 can provide you with the power you need for your hearing aid battery chargers and other electronic devices. It will plug into your device via connector or 12V lighter adapters. The Internet is full of examples of various solar panels that can be purchased from stores as close as your local **Canadian Tire**.
2. You can also consider investing in power boxes that store enough electricity to run your electronic devices for many days. The energy you store can come from your outlet while it is still functioning or from your solar panels. *The Bosch Power Box* for example is available from **Home Depot** for \$248.00.
3. If you live in the country, a wind turbine available from **Canadian Tire** for \$799.99 can provide you with an adequate supply of emergency power or you could power your whole farm from models available from **Entegrity Wind Systems Inc.** in P.E.I.

Chargers and Adapters:

4. One of the best deals on the market is the *Coleman Portable Power Kit* available at **Costco** for \$98.99. The kit is a combination flashlight, radio, ambient light and a charger for electronic devices. An advantage of the *Coleman* kit is that it is a solar power charger. It uses the energy of the sun to recharge itself.

5. Some battery chargers can do their job by getting their power from your car's battery via the little used cigarette lighter or socket power adapters. You would need car power socket adapter cords available from **The Source (aka Radio Shack)** for \$7.99. Be aware that in some car models the socket does not remain "hot" when the ignition key is off. However, if you turn the key to the "accessory" position in the ignition switch the socket should be energized.

6. Last but not least is a solar powered battery charger for button cell batteries. Many hearing aids work exclusively with disposable button cell batteries. A recharger called *Solar Aid* was developed in Botswana primarily for use by people in Third World countries who do not have electricity and little disposable income. *The Solar Aid* is a solar powered battery charger

designed to charge size 13 and size 675 Ni-Mh rechargeable hearing aid batteries or two AA rechargeable batteries. Available through the Internet from the American company **Sundance Solar** for \$49.00 US, the charger comes with your choice of a free 4-pack of either #13 or #675 Ni-Mh rechargeable batteries. Simply place the charger in the sun or sunny windowsill or under bright light. *The Solar Aid* will **not** charge disposable hearing aid batteries.

No matter which alternative power source or the kind of recharger you use, remember to try it out before you store it away for emergencies. You need to become familiar with the technology, make sure you have the correct connectors and adapters and use it in real-time circumstances such as camping, to be sure it is the correct source of power you need. Further information on the above devices is available on the Internet at the retailers mentioned.

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