

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS RESIDENTS

Before an emergency threatens the state, have a plan in place. People with unique abilities or special needs may face obstacles that require more detailed planning. Here are recommendations that may assist you!

DETERMINE SHELTER OPTIONS

Obtain emergency preparedness information from state and local agencies. If your community shelter cannot accommodate your needs, you will need to go to a special needs shelter, which provides a level of medical care appropriate for your condition.

Speak with your physician regarding practical plans for your safety. **If you receive regular treatments**, consult your service provider regarding their plans for continuing services during an emergency.

SIGN UP FOR FLORIDA SPECIAL NEEDS REGISTRY

Florida emergency management services keeps a current database of individuals with disabilities or special needs. Contact your local office and advise them of your specific needs. Each county has its own process and forms for registration, and many forms are downloadable from websites. You must update your form annually to be certain your information is up to date.



Go to floridadisaster.org/shelters for information regarding special needs registration by county.

REGISTER FOR VITAL SERVICES

Make certain you or a loved one are included in your county's Special Needs Registry.

If you must have electricity for your medical needs, or have a condition that cannot be provided for at a general population shelter, you should pre-register for your county's special needs emergency sheltering and transportation program.

If you require transportation to your assigned location, make these arrangements in advance.



PREPARE IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Have a list of people in your Personal Support Network, including contact information for each. These individuals should all be aware of your functional abilities and limitations.

Create a document with all current health information (medical conditions, doctors, insurance policy numbers, hospital preferences, list of all medications, etc.).

PREPARE EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES

Place identification labels on all medical support equipment you plan on taking to the shelter with you.

Collect your emergency equipment early.

Have at least a 7-day supply of bottled water (one gallon per day per person) and non-perishable, easy-to-prepare food.

Keep a 2-weeks supply of any prescription or non-prescription medications on hand.*

If you can drive, fill up your car's gas tank.

ARRANGE FOR SERVICE ANIMALS

Service animals are allowed in shelters if they meet requirements. It must have a collar with identification, proof of up-to-date vaccinations, and written instructions for the animal's care. You are responsible for care of your service animal during your shelter stay.



**Florida law allows you to obtain a 30-day refill of prescription medications regardless of the date of the last refill so long as you reside in a county that is under a hurricane warning, a state of emergency declared by the governor, or has activated its Emergency Operations Center.*

✓ LIST OF ITEMS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS RESIDENTS

Register with Your Local/County Emergency Management Office (see above)

Have a Personal Support Network

- Have at least three people in your Support Network.
- Give at least one trusted member of your Support Network a key to your house or apartment.
- Show your group where you store your emergency kit and review what is included.
- Arrange for more than one person in your network to check on you in an emergency.
- Teach caregivers, support members and others who may assist you, how to operate any necessary equipment.

Complete a Personal Assessment

- Make a list of your personal needs and your resources for meeting them in a disaster situation. This should include daily living needs such as personal care items, adaptive feeding devices and electricity-dependent equipment as required.
- Maintain a 7-day supply of all medications you take regularly.

Create a Plan

- Use the Florida Division of Emergency Management's Family Disaster Plan tool to create your own personalized disaster plan. www.floridadisaster.org/getaplan
- Learn about your community disaster plans and all warning systems that are in place.
- Know your community's evacuation routes.

Prepare an Emergency Kit

- Battery-powered flashlights/lanterns/radios
- Extra sets of batteries
- First aid kit
- Fully-charged cell phone with extra battery
- Duct tape, garbage bags and scissors
- Fire extinguisher
- Insect repellent (with DEET, picaridin, etc.)
- Heavy insulated gloves
- Manual can opener
- Generator (if required-operate outside only)

Have Safety Devices In Place

- Be sure everyone in the household, as well as caregivers, know where your fire extinguishers are located and how to use them.
- Keep the shut-off switch for oxygen equipment easily accessible in the event of a fire.
- Have properly working smoke alarms on every level of your home.

Gather Important Documents

- Keep copies of all important documents and records in a safety deposit box or other secure offsite location.
- Make a record of your possessions (in writing, photos or video) in the event of loss or damage.

Have a Plan for Your Pets

- Never abandon pets during an emergency.
- Have an ample supply of food and water, a copy of vet records, any medication(s), collar and leash, crate or carrier, favorite toy, kitty litter and container as needed.
- Know the location of local pet-friendly shelters (pre-registration is recommended). Service animals are accepted in all shelters (see above).

Additional Considerations

- Discuss emergency planning with your doctor or specialist.
- Know how to connect and start a backup power supply for essential medical equipment.
- If you use an electric wheelchair or scooter, have a manual wheelchair as a backup.
- Label all necessary medical equipment and attach instructions for their use.
- Store back-up equipment at an alternate location.
- If you use a personal care attendant from a home healthcare agency, check to see if the agency has special provisions for emergencies.
- Consider a medical alert system that will allow you to call for help in an emergency situation.

